

WALT WHITMAN
AND
ALLAMA MUHAMMAD IQBAL

A Comparative Study of the Mystical Self in
“Song of Myself” and ‘The Secrets of the Self

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DEDICATION

TO THE LOVE OF MOST BELOVED

PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ

WHOSE LOVE IS THE

FOUNTAINHEAD

OF ALL LOVE

در دلِ مسلم مقامِ مصطفیٰ است
آبروئے ما ز نامِ مصطفیٰ است

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*I know it is a dip in eternal space
My inadequacies now stare in my face
I hope for direction and the grace
Praying for ability to hasten my pace*

All my humble praise and boundless gratitude is due to Allah for granting me knowledge and vision. And praise is to the most exalted Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) whose love has always acted as a guiding light to illumine the path of my life.

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ABSTRACT

This research is an attempt to study the concept of the self, not only on theoretical grounds but also on account of its poetic expression in some of the selected works of the American poet Walt Whitman (1819-1892) and the Eastern poet-philosopher Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938). A true understanding of the concept is not possible without first defining the parameters of the self. In this context, I review the concept of the self in Philosophy, Mysticism (and Sufism) and Psychology. The self that I reflect upon is basically the mystical self represented in the works of Walt Whitman and Allama Muhammad Iqbal.

My thesis draws on some of the similarities and differences of the mystical philosophy of the self in the poetry of Whitman and Iqbal. Whitman's narrative poem "Song of Myself" in his *Leaves of Grass* offers a peculiar blend of the oriental mystical trends with the American democratic idealism of Whitman's times. Many critics of Whitman have traced the oriental roots of Whitman's "Song of Myself". They have compared his thought to that of the Hindu Mysticism; but his affinity with the Muslim Sufi thought has not been focused much. In this research, I document this amazing convergence of concepts between Whitman's "Song of Myself" (1855) and Iqbal's thought provoking poem *The Secrets of the Self* to highlight the Sufi concepts visible in the works of these poets. Both expound a dynamic interpretation of the concept of the self. In their own manner and style Whitman and Iqbal base their views on an individualism that emphasizes self-realization. My research informs that Rumi,

the Persian poet and Sufi of the thirteen century, also bases his ideas on self-realization in cognizance of the higher truth. I pick on Rumi and place him in the centre to view the development of the self in Whitman and Iqbal. I also try to find out whether the notion of the self bears the same terminological and ideological meaning for both the poets under study?

In deeper analysis of the text of the poems, I also apply Abraham Maslow's (A psychologist belonging to the Humanistic school of thought) "Theory of Self-actualization" to the concept of the self. Maslow's theory with its Humanistic and mystical stance has a striking relevance to the processes of attaining self-hood delineated in the verses of Whitman and Iqbal. The major purpose of this study is to explore how the poet philosophers like Whitman and Iqbal shape and influence the consciousness of their readers. Although these mystical luminaries emerge from different cultural backgrounds, their essential outlook merges in terms of universal love. I, therefore, highlight how these poets transcend narrow concerns of life to promote the eternal message of love for humanity.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE SELF

Whom do thou seekest? Him! Who is crystal clear?
Thou art thyself an enigma; why trouble thy mind?
In searching Him, thou will find thy own image;
In searching thy own self it's He whom thou wilt find! (Iqbal
in Umer 32).

The pronouncement of the Delphic Oracle “know thyself” is what Socrates placed at the centre of his philosophy. Since Socrates myriad of great minds have come up with countless thoughts and ideas concerning the self. For any development or enlightenment of the self, first its nature, its epistemology and ontology requires explanation. One needs to answer the question: Do we understand the self? How do we interpret it? It is not appropriate to impose one single definition. In broad terms the self is whatever one defines it to be--- as many selves as many definitions leading to plurality of selves and therefore to plurality of meanings.

Concepts and descriptions related to the self extend across many disciplines in various cultures, religions and scholarly discourses. The purpose of this chapter is to present an enquiry into some of these various perspectives around the self. It focuses on the descriptions of the self primarily within the scope of Philosophy, Mysticism (and Sufism) and Psychology so as to relate them with my central focus--- Whitman and Iqbal in the next chapters. A detailed analysis of the historical and conceptual differences around the multiple definitions of the self is not possible in this one chapter. So in presenting this enquiry I am aware of the

complexity of the philosophic, mystical and psychological landscapes and the elasticity these may provide about the concept of the self in form of generalizations. I shall, therefore, not state or argue for any definite conclusions regarding the self. To be clear, my goal is, first, to map some implicated territories of the self within and around the areas of Philosophy, Mysticism (including Sufism) and Psychology.

1.1 The Etymology of “Self” and “the Self”:

The English expression “self” is something that makes an ordinary object pronoun into a reflexive one: “her” into “herself”, “him” into “himself” etc. The reflexive pronoun is used when the object of an action or attitude is the same as the subject of that action (For instance when we say “John admired himself”; John is at the same time admirer and the admired).

The word “self” is also a noun whose primary definition is “the entire person of an individual” (*Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary* 2059). Its use as a prefix is extravagant: a recent unabridged dictionary has 415 self referants denoting human states and personal actions. As a prefix it is used for naming activities and attitudes identifying the special case where the object is the same as the agent: self-love, self-hatred, self-knowledge etc. Grammatically, such terms are “reflexive nouns and adjectives which relate an extensive range of cognitive states, temperaments, emotions, and personal actions of the self” (Marsella 92).

When we add article “the” to “self”, it often means more than “self”. It is equivalent to the term identity which can include one’s gender, profession, nationality and relationship. A human being is a plurality of selves, public and private, inner and outer, subliminal and conscious. The public and private categories of the self can also be explained by a simple consideration: public self includes the social, cultural and national self; and private self includes spiritual and mystical self moving towards The Self --- The Divine Self. Hence The

Self with capitals refers to the force reigning supreme in the universe and the human self in its culmination approaches and comprehends The Self. As Lakoff and Johnson hold: “Any really deep understanding, of why we do, what we do, feel what we feel, change as we change and even believe what we believe, takes us beyond ourselves” (Lakoff 12). In this research I have used the term “the self” because my concern is far beyond the linguistic implications of the word.

1.2 Some Generalizations on the Self:

On commonsensical ground, the self can be analyzed as divided into two selves--- the higher and the lower, the impersonal and the personal self, one is divine while the other is semi animal. The term self in lower case denotes the personal ego, one’s individual identity or personality in contrast with the Divine Self(with capitalization). A Reze Arasteh in *Growth to Self hood* uses the terms cosmic or real self¹ (Arasteh ix) in contrast to the conventional or phenomenal self² (Arasteh ix). He divides the conventional self structurally into a variety of selves that include:

1. Parental selves
2. Generational self
3. Social self
4. Professional self
5. Fatherhood or motherhood
6. National self
7. Historical self

On the other hand the real self is rooted in “our collective humanity and its expression is nothing but in harmony with human kind’s interests” (Arasteh 6-7). In other words, the phenomenal or conventional self is limited and finite in its capacity whereas the real or cosmic self encompasses much more and has wider and infinite scope.

Frank Johnson's observation is also significant in *Culture and Self*. He enumerates the dimensions of the self as extended over many disciplines: "the concept of self is ordinarily defined as a unitary phenomenon; --- the concept of the self is typically separated into a nominative ("I") self as-subject and an accusative ("me") self as object. Self --as -- object includes both the idea of self as a social object to others and that of self as a social and psychological object unto itself" (Marsella 93). From this observation he deduces that both the subjective and objective dimensions of the self are emphasized in one or the other discipline. Social sciences are prone to study the self as-object³ (object of experience) while psychology focuses on the self --as- subject.⁴

This brief analysis of the self, done so far, foregrounds the two major dimensions of the existence of the self ---- the conscious and unconscious, the physical and the spiritual which in turn include a variety of the selves. Every human being, to use Huxley's term, is an amphibian because he lives on two levels: physical and spiritual. He is the entity of several universes at the same time on account of his multidimensional personality: "besides being an embodied spirit, we are also highly self- conscious and self centered members of society" (Raymond 198).

Discussing the multifaceted and amphibious nature of human beings, Huxley propounds that "every human being is a conscious self; but below the threshold of consciousness every human being is also a not-self (subliminal self)" (Raymond 198). His use of the term "not-self" is quite intricate but not as complex as it refers to the unconscious that can not be substantiated. Being analytical, Huxley traces different distinguishable not- selves present in a human being.⁵ Huxley's approach seems quite pragmatic when he suggests that the conscious self cannot work independently without the assistance of not-selves. He further proposes:

Health is the harmony between self and not- selves, and proficiency in any fields comes to those who have learned

how to place the resources of their consciousness at the disposal of the unconscious. Genius is simultaneously inspiration and perspiration. It is no use inhaling unless we are prepared to sweat. And it is no use sweating unless we know how to inhale the life-giving airs that blow from worlds beyond our conscious self-hood (Raymond 198).

1.3 Epistemology, Ontology and Psychology of the Self:

The fact is that the different dimensions of the self overlap and intertwine with each other. They are different facets of the self. No matter how many ways one slices a pie, it still is a pie. In other words, the concept of the self is like a projector. It is what we make it out to be. It is a reflection. And the reflection will vary across in people, cultures and history. The concept certainly means something to most people. It has natural use in philosophic, mystical (in religion on a wider scale) and psychological contexts which are very seminal contexts for the discussion of the self. Hence there are three main domains of the enquiry of the self:

Philosophy deals with different theories of the self (which we can call as epistemology) initiating and then trying to answer the questions related to the nature of the self and the ultimate reality. Philosophic thoughts make it difficult to chalk out whether something called self exists or not, whether self is substantive or immaterial? And whether ultimate reality is approached through reason or sense perceptions.

Mysticism (and Sufism) do not contextualize too much the nature of the self and emphasize the methods which bring the human self into a harmony with The Divine Self. Mysticism is concerned with the ontology of the self--- the journey of the self towards enlightenment. Enlightenment is the process of knowing what is greater than the things we can see with our bodily eyes; it is the moment when we begin to know something greater than that, the supreme force of the whole universe, which is also within our selves.

Psychology contextualizes the processes involved in the growth and development of the self and human consciousness. The self is a necessary construct in psychology for explaining the human behavior and psyche. It is a complex

process of gaining self-consciousness, an awareness of the human being's relation to the world and an awareness of himself as a personality.

1.3 (a) Epistemology of the Self (The Self in Western philosophic Frame-work):

In philosophy the self is the agent, the knower and the ultimate locus of personal identity. This self, which is at the bottom of every action, and is involved in every bit of knowledge is the self philosophers speculate about. In philosophy a straightforward view of the self would be that the self is just the person and that a person is a physical system. This view has been challenged on two fronts. First the nature of freedom and consciousness has convinced many philosophers that there is a fundamentally non-physical aspect of a person. So while there are philosophers who think that mental properties cannot be fully reduced to physical or material properties, many of them would allow that these are the properties of a physical system rather than of an immaterial self. In this connection Risieri Frondizi states in *The Nature of the Self*:

The development of an adequate theory of the self has been obstructed by a fallacious dilemma which attempts to force us to choose between a substantial self and no self at all. In other words, according to this dilemma, only two paths are open to us: either we postulate, a metaphysical entity which assures us of the continuity of the self, ignoring its ever-changing nature, or we emphasis the empirical date which affirms the flux of the self but which cannot explain its unity and continuity (Frondizi vi).

Between 700-1500, the concept of the self was considered only the weak and selfish nature of humans. The concept of an independent, self- directed self did not start to develop until the Renaissance. In medieval times, values and meanings were dictated by the community (do what you are told to do). Philosophers, in those times, endeavored to respond to some of the larger questions on the meaning,

values and purpose of human existence. However, since the age of Renaissance, western philosophers generally construct their systems on the pure reason of scientific observation or an enlightened idealism born from a reaction to dogmatic religion. In this philosophic view, reason and experience became the sole standard of truth. Today, modern self theory says that each person is expected to decide what is right (without much reliance on the accumulated wisdom of the culture) and to know himself or herself well enough to determine what course of action is appropriate.

“The ideological cauldron from which modern European philosophy emerged is commonly called the Enlightenment (1650-1770)” (Solomon 3). Philosophers were divided on the two approaches to take in their search for true knowledge from science—rational⁶ and empirical.⁷ The rationalists believed in the use of deductive reasoning considering it superior to sensual experiences as a source of knowledge whereas the empiricists believed the reverse and considerable controversy developed between the two schools.

Different philosophers’ account of the self is complex and in brief discussion one can do no more than indicate out lines, major assumptions and perhaps loose-ends.

The founder of Rationalism Rene- Descartes constructed his philosophy upon the proposition that the self of a person exists as thinking substance. He found the logical proof of his existence in the very act of doubting it. In *Metaphysical Meditations* he proposed: “but I do not yet know clearly enough what I am, I who am certain that I am (Descartes 150-52). After taking into consideration multifarious possibilities, he reached at the notion: “I find here that thought is an attribute that belongs to me; it alone cannot be separated from me--- I am not more than a thing which thinks” (Descartes *Metaphysical Meditations* 150-52). And then emphatically declared “cogito, ergo, sum” (I think therefore I am) (Descartes *Metaphysical Meditations* 153). Now the word thought is not used by Descartes in usual sense of the word.⁸

Descartes believed that he had made evident the existence of the self as something non-physical and immaterial substance: as something that needs only itself in order to exist. His proposition 'I think therefore I am' provided him with the one certain fact from which he could deduce the existence of God. If his definition of substance is taken in the strictest sense, it refers to one single substance, God, for "all other things can exist only by the help of the concurrence of God" (Descartes *Principles of Philosophy* 24). This leads Descartes to maintain that mind and body are two distinct substances--- his fundamental separation of mind and body is termed as Dualism. Hence Descartes in the true sense was the founder of the modern philosophic pre-occupation with the self. From Descartes onwards, the story of the European philosophy is "the story of the rise and the fall of the self" (Solomon 4).

Locke with his empiricist stance attempts to destroy Descartes theory of Rationalism. He follows Descartes not only in affirming the certainty of our existence and the indubitability of one's existence but also in his procedure for attaining it: "it is past controversy, that we have in us something that thinks; our very doubt about what it is, confirms the certainty of its being"(Locke 6). But he departs from Descartes when it comes to determining "the nature of our being"⁹ (Locke 197). Locke is of the opinion that there is not any possibility of thought unless we are conscious of it so he adds: consciousness is what constitutes the personal identity. And Locke departs from the substantialist interpretation with the claim that personal identity is not because of the identity of the substance but because of the identity of consciousness:

It is impossible for any one to perceive without perceiving that he does perceive, when we see, hear, smell, taste, feel, meditate or will anything, we know that we do so. The consciousness that such thoughts belong to us is what constitutes what we call the self (Locke 448-449).

While Descartes grasped the human self as thinking or immaterial substance, Locke, on the other hand, understood the self as constituted by a mental process of reflecting on or being conscious of the sensation and thoughts. For Locke, “personal identity can be derived from the continuity of consciousness” (Locke 449).

Denouncing the philosophy of Rationalism, which declared that reason is the most important element of the human conduct, David Hume (1711-1776) attacked this proposition by saying that “the reason is ought always to be the slave of passion; that reason should serve, obey the passion, rather than the passion being sub-ordinate to reason” (Hume 451).

For Hume, the burning question is the impression from which we derive the idea of the self. This is what he postulates in his famous bundle theory. Mind, for Hume, has only impressions and ideas which can be called as “perceptions”. And then the self is nothing more than “a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable flux and movement” (Selby-Bigge 251-52). So there is no idea of the self distinct from perceptions. And this self is considered as an immutable being because:

If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, through the whole course of our lives; since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and variable --- and consequently there is no such idea (Selby-Bigge 251).

The fact is that Hume went too far in his analytical introspection. Our experiences, no doubt, are transient in nature but there is a possibility of deducing some sort of a unity to which these experiences belong.¹⁰

In Germany, other view points developed called Romanticism¹¹ and Idealism.¹² With romanticism and Idealism in vogue:

The self that becomes the star performer in modern European philosophy is the transcendental self or transcendental ego --- the transcendental self was the self—timeless, universal, and in each one of us around the globe and throughout history. Distinguished from our individual idiosyncrasies, this was the self we shared--- the transcendental self was nothing less than God, the Absolute Self, the world Soul” (Solomon 1).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) emphasized feeling rather than thought as the key to the self. The self which he talks about is individual and unique. In *confessions* he writes: “I am unlike anyone I have ever met; I will even venture to say that I am like no one in the whole world” (Cohen 17). In the silence and solitude of the St. Germain woods Rousseau made a miraculous discovery. It was his self:

This self was so rich and substantial, so filled with good feeling and half-articulated good thoughts, so expansive, natural and at peace with the universe, that he recognized it immediately as something much more than his singular self. It was rather the self as such, the soul of humanity (Solomon 4).

The self that Rousseau discovered was far more superior to the logical self of Descartes or empirical self of Locke and despondent search of Hume for the self.

It is with Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) that we find the elevation of the self from mere personal identity to an Absolute Self of transcendental proportions. He calls his philosophy “transcendental idealism”¹³ with transcendental as a key term in the context that means universal in contrast to the merely personal. Denouncing the claims of rationalism and empiricism, he employed instead the transcendental critical method, a study of the nature of the reason it-self.¹⁴

Kant’s account of the self is complex. He talks about two categories of the self--- empirical or phenomenal and noumenal or transcendental self --- with a heavy emphasis on the latter. In view of Kant, the phenomenal self is experienced through an active and constant involvement of the mental states across time. In this way, the phenomenal

self is neither static, nor limited to the contents that were laid down during its formation, but is in a constant state of becoming. In contrast to this phenomenal self, Kant proposed an antecedent (preceding thing) unknowable permanent “I” that lies behind the experienced activity of the mind. This noumenal self; rather than being an expression of the phenomenal self, expresses the phenomenal self as a continuous whole. It is not only the source of knowledge but also source of agency, the will behind our actions.¹⁵ He also concluded that metaphysical beliefs about the soul, the cosmos and God (the noumenal world transcending human experience) are matters of faith rather than scientific knowledge.

The first great Post Kantian philosopher, Johann Fichte (1762-1814) maintained that the self is the fulcrum of our experience. He believes that what is absolute and indubitable is the self. Fichte’s student Friedrich Schilling (1775-1854) placed his belief in one absolute self in the universe. He went still further in his romantic emphasis on reducing all things to the self- realizing activity of an absolute spirit which he identified with the creative impulse in nature. Schilling influenced the American Transcendentalism led by Emerson (which will be discussed in chapter 2 with reference to Walt Whitman). Robert C. Solomon’s words aptly define the whole truth: “some of the dramatic excesses of romanticism passed away with the romantics themselves, but this enduring image of the cosmic self not only survived but flourished in the years to come” (Solomon 55).

Frederick Hegel (1770-1831) synthesized empiricism, rationalism and Kant to develop his philosophy of Absolute Idealism:

The significance of that absolute commandment know thyself --- (whether we look at it in itself or under historical circumstances of its first utterance)—is not to promote mere self- knowledge in respect of the particular capacities , characters, propensities and foibles of the single self. The

knowledge it commands mean that of man's genuine reality --- of what is essentially and ultimately true and real of spirit as the true and essential being (Wallace 377).

Hegel's emphatic notion of the spirit limits the conception of the individual self. At the end of the preface to *The Phenomenology of spirit* he comments:

At a time when the universal nature of spiritual life has become so very much emphasized and strengthened, and the mere individual aspect has become, as it should be, the matter of indifference --- the individual must all the more forget himself --- {and} all the less must be demanded of him just as he can expect less from himself and may ask less for himself (Hegel 130).

Hegel saw reality as well as all that man experiences, as originating in the mind of God. According to Hegel, God's plan for man is to become increasingly aware of itself as free spiritual being, uplifting man in unison with the Absolute; freeing him from the "master-slave" relationships which have existed throughout the ages.¹⁶ "This hyper-inflation of the self marks the beginning of a new era of European philosophy" (Solomon 71).

The German idealism with its romantic fiber gradually lost enthusiasm with the result that the field of philosophy became fragmented and instead of a dimensional and directional development of the philosophic thought, it became a melting pot of diverse ideas and notions related to the self. And in this whole scenario, **Nietzsche's** philosophy represents an epochal disintegration of the transcendental self.¹⁷ For him, the self is a illusion because it is emptied of content and real values. Nietzsche saw man's loss of belief in God as his salvation because it enables man to lose his child-like dependency upon God and to find the courage to live in a world without God. Solomon comments on this nihilistic philosophy of Nietzsche as: "it looks as if the self which has been raised to transcendental then cosmic states, has now disintegrated into nothingness (Solomon 126).

Twentieth century continental philosophy has its roots in Edmund **Husserl** (1859-1938) with his revolutionary dictum of phenomenology.¹⁸ According to Husserl, Phenomenology gives us a new way of viewing things—the things in themselves:

Phenomenology takes the transcendental viewpoint further than the older idealist; for Husserl insists not only that the truth must be found in the self but that it is the self itself that must find it there. Thus he assigns double role to subjectivity-- as both the locus of truth and as its discoverer (Solomon 137-38).

So after Nietzsche, Husserl was the one who revived the concept of the transcendental self.

The concept of the self has been worked out in a radically different tradition from that common to philosophers by Jean – Paul **Sartre** (1905-1980) and his post-decessors who are the representatives of the philosophic movements known as Existentialism¹⁹ Sartre rejected Hegel's notion of the spirit which has a much limited scope for individual freedom. He believes that the individual self has a unique power “absolute freedom” ---- and this freedom itself is universal and necessary, common to all men and women.²⁰

The story of the rise and fall of the self in modern European philosophy ends with Postmodernism. Walter Truett Anderson in his book *The Future of the Self: Inventing the Postmodern Person* gives four terms postmodernists use to speak of the self which address the issues of change and multiple identities. The first is *multiphrenia*. This refers to the many different voices in our culture telling us who we are and what we are. As Kenneth Gergen, a professor of psychology, says, “For everything that we ‘know to be true’ about ourselves, other voices within respond with doubt and even derision.” (Gergen 228). Our lives are multi-dimensional. The various relationships we have in our lives pull us in different directions. We play “such a variety of roles that the very concept of an ‘authentic self’ with knowable characteristics

recedes from view” (Anderson 38). And these roles needn’t overlap or be congruent in any significant way. As Anderson says, “In the postmodern world, you just don’t get to be a single and consistent somebody.” (Anderson 38).

The second term used is *protean*. The protean self is capable of changing constantly to suit the present circumstances. “It may include changing political opinions and sexual behavior, changing ideas and ways of expressing them, changing ways of organizing one’s life” (Anderson 41). Some see this as the process of finding one’s true self. But others see it as a manifestation of the idea that there is no true, stable self (Anderson 41).

Thirdly, Anderson speaks of the *de-centered* self. This term focuses on the belief that there is no self at all. The self is constantly redefined, constantly undergoing change. As one philosopher taught, “The subject is not the speaker of language but its creation” (Anderson 42-43). Thus, there is no enduring “I”. We are what we are described to be. Anderson’s fourth term is *self-in-relation*. This concept is often encountered in feminist studies. It simply means that we live our lives not as islands unto ourselves but in relation to people and to certain cultural contexts. To rightly understand ourselves we must understand the contexts of our lives (Anderson 51-56).

If we put these four terms together, we have the image of a person who has no center, but who is drawn in many directions and is constantly changing and being defined externally by the various relations he or she has with others. All these ideas clearly go in a different direction than that taken by modern society. It was formerly believed that our goal should be to achieve wholeness, to find the integrated self, to pull all the seemingly different parts of ourselves together into one cohesive whole. Postmodernism says no; that can’t happen because we aren’t by nature one cohesive self. Hence, the postmodernism questions the very idea

An important construal of the self in Postmodern philosophy comes from Michel **Foucault** (1926-1984) who observed the shifting patterns of power within society and the way in which power relates to the self. He like Nietzsche believes that all knowledge is an expression of the will to power. Hence we cannot speak of any absolute truth. After Foucault, Jacques **Lacan** (1901-1981) has reduced human “I” or self to mere mirror-image. In what follows we have the Feminist Philosophy which bases its reasoning on the structural differences between male and female and it is in search of a more balanced theorizing of self hood. Hence in Postmodern philosophy, the self is relegated to the margins instead of occupying its centre--- it is in a state of flux, discontinuity and decenteredness. According to Olson:

Within the world of flux, there are no universal and timeless truths to be discovered because everything is relative and indeterminate which suggests that our knowledge is always incomplete fragmented and historically and culturally conditioned” (Olson 20).

So the philosophy of the later part of twentieth century offers no profound insight into the nature of the self and the current philosophic thought offers no certain truths, no real self. Every truth has become relative and literal.

The vacuum left in modern western philosophy is partially filled by the Eastern philosophy and in recent times, we find a growing interest, within western philosophic circles, for the Eastern and especially Indian philosophic thought. The challenge laid forth is that the self is not separate, individualistic, and egoistic nor for that matter permanent. In East, the epistemology and the ontology of the self are not distinct phenomena but merge into one. Most of the Eastern philosophers believe: “the world of concepts is not the world of reality. Conceptual knowledge is not the perfect instrument for studying the truth. Words are inadequate to express the truths of ultimate reality” (Hanh 141-143). The Eastern influence is due to the conscious effort of authentic

philosophers who synthesis the East and the West, the old and the new.

This brief study of the different theoretical frame-works of the self, in Western philosophy, has led me to think that theoretical thought is squandered in a theoretical diversity. Then the question arises how self knowledge is possible and of what nature is this knowledge? To my understanding, the way of self-reflection and contemplation is the only way leading to the discovery of the true starting point of the theoretical thought. When conceptual knowledge is prone to fallibility the only way leading to the absolute truth or reality is through direct experience and this is the experience of a mystic. This is what is affirmed by Huxley in *Adonis and the Alphabet*: “truth repeated is no longer truth; it becomes truth again only when it has been realized by the speaker as an immediate experience” (Raymond 200). Philosophy, therefore, is a strictly theoretical discipline which deals with the conception and epistemology of the self whereas in a mystical experience a mystic has a direct perception of the reality through visionary meditation. To use Huxley’s term, philosophy is all knowledge and mysticism is the understanding of that knowledge. Understanding comes when truth is experienced on the pulse as Keats held: “Axioms in philosophy are not axioms until they are proved upon pulses” (Gittings 93). The knowledge which a philosopher has of the self is such knowledge that “the blind man has of the light that has never entered him” (Raymond 199). For our culmination as human beings we “need a perfectly modest sense of the self that precedes the pretensions of philosophy” (Solomon 202).

What can be inferred from the preceding arguments is that our self hood is actually the centre of our existence. The experiential knowledge of the self transcends theory. Our self knowledge exceeds the limits of the theoretical thought. The philosopher and the mystic start from the identical point that is self consciousness, but while the philosopher limits himself

to the hypothetical deduction of the theory; a mystic acquaints himself with the growing range and subtler expansion of the self. A philosopher is not sufficiently equipped to pass beyond mental construction into the elastic life of the spirit and to enjoy its delicate and subtle movements.

Most of the western philosophers dogmatically reject this kind of self reflection but this is not the case with Eastern philosophers where the philosophers and mystics are one. They elucidate their philosophy after having an immediate and direct contact with the reality. Hence they are acquainted not only with the epistemology but also the ontology of the self. In the forthcoming passages a brief delineation of the ontology of the self would be discussed with reference to Mysticism and Sufism

1.3(b) Ontology of the Self (The Self in Mysticism and Sufism):-

‘Mysticism’ is said to be derived from the Greek word “mystikos or mysticon” meaning “of the mysteries or secret” which in turn is derived from the Greek word “mystos” meaning “keeping silence.” Generally, Mysticism is misunderstood as mysterious or occult. Mystery is a characteristic of the mystical but not the whole of it. Mysticism is to be distinguished from mystery, spookiness and magic which fall within the field of occultism. Hence its etymology is misleading as mystics have usually not kept their experiences or even the methods to attain them as secret. We have astonishing volumes of mystical writings which provide eloquent testimony about the nature of mystical experience to defy common assumptions that such experiences are ineffable.

Mysticism can also be defined as the transcendental life-transforming experience of the ultimate reality. The word “transcendental” distinguishes mysticism from the ordinary empirical experiences; the word “life transforming” refers to

its pragmatic import or value and “ultimate reality” lends an aura of sublimity to the mystical experience. Mysticism is an off-shoot of the spiritualism. Spiritualism cannot be termed as Mysticism, because the latter is only one aspect of the former. Spiritualism is like an ocean and Mysticism as its drop. Spiritual is to be taken in a broader perspective----- there is no possibility of the mystical union without an awakened and enlightened spirit.

Mysticism is a process based on a deep fascination and a passionate love of the Absolute and a longing for experiencing a state of illumination granting the mystic moments of intense gnosis, love, and exultation. To define mysticism, then, one must identify the mystical process or the mystical experience. An eligible definition, which cannot be overlooked in this study, is suggested by Ronald W. Hepburn, who asserts:

Mystical experience is a religious experience, in a broad but meaningful sense of “religious”. It is sensed as revealing something about the totality of things, something of immense human importance at all times and places and something upon which one’s ultimate well-being or salvation wholly depends. More specifically, a mystical experience is not the act of acquiring religious or theological information but is often taken to be a confrontation or encounter with the divine source of the world’s being and man’s salvation. There must be a unifying vision, a sense that somehow all things are one and share a holy, divine, and single life, or that one’s individual being merges into a “Universal self”, to be identified with God or the mystical One. Mystical experience then typically involves the intense and joyous realization of oneness with, or in, the divine, the sense that this divine One is comprehensive, all embracing, in its being (Hepburn 12).

The mystical experience then does not belong to any particular religious dogma. It is a universal constant, whose “variations can be observed to be very clearly and characteristically shaped by the several religious systems upon which they were based” (Arbery 12). Its universality verifies

the fact that all mystics share common characteristics; at the same time each has his/her distinctive dogmatic background which shapes his/her mystical experience. Besides, mysticism, which evolves from religious dogmas, might not conform to these dogmas. Thus mystics are not altogether theologians inasmuch as theologians are not necessarily mystics. The key-terms used by all might be similar, but their conceptions of these terms might differ. The same is true of mystics themselves; they all use similar key-terms to describe their mystical experiences, but their conceptions of these terms may differ according to their basic dogmas. Still, all mystics acquire knowledge and illumination by *acquaintance*, while theologians acquire knowledge by *description*

A mystic is endowed with a heightened consciousness which makes him perceive the distance between our conventional, phenomenal or physical self and our real/cosmic/ transcendental self. He knows of “a non-phenomenal, eternal self, an inner man, the spark of divinity within him, which is his true self ----- it is the chief end of man’s earthly existence to discover and identify himself with his true self” (Happold 20) The perception and awareness of this distinction puts him on the pathway of growth of the self-hood. This pathway to the selfhood is beautifully pictured in one of the poems of Jalal-ud-Din Rumi entitled as “From No-Man to Cosmic Man”:

Low in the earth
 I lived in realms of ore and stone;
 And then I smiled in many –tinted flowers
 Then roving with the wild and wandering hours,
 Over earth and air and ocean’s zone
 In a new birth
 I dived and flew,
 And crept and ran
 And all the secret of my essence drew
 Within a force that brought them all to view
 And lo, a man!
 And then my goal

Beyond the clouds, beyond the sky,
 In realms where none may change or die
 In angel form; and then away
 Beyond the bounds of night and day,
 And Life and Death, Unseen or Seen
 Where all that is hath ever been,
 As one and whole (Rumi 381).

Thus the real self is the heart of the mystical enterprise unlike the phenomenal or conventional self which by its nature is limited, finite and transient whereas the real self is the outcome of “intuitive power and enlightened reason and by its make-up is organic and illuminating” (Arasteh 5). The real or transcendental self, in view of a mystic, constitutes the very essence of our being. This real or true self, in words of F.C Happold, “is not affected by ordinary happenings, it does not change in the flux of sensations, in the dissipation of ideas, or in the fading of memories” (Happold 48). The real self-----”the spark, the centre, the apex of the soul” (Happold 48-49) ----- in its consummation is likened to the Divine Self pervading the universe. The truth of the matter is that The Self is the very foundation and ground of the self, whereas the self is a mode or manifestation of The Self. Through full realization of his own true self, the human individual can experience oneness with The Self in a moment when:

We are laid asleep in body
 And become a living soul (Wordsworth in Thomas 22).

A mystic plumbs the depths of the self and reality in order to discover his true nature experientially. It is the practice of presence of God, path of knowing and experiencing God, the world, others and ourselves as we really are in our dynamic wholeness and interconnectedness. Based on extra ordinary perception, mystics may believe that the true unity of religion and philosophy can be found in mysticism:

Philosophy can, moreover easily become a game of conceptual counters. The mystic puts aside this game of conceptual counters. He relies not on deductive reasoning but on intuitive unifying vision to pierce the secret. As a result of direct intuitive experience, he can find not only a coherent pattern, which is not contrary to his reason, but also a certainty of a sort which cannot be given by philosophy (Happold 42).

These divergent directions of mysticism and philosophy led Jalal-ud-din Rumi to declare that “the legs of logicians, philosophers and mechanical scientists are wooden and wooden legs are untrustworthy --- especially on the long path of growth to self-hood” (Arasteh 5). This is the distinction which made Walt Whitman to declare:

When I heard the learned astronomers,
 When the proofs, the figures, where ranged in columns before
 me,
 When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add,
 divide and measure them,
 When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured
 With much applause in the lecture room,
 How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
 Till rising and gliding out, I wandered off by myself,
 In the mystical moist night air, and from time to time
 Looked up in perfect silence at the stars (Bradley 271).

Hence theory is grey and the first hand experience is green. A mystic is not anti-life. He wants life even more than ordinary men do and in words of Evelyn Underhill: “true mysticism is active and practical, not passive and theoretical. It is an organic life process, a something which the whole self does; not something as to which its intellect holds an opinion” (Underhill 81). So mysticism does not divorce itself from the temporal world. Jacques De Marquette rightly declares in *Comparative Mysticism*: “Mysticism appears as the most welcome mediator to religious-minded men seeking to conciliate religion, with its indispensable ethical incentives, and concepts of the world computable with factual science” (

Marquette 71). This, indeed, is the reason that I have placed mysticism in the centre in the structural division of the present chapter.

Mysticism, with its claim of illuminating the path of the self –hood, dominates much Indian philosophy where the mystical experience is always characterized as trans-mundane. With a vast wealth of mystical literature and philosophic defenses of mysticism, Indian thought has much more to offer about the ontology of the self:

Hindu India has been traditionally concerned with the “self” as an ontological entity----- the empirical self, the ego as actor surrounded by other egos, is systematically marginalized in the Indian tradition so as to exalt the “true” that is the non-empirical- self, often identified with the cosmic absolute pure and simple (Marsella 185).

The mystical world of *Vedas, Upanishads, and Gita*, is not based upon any abstract notion of the self. It is based upon the illuminated soul’s personal, concrete experience of being as the unifying centre of the existence and also the ontological root of the self. This concrete and direct realization of the self in its fullness is the unique aspect of the Indian philosophy which the West happens to lack. John M. Koller commends this aspect in *Oriental Philosophies*:

The primacy of the practical consideration involved in Indian philosophy gives them substance, while the necessity of the speculative considerations determines their structure ---- “Good in theory, but not in practice”, is a remark that makes no sense when applied to Indian philosophies ----No sharp distinction exists between theory and practice; philosophy and religion are not considered to be two separate activities (Koller 8-9).

All schools of Hindu philosophy have over-whelming queries and debates over the exact nature of human self²¹. Different schools of Indian mystical philosophy have held very dissimilar views on the question of the self ranging from the notion that there is no real self (Buddhism and Charvaka)

to the idea that the self is nothing less than the Omnipotent, unlimited Absolute (Advaita), with many other positions lying between these two extremes. Hence we have three dominant views on the self:

- i. The anatta or no-self, view of Buddhism
- ii. The non-dualist view of Advaita which is characterized as “You are the Absolute”
- iii. Vishishta –advaitin

Before the rise of Buddhist thought in the sixth century B.C, the prevalent view in India on the nature of the self was that found in the philosophic treaties known as the *Upanishads* (2150-600 B.C.E). The Upanishads certainly upholds the eternal continuity and imperishability of the self because it is non-different from the Absolute. Hence Hindu thought is non-dualistic: “thou (Atman) are the (Brahman); everything is oneself” (Happold 144). According to Buddhism²² there is no continuity or permanence in anything that we experience, think or are. Therefore there is not any continuity of the self. Thus there is no self according to Buddhism.

In Advaita Vedanta, the dominant and living system of mystical philosophy in Hinduism, the self or *atman* in man is identified with the supreme self or *Brahman* of the universe. The apparent separateness and individuality of being and events, the self and the Self is held to be and illusion (Maya). This illusion can be dispelled through the realization of the essential oneness of the *Atman* and *Brahman*. When this apparent separability of subject and object, of the self and The Self is realized, a mystical state of liberation is achieved. Because of this inseparability: “*Atman* is that pure, undifferentiated self-shining consciousness, timeless, space less and unthinkable, that is not different from Brahman.----- this is the central meta religious or meta psychological affirmation of *Advaita Vedanta*”(Deutsch 48).

In spite of the apparent divergent notions of the self in Buddhism and other Indian mystical philosophies, they

together can be contrasted with the empirical doctrines of the self in the west. In this context Aghananda Bharatia makes a significant observation in *Culture and Self*: “Hindu concept of self and Buddhist concepts of self and non-self, thus share a family resemblance so strong that they cannot be juxtaposed except by radical contrast to western notions” (Marsella 204). The reason is that the Western Philosophy has tended to maintain a tension between religion and secularism. In India however the tension has tended to be between Monism and Dualistic theism.

Sufism²³ is another dynamic mystical school in the East. The name Sufism usually is given to a collection of mystical practices and trainings about 300 years after the time of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessing upon Him) in ancient Egypt and Middle East. But actually its starts with Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and he was the one who brought first a mystical spiritual path (Sufism). It was later revealed as religious organizational system that came to be identified as Islam---which simply means surrender to the Divine unity. In this view, Sufism is not an esoteric religious side of Islam but the origin was Sufism. . In fact Sufism presents a profound philosophy which aims at self realization which in words of Abu Said--- the Master Sufi “is like taking one step out of one’s self and taking another step into God”(Arasteh 50).

A human being as an entity has duality in its composition. That is how God made us. On one side we are ethereal or spiritual and on the other hand we have a temporal self, which serves as a vehicle to carry our ethereal self. According to our belief system (and almost any other) the former component, our ethereal self is permanent whereas our temporal self is only transitory and temporary. The Sufi tradition recognizes this split and concentrates and teaches to develop the ethereal part of ourselves. It propagates the idea that this ethereal part of us is the primordial state of being, and it is the state of being when it

was closest to the Creator. So this is the Sufi quest – to seek the nearness to the Creator – the primordial state when we existed only in ethereal self.

A Sufi, like a mystic, is more concerned with the cosmic or real self. The real self can be thought of as the crown of unconscious, which is potentially conscious existence, the Sufi's goal. And this state is self-explanatory and self-evident. The moment of acquaintance with one's own superior consciousness is the moment of one's vow with the reality. It directs the seeker to the reality of immortality and closeness to creative essence ---God. This state of cosmic self-consciousness is not achieved by taught principles rather experience offers the only way. Among Sufis, there are two schools: those who hold the transcendence of God (Monism)²⁴ and those who hold His immanence (polytheism)²⁵. In Sufism, it is by the spiritual path that the self is gradually purified and transformed into Divine Attributes, until there is nothing left of one's compulsive self. Then all that remains is the Perfect, Divine Self.

In Islamic Sufism, Rumi was a great Muslim saint with his revolutionary concepts. Putting much emphasis on high potentialities of human self in his works, Rumi asserts the nature of transcendental knowledge as an intuitive insight of the truth which goes beyond the human sense experience; the idea which intellectually includes him in the circle of the 19th century Transcendentalists pioneered by R.W. Emerson. According to Rumi actual insight of truth can be achieved through intuition and constant trust in the wisdom of the self needless of any external medium. Rumi's poetry reveals a yearning for a direct, natural and personal relationship with the divine. This main principle of Sufism (Islamic Mysticism) is well reflected in Rumi's following poem:

Cross and Christians from end to end I surveyed;
 He was not on the cross.
 I went to the idol-temple, to the ancient pagoda;
 No trace was visible there.

I went to the mountains of Heart and Candahor;
 I looked; He was not in that hill and dale.
 With set purpose I fared to the summit of mount Qaf
 In that place was only Anqa's habitation.
 I bent the reins of search to the Ka'ba;
 He was not in that resort of old and young.
 I questioned Ibn Sina of his state' He was not within Ibn
 Sina's range,
 I fared towards the scene of two bow-lengths' distance,
 He was not in that exalted court I gazed into my heart;
 There I saw him; He was nowhere else (Arasteh, 12).

This is the notion Sufism or Islamic Mysticism has in common with Transcendentalism regardless of their chronological distance. Both doctrines assert the possibility of attaining an intuitive knowledge of spiritual truths through individual meditation and contemplation. As mentioned by Miller:

Transcendentalism rejects the aid of observation and will not trust to experiment. General truths are to be attained without the previous examination of particulars, and by the aid of a higher power than the understanding. The hand-lamp of logic is to be broken, for the truths which are felt are more satisfactory and certain than those which are proved. The sphere of intuition is enlarged and made to comprehend not only mathematical axioms but the most elevated propositions respecting the being and destiny of man. Hidden meanings, glimpse of spiritual and ever-lasting truth are found, where former observers sought only for natural facts. The observation of sensible phenomena can lead only to the discovery of insulated, partial and relative laws; but the consideration of the same phenomena, in a typical point of view, may lead us to infinite and absolute truth- to knowledge of the reality of things.... (E.H Miller 174)

In Christian theology and mysticism, human personality is regarded as dichotomous, consisting of only the body and the mind itself being called the soul or the spirit. In the whole Judeo- Christian tradition, God is regarded as the wholly other. Mystical experiences may bring God and the soul

closer together but they can never become one. And a mystic can get only a distant or indirect vision of God. What Christian apophatism does is to deny the ability of discursive thinking and the rational mind to perceive the real transcendent nature of God. In other words, Christian apophatism is mainly epistemological. Unlike the Indian mystic, Christian mystic does not seek liberation from his personality and the cycle of birth and death. Such a concept does not exist in the Bible, and none of the mystics appear to have moved in that direction. It follows also that despite the occasional attempt to organize and orchestrate the spiritual path, there is still no credible system like Indian system. Any how, these mystical introspections, presuppose a substantive self ---a self that has an identity that is more or less fixed, distinct and unique. One's relationship with God is based upon the reality of this identity. Without it, in effect, God does not exist. To find and know God, one looks at one's own self. One of the basic differences between Christian mysticism and Sufism is that the first adheres to the authority of the established church while the second places the mystical experience above the authorities of traditional dogmas or doctrines. Commenting on the relation between experience and dogma in Christian mysticism, H. P. Owen explains:

These mystics constantly appeal to the Church's authority in the realm of religious belief. They accept unconditionally those dogmas that the Church teaches and in which all Christians believe. Moreover in varying degrees they show a detailed knowledge of the ways in which dogmas have been formulated (Owen 156).

Another difference between Christian mysticism and Sufism is that to the Sufi, Allah is One and only One ("La ʔlah ʔlla Allah"). The Prophet Muhammad does not share Allah's Godhead, and in no way is he equal to Allah. It follows that the Muslim and the Sufi do not recognize an incarnate God, a Savior acting as a medium between Allah and his worshipers. The Prophet is only the vehicle of the

Divine Message to man, and the Qur'an is this Divine Message. Via ardent repetition of verses from the Qur'an, the Sufi empties himself from himself and becomes one with this Divine Message, thus becoming one with Allah. Christian mystic believes in the doctrine of Trinity. Bernard McGinn asserts that "Christian understanding of mystical union must be radically different from Jewish and Muslim ones, if only because union, however understood, is with the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (McGinn 187). Thus the Christian mystic's object of contemplation and meditation is God or God Incarnate, Jesus Christ; the Bible is not his immediate channel for achieving the mystical experience.

This brief study brings the bewildering variety of spiritual experiences with ritual diversity but transcendental unity. That is to say that the transcendental experiences of mystic are basically the same. Literary difference signifies new modes of expression. Literary difference emerges from differences of cultural backgrounds and settings. Mystics speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. The German scholar Rudolph Otto writes:

It is often claimed that mysticism is the same in all ages and in all places, that timeless and independent of history, it has always been identical. East and West and other difference vanish here. Whether the flower of mysticism blooms in India, in China or Persia, or on the Rhine, its fruit is one (Otto 13).

1.3 (c) The Self in Psychology:-

The realm of psychology includes a wide range of theories and schools with diverse opinions on the concept of the self. The self, from the vantage of psychoanalytical phenomenology, is a psychological structure through which self-experience acquires cohesion and continuity. Generally, in psychology, the concept of the self can be categorized as:

(i) Pragmatic view of the self:-

According to this we develop a concept, of who we are,

through our interaction with the others. This view is expressed in the works of William James and Herbert Mead. **William James'** model of the self provides a frame-work to explore the experiences of the self. His model details the subjective and objective constituents, the sense of self-continuity through time and the plural nature of the changing self. He developed his definition of self- consciousness in his *Principles of Psychology*. James discussed the components of the self as "I" and "Me". He further explores the three dimension of the "Me" as the material, social and spiritual constituents in relation to pure ego.

(ii) Humanistic view of the self:-

Drawing on perspectives of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers this view of the self emphasizes individual growth towards self-actualization.

The mystical self that is central focus of the present study is much relegated in western psychology as is done in philosophy. The reason perhaps is that spiritual matters are by nature subjective and complex. They are difficult to be discussed within the scientific or empirical paradigms so they are disparaged by most of the early psychologists of the twentieth century. Barbara Marx Hubbard points out this fact:

What sexuality was to the Victorian age, mystical experience is to ours. Almost every one experiences it, but almost no one dares to speak about it. We have been dominated by a scientific materialistic culture which has made us feel embarrassed about our natural spiritual natures. Yet we read that sixty percent of American people have mystical experiences we are a nation of repressed mystics (Hubbard 179-180).

The experiences of the transcendental self have been reduced to infantilism in **Freudian** models of psychology. He considered all forms of spirituality to be regression into a childlike state of consciousness. For him, the ego (which

integrates and regulates the conscious and the unconscious) had to be a mediator between the rules and regulation of super –ego (the sum total of all internalized commandments and advices) and the demands of the Id (unconscious and all its drives). After him, **Carl Jung**, disagreeing with Freud, held somewhat positive view about the role played by spirituality in human psyche. For he discovered that deep down in the *collective unconscious* of man there were symbols at work which he called archetypes which had the power to harmonize and stabilize the psyche. For Yung: “these archetypes are the organs of the pre rational psyche---- they are centers of energy, of immense power, and the symbol through which they are manifested enshrine the deepest spiritual wisdom of mankind”(Happold 50).

For what psychology lacked until Yung was to offer an overall map of the spectrum of consciousness that includes all aspects of the human psyche including religion and the mystical experience. According to John E. Mack, M.D,²⁶ a spiritual point of view requires a modification or extension in the notions of the self prevalent in psychology. The self in spiritual or mystical sense is something more mysterious or mythic, a space or possibility, a ground of being -----self in this sense is not discrete or limited to an individual, but a kind of fluid potential through which one connects with other selves and all of reality.

Robert Assagiolo was the first to give us such an overall map.²⁷ With him, the forgotten wisdom of all ages and cultures was beginning to re-enter Western science again. After him, Abraham Maslow with his school of Transpersonal Psychology brought radical and revolutionary changes in the field of psychology. Maslow has been very inspirational figure in personality theories. In the 1960s, in particular, people were tired of the reductionist, mechanistic messages of the behaviorists. They were looking for meaning and purpose in their lives, even a higher, more mystical meaning. Maslow was the pioneer in that movement to bring

human being back into psychology and the person back into personality.

Transpersonal²⁸ is a school of psychology considered by proponents to be the fourth force in the field after the three: psychoanalysis, Behaviorism and Humanism. This school refers to the psychological study of the experiences which transcend the traditional boundaries of the ego or the self that is which is trans-mundane, transegoic and transpersonal. Traditional schools of psychology, according to its proponents, have failed to include these transegoic elements in human existence such as altered stages of consciousness and spirituality. It strives to combine insights from the world's contemplative traditions, both East and West.

Maslow's work has been called ground breaking because it is concerned with the spiritual yearnings of human kind and focuses a scientific interest on mysticism. As mentioned earlier, such an endeavour had been absent since the work of psychologist and philosopher Williams James at the beginning of the twentieth century. Maslow believed that the people develop through various levels towards their full potential. A few reach the highest level of development and are called self-actualized. Most, however, stop at a lower level along the way. Maslow's interest was in the few who become self-actualized. He saw these few as beacons, directing humankind towards its full potential (Details of his theory of self-actualization in Ch.3b p.100).

All transpersonal psychologists share one basic theme. They claim that human beings possess a superegoic centre of consciousness that is irreducible to any known state of empirical or ordinary consciousness. This root of consciousness (and human existence) is frequently called The Self (higher self) in order to distinguish it from the self or ego which is considered to be the seat of ordinary day working consciousness.²⁹

After viewing the multifarious facets of the concept

called the self in various disciplines, I have reached the proposition that the self is egocentric in the west and allocentric in the East. Whatever it is, to my understanding, the self is the central point of our being, the hub of the wheel. It is the true inner centre of our diversified lives. Thoughts, feelings, actions and relationships all originate here. Whether substantial or unsubstantial is not the issue but the real task lies in the exploration of this self ---a peep inward ---a voyage into the interior to know its potentialities and deficiencies. The nexus of the human development lies in the process of self discovery or looking within to experience the self. This is analogous to the natural process by which all the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits of tree can be simultaneously nourished and enlivened by watering the root. So it is the root of our existence. This self during the process of its growth approaches The Self ---- a reservoir of creativity, intelligence and happiness that spills over all phases of living. The next chapter deals with this celebration of the self in the poetry of Whitman and Iqbal.

Notes And References

¹ Cosmic self can be thought of as the image of the universe which must be unveiled. It embraces all our being.

² The phenomenal self --- the product of culture and environment, encompasses consciousness. It designates only a part of our existence.

³ Self as object is influenced by cultural and social factors and determined by the actions of others.

⁴ Self as subject is the initiator of action

⁵ Huxley builds a hierarchical pattern of not-selves. First of all is the personal home made not-self which is the region of subconscious with which psychiatry mainly deals? "It is a not-self of habit and conditioned reflexes, of repressed impulsive, of buried alive reactions to remote events and forgotten words, the not-self of fossil infancy" (experiences). Then comes the not-self called 'vegetative soul' which governs the entire physical functioning of the body. Then we have the not-self which deals

with aesthetic sense, artistic sensibilities and inspirational tendencies. “It is the not self who spoke to Socrates through his daimon, who dreamed the text of *Kubla Khan*, who dictated king Lear and the *Agamemnon* and the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Then there is ‘mysterious not-self’ which governs divinity in man and which makes us have mystical experience. This mysterious not- self has nothing to do with human symbols. It needs a soul probing activity that needs deep insight. “This mysterious not- self lives in the midst, not of shared human symbols, but of shared non-human facts, facts of the others world, of heaven or hell”. And above all is the immanent ‘Universal Not-self’ “which men have called the Holy Spirit, the Atman- Brahman, the Clear Light, Suchness.”

⁶ The rational method is based upon deductive reasoning such as is employed in the formulation of mathematical principles where by logical conclusions are reached from certain “a priori” premises. “A priori” premises are those that are derived from the reason alone.

⁷ The empirical method is based on sensory experiences, observation and experimentation and inductive reasoning that is conclusions reached from proven or know facts.

⁸ He makes it clear that a thing which thinks “is a thing which doubts, understands, conceives, affirms, denies, wills, refuses, which also imagines and feels” (Descartes *Discourse on Method* 101). He defines substances as “a thing which so exists that it needs no other thing in order to exist” (Descartes *Principles of Philosophy* 24). Although his conception of substance seems comprehensible, but the knowledge we have of the substance is not easily acquired as Descartes affirms “we do not perceive its existence directly but rather through it observable attributes” (Descartes *Principles of Philosophy* 136).

⁹ The certainty which Locke affirms is only with reference to the existence of the self and not its nature. Locke states it as “we must content ourselves in the ignorance of what kind of being it is”

¹⁰ Our human body is an appropriate example of such a system. All its constituents come into being and then pass away and yet the human body as a system or organized totality persists. And this constant change of its constituents is essential for its proper functioning. Same is the case with the self and mental life. Its innumerable and diverse factors are transient -- - yet the totality that is formed by their combinations is a persistent system. If Hume wanted this persistent unity to stand before us as conspicuously as, for example, a mountain peak, at all times of our life whether sleep or awake, then surely such a unity cannot be discovered. But still there is such a unity. Hence we find some severe limitation in his theory of the self which disintegrated the self into separate fragments and he wanted to fill in the gap but could not as he confessed: “For my part, I must plead the privilege of a skeptic; and confess, that this difficulty is too

hard for my understanding” (Hume 559). The story of empiricism, in a way, ends with this confession of Hume.

¹¹ Romanticism was a radical movement in philosophic thought. Romanticism saw the route to truth and to the human progress, as being from within ourselves, rather than through the laws of nature and the science as advocated during the age of enlightenment. The Romantics argued that the real world is much more than the sense perceptions of the empiricists or the clear and distinct ideas of the rationalists. It encompasses the totality of human experience. To the Romantic, reality and the law of nature are not mechanical clockwork systems, but are spiritual in nature designed by the living spirit, God, who is the soul of the universe.

¹² Idealism is also concerned with the spiritual nature of things.

¹³ Transcendentalism means independent of experience but idealism means dependent on subjective existence (my) then transcendental idealism would have to mean knowledge of objects that are dependent on subjective existence (my) but independent of experience.

¹⁴ Kant’s belief that reason connects us directly to things in themselves does not allow for metaphysics practiced by Rationalists because reason alone does not determine any positive context of knowledge: “Thoughts without the contents are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind” (Kemp-Smith 51).

¹⁵ He also uses the term transcendental self or ego which for Kant is entirely different from the empirical self of every day life: “It is a rich source of a priori knowledge. It is timeless and universal” (Solomon 34).

¹⁶ In other words, Hegel considered man to be in an internal dilemma—facing the conflict between his “true self” and “false self”. True self longs for God and the false self clings to the world. The true self attempts to master the unworthy false self.

¹⁷ Feeling dissatisfied with the Christian way of life and having disgust for the philosophies prevalent in Europe with regard to the conception of the self he uttered: “man has lost dignity in his own eyes. Since Copernicus, man seem to have got upon an inclined plane--- he is now rolling faster away from the centre—wither? into nothingness? into the over-whelming feeling of his nothingness” (Morgan 53).

¹⁸ Phenomenology is the close examination of the essential structure of consciousness, with an eye to describing the necessary and universal truths of experience. Its aim is nothing less than the return of philosophy to scientific status, and of European thought to the road of rationality. In other words, it is a description of experience that is without pre-suppositions, and opportunity to see clearly without doubts the essential structures of not only one’s consciousness but of every possible consciousness. These categories are not to be deduced from the facts of

experiences but are intuited directly.

¹⁹ Existentialism is a philosophy that solely focuses upon human existence without being concerned with any other aspect of philosophy. It holds the primacy of the existence over essence means that my existence is what is of prime importance rather than any assumed essence of me as given by philosophy, religion and science. Man must be recognized as a conscious being who experiences all sorts of things.

²⁰ He is of the opinion that philosophers throughout the ages have tried to solve the dilemma about the essence of human nature but all their hypotheses are false because human beings are free to choose what they will be: “man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself----- he is nothing else but the sum of his action, nothing else but what his life is” (Sartre 28). Hence there can be no final answer to the question of what the self is. What human beings at larger level are? If at all they have any essence that is freedom. Hence there is no transcendental self to give meaning to our experiences. Sartre’s existentialism though having a different starting point owes much to the Enlightenment and Romanticism because of its insistence on the individual and individual freedom.

²¹ The realm of Indian philosophy is much broader with regard to the issues which later were discussed in the western philosophic tradition. Most of these schools hold that human personality is trichotomous consisting of body, mind and the spirit, the latter being known as *atman* or the self. This real self or *atman* is considered to be pure untainted ultimate source of consciousness and an independent entity distinct from mind. The source of all knowledge is within the *Atman*. God is the Supreme Self and the individual selves, which are self-existent and of the same nature as God, are only a reflection or part of Him. Mystical experience is only the realization of this integral relationship between God and souls. And there are two pathways of attaining this enlightened realization: Path of affirmation and path of negation.

²² Buddhism is an attempt to construct a metaphysical doctrine known as *anatta* or no-self

²³ Sufism is also often termed as Islamic Mysticism. “Suf” is the Arabic word for “wool” in the sense of the cloak referring to the simple cloak, the original Sufis wore. In Greek terms, *sofis* or *sofia* literally imply wisdom or enlightenment. Then there is the Arabic root in certain languages ---’soaf’ which literally means pure, clean or blank.

²⁴ In Monism, the witness, the nearness, the Encompassment, the Firstness, the lastness --- all refer to another being.

²⁵ Polytheist sees God everywhere, he sees Him in his own self

²⁶ John E. Mack, M.D is a Pulitzer prize winning author and professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He is the founder of the centre of

psychology and social change. He has made this observation in his essay "Psychoanalysis and the Self: Towards a spiritual point of view, which was originally published in Boston University Studies.

²⁷ His map of human psyche includes:

- Lower (infra) unconsciousness
- Middle unconscious
- Field of unconscious
- Higher consciousness
- The conscious ego
- The higher self
- The collective unconscious

²⁸ It was originally founded in 1969 by Abraham Maslow and others in order to pursue knowledge about issues connected to mystical and transcendental experience. The motivation behind was Abraham Maslow's already given theory of Hierarchy of Needs in which he talks about the human peak experience.

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- The superegoic root of consciousness (the self) survives bodily death in some transpersonal schools; for others it dies with body.
- For some, the self is dormant and latent for others; it is even watchful and precedes empirical human consciousness.
- Some think that self is mutable and potentially expandable and completely outside of space and time, and that only ego is subject to temporal change.

Chapter 2

SELF-ASSERTION IS SELF-POSSESSION

The Concept of the Self in the Works of Walt Whitman and Allama Muhammad Iqbal.

This ideal of Whitman's is a critical ideal of workability, of direct use. Applying it here and now, I can think of only one living poet who in any way sustains the test, and almost necessarily he is not of our race and creed. I mean Muhammad Iqbal, whose poem "Asrar-i-Khudi": The Secrets of the Self, has recently been translated from the original Persian by Dr. Reynold Nicholson----. (Reads in Ishrat 141-42)

Oh Walter, Walter, what have you done with it? With your individual self? For it sounds as if it had all leaked out of you, leaked into the universe. (Lawrence 173)

Walt Whitman and Iqbal, the central focus of this comparative study, have poured out their creative genius by writing about the self in their own particular ways. Rather than much concerned with the nature of the self (like a philosopher as mentioned in Ch.1), both these poets, though belonging to different countries and time periods, are more concerned, in common, with the consciousness and introspective awareness of the self. In both the cases this introspective awareness about self-consciousness does not clearly demystify the self. It does not also tell what the self is, other than its being the sort of entity that permits the consciousness of itself. It is more a mystical consciousness than a purely philosophical one.

The underlying purpose of this comparative study, between these diverse yet uniquely similar poets---Whitman

and Iqbal, is an understanding and appreciation of the points of unification and departure in their concept of the self. This research mainly focuses on the background philosophy in the works of these two poets that also transmutes into their ethical and spiritual beliefs. Pluralism is the order of the modern-day world. In a pluralistic world, contact with other cultures, inevitably, leads to cognitive exchanges in which the ideas of each culture influence those of the other. Hence a comparative study of different poetic philosophies emerging from different springs and sources of inspiration becomes a self-rewarding experience.

One way of comparing Whitman and Iqbal is to do so by analyzing multiple labels that have been attached to both of them. While there is some merit associated with each label, these still do not encompass the complexity these poets might hold. Another important and interesting similarity between the two is that they both have been divinized as well as demonized. Although, quite divergent, these two approaches carry further the multiplicity and diversity of their expression and interpretation. What Whitman affirms in “Song of Myself” can be applied to both:

I am large, ----- I contain multitudes

(SOM, Section 50, Line16)*

There are various dimensions of their philosophy of the self that are the outcome of their deeper reflection and wider experience.

In this regard, their choice of poetic form for the delineation of their philosophic and mystical concepts especially the concept of the self (the contention of the present study) is also significant. It can be explained on the ground that an artist has a unique perception of things and art is the medium that the artist uses for searching his identity

* All the textual references are from—Walt Whitman. *Leaves of Grass*. New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India, 1986.

and self. It is the medium in which he voyages for self-discovery. Iqbal holds in *Stray Reflections*:

The world spirit conceals the various phases of her inner life in symbols. The universe in nothing but a great symbol. But she never takes troubles to interpret these symbols for us. It is the duty of the poet to interpret these symbols for us. As for the poet and the world spirit, the former reveals what the latter conceals. (Iqbal 78)

Whitman also assigns somewhat similar role to the poet in Preface to 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* (LG):

Of all mankind the great poet is the equable man--- he is the arbiter of the diverse and he is the key --- As he sees farthest he has most faith --- Faith is the antiseptic of the soul--- He is a seer—(Whitman in Bradley 714, 716)

So they both consider it the duty of the poet to open new vistas of meaning for the secrets of existence so that the process of betterment may continue. They want the poet to be dynamic with a vision that extends beyond worldly horizons, planets and space into the cosmos. The poet as a leader, seer and reformer creates new and beautiful forms and interprets the human aspirations. His thought is universal and all embracing and it contains material, moral and spiritual aspects of life. That is the reason that both these poets, Whitman and Iqbal, are as much concerned with the world of material values as with the world of spiritual and aesthetic values. The world of matter is as much important and significant as the world of spirit. These two worlds are interconnected and one compliments the other.

Though Whitman inherited the transcendental spirit from Emerson yet there are instances that prove Whitman's debt to Upanishad and Gita (Indian mystical philosophies). Edward Carpenter, the famous biographer and critic of Whitman, found the parallel between *Leaves of Grass* and the *Upanishads*. In *Maha Yogi: Walt Whitman*, K. Nambiar elaborates a Hindu perception of Whitman's mystic

adventure. In addition, Malcolm Cowley also in his introduction to the *Leaves of Grass* 1855 traces the elements of mysticism in his work. Sri Aurobindo in his book *The Future Poetry* compared Whitman to old Indian seers: “That which the old Indian seers called the *mahan atma*, the Great Self, the Great Spirit is the subject of some of his strains” (Allen *Walt Whitman and the World* 396). Western Scholar Beongcheon Yu in his book *The Great Circle: American Writers and the Orient* surveys Whitman’s affinity with the Indian thought.

Whitman’s introduction of Vedic consciousness in American poetic exploration can not be under estimated. But there is essentially another side of Whitman’s mysticism that aligns him with the dynamic Sufi philosophy of Jalal-ud-Din Rumi¹ and Iqbal. A lot work has been done in tracing the transcendental and Vedic roots of Whitman but Whitman’s debt to Sufi phenomenon has not been focused much in Western and American academia. Although I dwell here on the transcendental and Vedic roots of Whitman but I would also draw an affinity between Whitman and Sufi thought through the triangle of Whitman- Rumi- Iqbal. Rumi is emphatically placed in the center because of the amazing convergence of his philosophy and that of Whitman. Similarly in shaping the creative genius of Iqbal no other influence (Western or Eastern) worked as significantly as that of Rumi. In his poetry we find a recapitulating of Rumi’s thought.

In many ways Rumi seems well aligned to the American tradition; indeed his poetry reminds one of Whitman’s verse in its exaltation of the Divine in everyday life, its defiance of convention and its celebration of language of common people. Iqbal’s poetry also radiates with the spirit of Rumi in its aspiration for the Divine. Like Rumi, the speakers in Iqbal and Whitman’s poetry are both brazen and humble, revealing their capacity for greatness, acknowledging their humility before God as in the following lines of Rumi:

I am small I can barely be seen,
How can this great love be inside me?

Look at your eyes. They are small,
But they can see enormous things (Rumi in Barks 279).

Walt Whitman appeared on the American literary scene when the Americans were trying to solidify a national identity. In a way, Whitman and America together conducted the quest for the self. In his poetry, Whitman's discovery of himself is the discovery of America. Whitman loved the world and the people in it and enjoyed traveling about America, singing the praises of its natural beauty and wealth, the vitality of its people, the pioneer spirit and the excitement of building a new nation on a new principle of individual freedom and vision. This discovery of potential in the American continent goes along with the discovery of the potential within his self and vice versa. The sense of pioneer ship, exploration, individuality and democracy equates Whitman and America. Whitman's poetry may certainly be read at the surface level but even a casual reading of Whitman's verse informs that there is much more to what its author says than a simple literal cataloguing of observation and experience.

Within the system of his dynamic meditations, he perceives the radiance of body and soul, of subject and object, of life and death and above all love. His *Leaves of Grass* though severely condemned because of its openness and so called homoeroticism reveals the depth of his insight and wideness of his outlook. His "Song of Myself" offers an insight into Whitman's quest for the self-discovery. Being the poet of "the open road" (*LG*: "Song of the Open Road", Line 1.p.149) he does not contracts but rather expands his self through his poetry.

Iqbal's poetry on the other hand appeared fairly early in the twentieth century--- a crucial time for the people of the sub-continent in the wake of British colonization and World War-I. He was deeply concerned with the revival of the lost identity and status of Muslims. Iqbal was despaired with the Muslim religious-philosophic tradition of his time which he

termed in *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* as “worn-out and practically dead metaphysics” (Iqbal 125) with its peculiar thought form and phraseology producing “a deadening effect on the modern mind” (Iqbal 125). His vibrant poetry stirred the dead into life and infused a renewing and rejuvenating sense of identity and self-manifestation in his readers. Conversant with Eastern as well as Western Philosophy and Mysticism, he believed in developing an understanding of relation between the self (man) and The Self (God). With his own peculiar vision, he extolled mysticism for demonstrating the inner experiences of the self on its way to finding the Higher Self.

This brief sketch of Whitman’s and Iqbal’s poetry foregrounds the fact that, in general terms, the poetic voice of the two had its seminal role in evolving the consciousness of their readers. Both performed the role of vitalists in urging their fellows to embrace life to the fullest by exploiting the unimaginable power of the self; both emphasized the synthesis of spirituality and active and vigorous life in the world, both earnestly preached the ideal of human unity and brotherhood; both held firm faith in the infinite potentiality of the self.

More specifically, the concept of the self, the central focus of Whitman’s and Iqbal’s poetry, shares common as well as uncommon grounds. Both Whitman and Iqbal consider the self to be a composite of the physical and the spiritual but still there are terminological differences in their concept of the self. They hold almost the same conception of The Divine. Both of them have panentheistic strain rather than pantheistic one. Both believe that the human self for its complete development must be in tuned with the Higher or Divine Self. They use the same medium of intuition and love but the manner of getting in tuned with the infinite is altogether different. Whitman becomes one with the Higher Reality by absorbing the self in The Self. On the other hand, in Iqbal, the climax of the voyage of self-discovery is to

absorb The Self in the self. On the poetic level, Whitman's poem "Song of Myself" depicts the mystical journey of the one individual self (the poet himself) that stands for all selves. Iqbal's poem *The Secret of the Self* does not depict the mystical journey in the traditional sense but rather explains the process of growth of the self-hood at a larger societal level and that stands for the individual self as well. (Details with analysis and examples in the coming passages).

Both Whitman and Iqbal depart from the traditional mysticism in their dynamic conception of the self-hood. It converges and diverges at many points with the difference in tone and temperament and in the sources of its inspiration. Iqbal, like Whitman, believes that a fossilized religious dogmatism could not generate an outlook that would lead to self-realization. Unlike the traditional mystical idea of self-negation propagated by dogmatic religious beliefs, Whitman and Iqbal propose a radical vitalizing concept of **"self-assertion as self-possession"**. They believe in a kind of balance between temporal and spiritual, as Whitman asserts:

I am the poet of body
I am the poet of soul

(LG: SOM, Section: 21, Line: 420)

And for Iqbal also the world of matter is not an illusion and if ignored all progress would cease. For him both the body and the soul are the expression of the same reality; they are constituted of the same stuff. He defines the relation of the body and the soul on the analogy of the relation of God with the universe. He states in *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*:

It is not placed at some definite or particular point in the body. It is not identical with body either. It is related to it, is in contact with every atom of it, permeates and infuses it through and through and at the same time is over and above it. It is neither inside nor outside the body, neither proximate nor separate from it and yet it is in contact with its every atom (Iqbal 135)

Hence the body is necessary for the expression and manifestation of the soul.

Whitman's notion of self-assertion is further evident in his Preface to 1876 edition of *Leaves of Grass* where Whitman insists that his "enclosing purpose" is "to express, above all artificial regulations and aid, the eternal Bodily character of one's self" (Whitman in Bradley 750). The self that Whitman asserts is no doubt the transcendental / mystical / cosmic self but it can only be revealed through the physical self. Unlike the traditional mystics, Whitman did not regard flesh and matter as a hindrance in spiritual aspirations towards the ideal; he regarded the material reality as the glorious means of life: "He does not negate life but in his quest of self he has a 'lusty enthusiasm', a hearty relish for life lived at all times to the fullest intensity" (J. Miller *Walt Whitman* 17). For him, it is not just the spiritual self that comes in communion with the "over-soul"² but the physical and the spiritual self in their unison or totality get in tuned with the infinite during mystical experience.

Throughout his poetry, Whitman insists on the idea that it is through the physical that one achieves the spiritual. He evinces the charm and wonder of the body and its participation with the soul in achieving higher mystical ideals:

I will not make a poem nor the least part of poem but has
reference to the soul-----

Was somebody asking to see the soul?

See, your shape, countenance, persons, substances, beasts, the
trees, the running rivers, the rocks and sands---

Behold, the body includes and is the meaning, the main
concern, and includes and is the soul,

Whoever you are, how superb and how divine, is your body,
or any part of it.

(*LG*: Starting from Paumanok: Section 12, 13, Lines.174-
75,177-80)

Here, Whitman emphasizes the fact that the soul is embodied in outward "shape" and "countenance". This

embodiment lends a divinity to the body.

Whitman in “Song of Myself” considers body not only as an instrument of the soul but a full partner in the business of the living. He depicts the struggle of the self to achieve immortality in its union with “The Self” or “Over- soul”:

I have said that the soul is no more than the body
 And I have said that the body is not more than soul,
 And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one ‘s self is.
 (LG: SOM: Section 48, Lines.1269-71)

For Whitman, “the physical body and its senses are the receptors and interpreters of those mysterious signals, for without the senses the soul would not receive the information it needs to distill the latent truth of its experience” (Caddy 214-215). He reiterates this fact again and again:

I will make the poems of materials
 For I think they are to be the most spiritual poems,
 And I will make the poems of my body and of mortality,
 For I think I shall then supply myself with the poem of my
 soul, and of immortality.
 (LG: Starting. From Paumanok: Section, 6 Lines 70-74)

Both, the body and the soul, are related to, and have their source in the same reality and execute the purpose of that reality as a single and indivisible whole. So for Whitman, as for Iqbal, the body owes its existence to the soul while the soul has its source in the Divine Reality.

The self that Whitman asserts in his poems is the spiritual self as after the divine synthesis of the body and the soul. This self is man’s individual identity. Despite Whitman’s celebration of the body: “I believe in the flesh and the appetites, /Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is a miracle. (LG:SOM: section 24, Line.522-23), he is at the same time aware that body is only a portion of what he is himself:

I pass death with the dying, and birth with the new washed
 babe, and am not contained between my hat and boots
 (LG: SOM, Section 7, Lines 133-34)

These declarations do not appear as paradoxical when one realizes that this is a song of multilayered self and that Whitman's psychology understands the body as the way for the soul to function in nature.

The self after the synthesis of the body and the soul expands to encompass both space and time. In the course of his poems there is a clear indication of the assertion and expansion of the self into inclusive consciousness. As R.W.B Lewis in his book *The American Adam* states: "Traditional mysticism is a surrender of the ego to its creator--- Whitman's is the expansion of the ego (self) in the act of creation itself naming every conceivable object as it comes from the womb" (Lewis 52). He loves the earth, the flora and fauna of the earth, the moon and the stars, the sea and all other elements:

I will make the poem of riches,
To earn for the body and the mind whatever adheres and goes
forward is not dropt by death.
I will not make poem with reference to parts,
But I will make poem, songs thoughts, with reference to
ensemble---
(LG: Starting From Paumanok, Section 12, Lines 165-175)

Whitman's emphatic declaration: "I will not make poem with reference to parts" projects his desire to engulf the totality within himself.

His concept of self is not to be confused with egotism. Whitman's pronominal assertion, his "I" in his poems is not egotistical self-assertion but has larger universal parameters that can be understood only by placing the self of Whitman in a vaster mystical and metaphysical context. The "I" of Whitman's verse, Whitman himself, we soon become aware is every man and every woman. Donald Hall interprets this assertion of Whitman as: "when he sighs of himself, he is far removed from egotism precisely through inwardness; the self that he observes through imagination become all selves; he is the multitude he called himself" (Hall 7). The egotistical self of Whitman is, therefore, deconstructed to fit it in a larger

canvass of a universal “I”, a part of the Divine and hence not egotistical. To Whitman, all matter is as divine as the soul since the body is as sacred and spiritual as the soul. When he sings of the body or its performance, he is singing a spiritual chant. To quote the words of Paul Hourihan in *Mysticism in American Literature*: “the ‘self’ celebrated here is not the ordinary phenomenal self of Whitman but the transcendental ‘I’ Consciousness, the Mystical self, the Cosmic Mind while the radiance is still upon him who writes down his revelation” (Hourihan 150). This Cosmic Consciousness is one aspect of Whitman’s mysticism.

In comparison Iqbal, in his poetry, specifically in *The Secrets of the Self* encapsulates the idea of **self assertion as self-possession**, but from a slightly different stand point as that of Whitman’s. In the dynamic perspective of his thought, the unflinching assertion of the self is the watchword:

Endeavor to surge and wrestle with the sea
 Oh expand thyself: Move swiftly!
 Be a cloud that shoots lightning and shed a floor of rain!
 Let the ocean sue for thy storms as a beggar,
 Let it complain of the straitness of thy skirts.
 (The Secrets of the Self, Lines 1309-1316)*

Central to Iqbal’s drama is his concern with human individuality. Rejecting Plato’s static universe and those aspects of Sufism that denied the affirmation of the self in the world, Iqbal utilizes the Quran to develop a unique *weltanschauung* in his theory of self hood that embraces all reality: the individual self, society and God. Every little stream of Iqbal’s poetry falls into the mighty ocean of the self. In espousing his prolific volatile concept of the self, Iqbal profited from the Western and Eastern philosophers and mystics but never imitated any of them. In words of Robert Whittmore:

* All citations are from the translation of *Asrar-e-Khudi* as *The Secret of the Self* by Dr. Nicholson published by Sh. M. Ashraf. Lahore, 1920

Iqbal is not merely another Asiatic turned Western eclectic. For Ghazali and Rumi also have been his teacher, The Prophet (P.B.U.H) and the Quran his constant source of inspiration. It is this fusion of patterns of philosophical and religious thought foreign to each other that constitutes Iqbal's Reconstruction (Whittemore in Ishrat 439).

For Iqbal the climax of the long evolutionary development of the self-hood is reached, as he states in *Reconstruction*, "when the self is able to retain full self-possession, even in the case of direct contact with the all embracing Ego (self)" (Iqbal 111). (Instances would be provided in the third chapter in the analysis of *The Secrets of the Self*). It is the desire to conquer the nature that gives purpose to life and leads the self into creativity: "in great action alone, the self of man becomes united with God without losing its own identity and transcends the limits of space and time" (Dar 398). Hence life's affirmation and not its negation becomes for Iqbal the ultimate human value. He writes in a letter to Nicholson: "What then is life? It is individual. Its highest form, so far, is the Ego (self) in which the individual becomes a self contained exclusive centre" (Iqbal in Nicholson xix). In *The Secrets of the Self*, he affirms the same fact:

The form of existence is an effect of the self
 Whatever thou seest is a secret of the self
 (The Secrets of the Self, II. 187-188)

Consciousness of the self is the ultimate human goal. The continuation of individual life depends on the affirmation of the self:

Tis the nature of the self to maintain itself
 In every atom slumbers the might of the self
 Power that is unexpressed and inert
 Chains the faculties which lead to action
 In as much as all life comes from the strength of the self
 Life is in proportion to this strength
 When life gathers strength from the self

The river of life expands into an ocean
 (The Secrets of the Self, P. 14-15)

Iqbal criticizes all notions of spirituality that preach renunciation of worldly life. He is against the concept of bifurcation of man into spirit and body. Like Whitman, for Iqbal, man is neither spirit nor body alone but an organic unity of the two. For the realization of the self, it is not necessary to discard the bodily needs. He should lead the worldly life in such a way so as to have his gaze fixed always on the realization of the self. Iqbal, himself, explains the whole phenomenon in one of his lectures in 1937:

When I condemn self-negation I do not mean self denial in the moral sense; for self-denial in moral sense is a source of strength to the self. In condemning self-negation, I am condemning those forms of conduct that lead to the extinction of the "I" as a metaphysical force, for its extinction would mean its dissolution, its incapacity for personal immortality. The ideal of Islamic Mysticism according to my understanding is not the extinction of "I". The ideal of Islamic Mysticism is a stage beyond the stage of extinction that is immortality which from my point of view is the highest stage of self-affirmation.--- Ethically the word "khudi" (self) means (as used by me) self-reliance, self respect, self-confidence, self-preservation: even self assertion (Iqbal in Razzaqi 212).

The crux that can be extracted from these sayings of Iqbal and Whitman is that the realization of the self through its assertion is the highest spiritual ideal of human life. And these poets are making their readers conscious of it.

Regardless of the geographical, cultural and chronological distances between the two poets, the notion of the self in inner cognizance of the truth brings them close to each other. As mystics, they versify unity through cosmic and universal forms of love celebrating every bit of creation and concerned with the elevation of the whole human race not of the few supermen like Nietzsche.³ The fact is that both

Whitman and Iqbal remain incomprehensible without the mystical stance. All their divergent modes can be brought into a unified whole by taking into consideration the mystical dimension of their work that has universal implications. This fact has been affirmed by Whitman himself in *Democratic Vistas*:

The culmination and fruit of literary artistic expression, and its final fields of pleasure for the human soul are in metaphysics, including the mysteries of the spiritual world, the soul itself, and question of the immortal continuation of our identity. In all ages the mind of man has brought up here and always will here at least, of whatever race or era, we stand on common grounds—those authors who work well in this field—though their reward instead of a handsome percentage, or royalty, may be but simply the laurel-crown of the victors in the Olympic games—will the dearest to humanity and their works however aesthetically defective, will be treasured for ever. The attitude of literature and poetry has always been religious—and always will be. The Indian Vedas, the Nacakas of Zoroaster, the Talmud of the Jews, the Old Testament the Gospel of Christ, the Koran of Muhammad, the Edda of Suorro and so on towards our own day-----these, with such poems only in which (while singing well of persons and events, of the passions of man, and shows of the material universal), the religious tone, the consciousness of mystery, the recognition of the future, of unknown, of Deity over and under, of the divine purpose, are never absent, but indirectly give tone to all—exhibit literature’s real heights and elevations, towering up like great mountains of the earth (Whitman in Ishrat 241).

Reflecting over this potentiality of Whitman’s work, Herbert Read in his article “Readers and Writers” comes up with an appraisal of Iqbal’s poetry. He thinks that Iqbal’s poem *The Secrets of the Self* is a continuation of Whitman’s “Song of Myself”. For Herbert Read, Iqbal’s *The Secrets of the Self* is a culmination of Whitman’s ideal:

This ideal of Whitman’s is a critical ideal of workability, of direct use. Applying it here and now, I can think of only one

living poet who in any way sustains the test, and almost necessarily he is not of our race and creed. I mean Muhammad Iqbal, whose poem “*Asrar-i-Khudi*”: *The Secret of the Self*, has recently been translated from the original Persian by Dr. Reynold Nicholson and published by Messrs. Whilst our native poet masters were rhyming to their intimate coteries about cats and corncrakes and other homely or unusual variations of Keatsian theme, there was written and published in Lahore this poem----- that no nostrum, neither of the jingo nor of the Salvationist, has wrought this wonder, but a poem that crystallites in its beauty the essential phases of modern philosophy making a unity of faith out of a multiplicity of ideas, a universal inspiration out of the esoteric logic of the schools (Read in *Ishrat* 241-242).

So it is the mystical ideal of Whitman and Iqbal that brings them on one level. Whether it is Transcendentalism or Sufism of Rumi both espouse the view that the Divine permeates all objects and the purpose of human life is to get in tuned with it (details in chapter 3). To understand the deeper implications of their concept of the self, it is important to understand their concept of the Divine.

In their poetry, Whitman, Rumi and Iqbal, employ an image of God mostly in a mystical and transcendental way. The essential theme of their all encompassing and wide ranging poetry is their longing for union with the divine. For these mystics, human kind, nature and the whole universe are images or attributes of God- the Divine Unity. Such a cosmic and universal force has different terms in different creeds and schools, in Hinduism *Brahman*, in Sufism “The Ultimate Ego or Al-Haq” and in Transcendentalism “Santa spirita” or “Over Soul”. Whitman affirms it:

Santa spirita, breather, life,
 Beyond the light, lighter than light,
 Beyond the flames of hell, joyous, leaping easily above hell,
 Beyond paradise, perfumed solely with mine own perfume,
 (LG: *Whispers of Heavenly Death*, Lines 35-40 P. 445)

In Whitman’s “A Persian Lesson”, the greybeard Sufi gives his last lesson to the young priests and students. He

teaches that God is everything:

Finally my children, to envelop each word, each part of the
rest

Allah is all, all, all--- is immanent in every life and object,

May--- be at many and many-a-more removes-yet Allah,

Allah, Allah is there---

It is the central urge in every atom.

(*LG: A Persian Lesson: Lines 7-10, P. 553*)

Whitman's lines have an affinity with Rumi's lines in
Mathnawi translated by Nicholson in *Selected Poems from Divan*:

The motion of every atom is towards its origin;

A man comes to be the thing on which he is bent

By the attraction of fondness and yearning, the soul and heart

Assume the qualities of the Beloved, who is the Soul of the
souls (Rumi in Nicholson 152).

And for Iqbal, God, the Ultimate Absolute Self,
permeates in each and every object of the universe. Many
verses of Iqbal affirm this fact. For instance he says in Lala-i-
Tur: Persian Couplet from *Payam-e-Masbriq*:

Every flora and fauna bears His hallmark,

Every flower-cup glows with his sparkling wine,

His branded mark burns like a lamp in every heart,

Thus he hasn't left a single soul in the dark (Iqbal in Umar 36)

Iqbal's view of God differed from a traditional
conception of the Divine. He believes that God has a creative
dynamic life that is both permanent and changing as creation
is the unfolding of the inner possibilities of God in a single
yet continuing act. Greek Philosophy upheld a static concept
of God as the one who had made the universe once for all
and then retired into a merely passive supervision of the
grand scheme of things. His concept of the Divine was
inspired from the Quranic proposition: "God is the light of
the Heavens and of the earth. His light is like a niche in
which is a lamp-the lamp encased in a glass --- the glass as it
were a star". (Al-Quran, Ch. 24 Verse 35). According to
Iqbal, this verse strengthens the view of God as the Ultimate

Ego. Iqbal considers God's creative energy as a dynamic driving force in the universe, revealing it every moment. God is present in full glory all the times. The concept of now and then, past and present and future lose meaning in Iqbal's understanding of God. So God is approachable all the times--
- the means to approach though different.

Whitman follows transcendentalists' tenant in his rejection of the narrow orthodox Christian concept of God. Transcendentalism⁴ espouses a broader conception of seeing God in His creation and not only as the Creator and hence relocates god head in the self. Emerson who helped to form a major portion of the transcendentalist philosophy did not want to escape from the physical world into the spiritual world but believed in having a union of both. He wrote: "It is better--- to look upon external beauty as Michelangelo did, as the frail and weary weed, in which God dresses the soul"(<<http://www.Journal of Philosophy 14html.com>>). Whitman like transcendentalists emphasizes the divine potential within every individual. In a seemingly pantheistic⁵ way, he sees God in the "faces of men and women". He clearly chants his vision of God:

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four, and
each moment then,
In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my own
face in the glass,
I find letters from God dropt in the streets, and everyone is
signed by God's name
And I leave them where they are, for I know that where so
ever I go,
Others will punctually come for ever and ever.

(LG: SOM: Section 48 Lines: 1284-1288)

He believes in the divine nature of the human self and the presence of the Divine not only in humankind but also in all creatures and nature they see and hear. His lines echo Emerson's lines: "I become a transparent eye-ball, I am

nothing, I see all, the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me, and I am part and particle of God” (Emerson in Joel 10)

In such a conception of the Divine he is also indebted to the Vedantic mysticism that aims at realization of individual soul’s identity with *Brahma* or Supreme soul which is alone transcendent and immanent. The Upanishad texts of ancient India describe a notion of God or Brahman that represents an all enfolding consciousness. The idea that God is everywhere permeates Whitman’s text. The above mentioned lines of “song of Myself” sounds similar to the idea of divinity expressed in the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna: “The image was consciousness, the altar was consciousness, the door sill was consciousness, and the marble floor was consciousness----- all was consciousness” (Cowley 243). It is this consciousness that makes Whitman see the beauty in all things and the need to celebrate all things, from the blade of grass to the breaking waves.

Despite this seeming affinity with Vedantic mysticism and transcendentalism, Whitman in fact departs from both. He is a mystic in his own right. There is a fundamental difference between Emerson and Whitman regarding their conception of the Divine:

Whitman experiences oneness within himself and ultimately a fraternal kinship with everything in nature and every other human being----whereas Emerson gazes upward at stars and outward at the tranquil landscape---- Whitman’s eye is drawn downward, his gaze so acute that he can see the brown ants beneath the leaves in the field (Joel & Sandra 173).

Similarly Whitman does not deny the reality of the physical world as Maya or deception of the senses (asserted by Vedantic Mysticism: Detail: Ch.1) nor does he relegate the reality of the body and the soul. For him the human self is not unreal. So where the yogis seek to abnegate the self to form a union with the Divine, Whitman asserts and celebrates. He is not a pantheist because creation for a

pantheist is not merely the handiwork of the creator; it is really the substance of the creator itself. In Pantheism, the created is equal with the creator. On the other hand Whitman says:

I believe in you my soul----
 And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
 And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own,
 And that the kelson of creation is love
 (LG: SOM: Section 5Lines:92-96)

Whitman's use of the "brother of my own" implies the individual identity of the created rather than being the substance of the creator.

For Whitman seeks participation in divine nature of all creation considering physical world of nature and the human self as essentially good. Such a mystical perception aligns him with radical Sufism of Rumi and in turn of Iqbal, who postulate a revolutionary dynamic concept of the relation of the Divine (the Self) with the self eulogizing both material and spiritual. Hence Whitman is more prone to **Pantheism**⁶ than **pantheism**:

O thou transcendent,
 Nameless, the fiber and the breath,
 Light of the light, shedding forth universe, thou centre of them,
 Thou mightier centre of true, the good, the loving,
 Thou moral spiritual fountain --- affection's sources-thou reservoir

Similar to Whitman, Rumi, as a panentheist, maintains that the divine can be both transcendent and immanent⁷ at the same time. For Rumi, the material world itself is not illusion. This physical world manifests the eternal truths. In Rumi's view-point, God might be everything without being identical with everything. Rumi asserts the individuality of God (His otherness) in the face of mystical communion through image of a veil:

So he (man) does not see the Master at this moment without a veil. So it is with all desires and affection, all loves and fondness which people have for every variety of things—father, mother, heaven, earth, gardens, places, branches of knowledge, acts, things to eat and drink. The man of God realizes that all these desires are the desire of God, and all those things are veils (Arberry *Discourses of Rumi* 46).

These veils and coverings become visible when man beholds the Divine. The very image or the metaphor of veil entails the separate identities of the human and the Divine.

The pantheistic strain is evident in Iqbal's early poetry and philosophy when he declared that the world in all its details "is the self-revelation of the Great I am" (Chaghatai 224). The fact, that Iqbal was at one time drawn to pantheistic mysticism, is referred to by Dr. McTaggart in a personal letter to the poet: "Have you not changed your position much? Surely, in the day when we used to talk philosophy together, you were much more of a pantheist" (Wahid 80-81). Later on Iqbal's views about the immanence of God underwent a profound change.

Iqbal emphasized the distinction of the finite ego (the self) from that of Infinite Ego (The Self) rather than the dissolution of the former into the latter. He challenged the pantheistic philosophy of wahadat-ul-wajood⁸ (Unity of Being) that made its way into Sufism through Neo-Platonism.⁹ The non-existence of the material world established by this philosophy led to the inevitable renunciation of the world. Iqbal vehemently rejected Plato and his influence on Sufi thought. For him "I" or the self or identity is the greatest truth. It does not belong to the realm of appearance and illusion. It is evident in Iqbal's verses in *Gabriel's Wings* cited by Pro. Muhammad Munawar in *Dimensions of Iqbal*:

If you say that the "I" is mere illusion-an appearance among appearances. Then tell me who is the subject of this illusion?

Look within and discover
 The world is visible
 Not even the intellect of an angel can
 comprehend it;
 The "I" is visible and needs no proof.
 Think a while and see thine own secret.
 The "I" is the truth and no illusion (Munawar 26-27).

Since all life is individual for Iqbal so he believes in the dualism of The Self and the self. He affirms this fact in *Reconstruction*: "I have conceived the Ultimate Reality as an Ego (self) and I must add now that from the Ultimate Ego only egos (selves) proceed....." (Iqbal 67). According to Iqbal, gnosis of God became dependent on realization of the self and maintenance of the self. In a way, The Self and the self become reciprocal to each other. In *Persian Psalms* he declares:

Far, Far from every other go,
 With the one Friend upon the road;
 Seek thou of God thy self to know,
 And seek in self hood for thy God,
 In the selfhood is hidden God head,
 Search O Ye careless..... (Ashraf 104).

The relation of the finite to the infinite is the one in which, as Iqbal says in *Reconstruction*, "true infinite does not exclude the finite but rather embraces the finite without effacing its finitude (Iqbal 27-28).

The ideal of the self-hood is hence not self-evasion and a move away from individuality but an assertion of it in the face of the Ultimate reality. In words of Robert Whittemore:

We can say Iqbal's conception is not pantheism but panentheism, understanding by this latter "the doctrine that the world is not identical with God (pantheism), not separate from God (Deism) but in God (theism), who in His divine nature transcends it (Ishrat 446).

In his criticism of Pantheism, Iqbal points out that the self is real or existent and its end cannot be self-absorption in

the Absolute, as the pantheists maintain. Dr. Ishrat Hassan Anver's evaluation of Iqbal's concept of the relation of the Divine or Ultimate Ego or The Self to the self expresses precisely Iqbal's thought:

We must hold that the Ultimate Ego holds the finite egos in His own being without obliterating their existence. The Ultimate Reality must be regarded as of the nature of the self. But further this self does not lie apart from the universe, as if separated by a space lying between Him and ourselves. The Ultimate Self, therefore, is not transcendent, as is conceived by the anthropomorphic theists. He is immanent, for He comprehends and encompasses the whole universe. But he is not immanent in the sense of the pantheists of the traditional type because He is a personal and not an impersonal reality..... He is in short immanent and transcendent both, and yet neither the one nor the other. Both immanence and transcendence are true of the ultimate Reality. But Iqbal emphasizes the transcendence of the Ultimate Ego rather than his immanence (Enver 72-73).

In many ways, Iqbal does not agree with pantheistic idea of union with God for its own sake. He holds that one should not annihilate one's self into the ocean of unity. One should seek eternal life by asserting the self. He even goes to the extent of saying that one should absorb God Himself within oneself.

Iqbal's conception of the individuality of the self in relation to the Divine and his idea of absorbing God in himself and supplementing the on going creative process is also found in Rumi. Rumi believed in personal immortality and individuality and says that man does not get absorbed in God like a drop of water in the ocean. Instead he retains his individuality like the lamp light in day-light. The idea of fortification of the self and assertion of "I" is found beautifully in the verses of Rumi translated and cited by Sh. Muhammad Ashraf in *Iqbal as a Thinker*.

If thou art a grain, little birds will pick thee up;
If thou art a bud, children will pluck thee off,

Conceal the grain and be wholly net; keep thy bud hidden and be the grass that grows on house tops (Ashraf 183)

And Iqbal following Rumi espouses in the following verses of *Zabur-e-Ajam* cited by Abu Sayeed Nurudin in *Iqbal's Attitude towards Sufism and His Unique Philosophy of Khudi- Self*:

“O’ traveler, live eternal die eternal,
The world which comes affront ---besiege it.
To be lost in His Ocean is not our end,
If thou behold Him, that is not annihilation
It is real perfection for the self to maintain its own” (Nurudin 36).

The mystical renderings of Whitman, Rumi and Iqbal coordinate on the point that it is through the realization of the Divine and a supreme experience of self-realization that the human being achieves immortality. All the three aspire for immortality. Whitman achieves this immortality and the culmination of the self by absorbing himself in God and yet retaining his identity. “This is not just ‘negative capability’, in Keats’ famous phrase: a loss of the self in the being of another, an act of total immersion and projection. It is as Whitman presents it, a discovery of the self in the other.....” (Gray 20). Moreover this union with the Divine does not result in the annihilation of the self because this unification as Annmarie Schimmel describes it is “nothing but unification in the consciousness and not in being. This consciousness is not presential but acquired” (Schimmel 92). The union comes in the realm of consciousness and spiritual perspective. Rumi and Iqbal find this culmination by absorbing God in their own self and so retaining their identity. The idea of absorbing God in the self means the cultivation of the attributes of God in the self. (Details in Ch. 3).

For both Whitman and Iqbal, the main reason for existence is to journey from the outward, the world without, to the inward, the world within, to return to the origin; to the transcendental centre. What can be inferred from their perception of the Divine is that the relation of the Divine to

the material world is both “transcendent” and “immanent”. They are prone to emphasize the transcendent aspect but in such a way that God does not become estranged and distant from His creation.

After the clear perception of the Divine, the next step for a mystic is to get in tuned with it ---to bring his self in communion with the Divine. On this pathway to divinity, one finds Whitman and Iqbal holding company at many points. Both reject “reason” for attaining the self hood. Leaving aside Rationalism and Empiricism, they turn to the inner depth of consciousness---- intuition.¹⁰ It is in intuition that the self is realized and revealed in all its essence and nature. Just by trusting empirical knowledge, one cannot bring the self in connection with The Self (as stated in Ch. 1). Such knowledge cannot explain this relation. This can only be discovered through intuition. Intuition of the self leads to the intuition of the Divine without obliterating our own self hood. In the act of intuition, the known is always apart from and other than the knower.

Following Emersonian lines, Whitman believes in intuition as a higher mode of cognition than reason, logic and science. Chales Mayo Eliss in his “Essay on Transcendentalism (1842) wrote:

The belief that we term transcendentalism maintains that man has ideas that come not through the five senses or power of reasoning but are either the result of direct revelation from God, his immediate inspiration or his immanent presence in the spiritual world (<[http:// www.transcendentalism.com](http://www.transcendentalism.com)>).

Hence the intuitive faculty instead of the rational one becomes the means for a conscious union of the individual self with the Divine Self. Indicating their being of the same mind, like Whitman, Rumi insisted that intuitive experience, not rational thought, brought him closest to God. In this regard, it’s interesting to view Rumi’s following poem:

Reason is the chain of travelers and lovers, my son;

break the chain and the way is plain and clear ahead, my son.
 Reason is a chain, heart a cheat, body a delusion, soul a veil;
 the way is hidden from all these heaviness, my son....
 (Arberry *Mystical Poems of Rumi* 115)

As pointed by Arasteh in *Rumi the Persian: Rebirth in Creativity and Love*, Rumi's way of life emphasized liberation from instinctive acts, the utilization of reason for practical purposes, and its usefulness for transcendental man to follow his real self. Reason can only help him reach the door of wakefulness. Rumi reiterates that this stage is not attained from knowledge gained in books or from listening to others (Arasteh 117).

In Iqbal's mystical philosophy, intuition is that veritable reality that reveals the true nature of the self. He opens up the door of Islamic Mysticism for a direct revelation of God, the mysteries of the self, its immortality and freedom ---all this is possible only through an extraordinary experience which Iqbal calls intuition. The theoretical consciousness attempts to grasp the Ultimate reality but is unable to do so as was concluded by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (mentioned in Ch. 1). Iqbal makes intuition as a more understandable idea by starting with the intuition of the self (bringing it closer to our experience) and this intuition leads to the intuition of the Ultimate Reality. Heart is the centre of this intuitive faculty. Iqbal says in his lectures in *Reconstruction*:

The heart is a kind of inner intuition or insight which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of reality other than those open to sense perception. It is according to the Quran, something which "sees" and its reports if properly interpreted are never false. We must not, however, regard it as a mysterious special faculty; it is rather a mode of dealing with Reality in which sensation, in the physiological sense of the word, does not play any part. Yet the vistas of experience thus opened to us are as real and concrete as any other experience. To describe it as psychic, mystical or supernatural does not detract from its value as experience (Iqbal 15).

Iqbal considers intuition superior to intellect as is evident in the following verse of Iqbal cited by Pro. Muhammad Iqbal in *The Poet's Vision and Magic of Words*:

Intellectual knowledge relishes research,
Love and intuitive knowledge relishes creativity (Iqbal 109).

He even dissociates himself from that philosophy that is the outcome of a distorted and incomplete vision or intuition of Reality. He once declared:

I am afraid; I have no philosophy to teach. As a matter of fact, I do not hate systems of philosophy nor do I trust principles and conclusions of philosophy. No man has condemned the human intellect more than I that is as applied to the ultimate realities of religion. No doubt I talk of things in which philosopher are also interested. But with me these things are matters of living experience and not of philosophic reasoning (Chaghatai 173).

So both Whitman and Iqbal believe in direct intuitive apprehension of the Reality ---- a mystical approach rather than the reasoning of the philosophers and logicians.

Another stepping stone for the realization of the self is love. Love is the light that guides and enlightens the path of the voyagers on the road of spirituality. To them, whatever they find and to whatever type of religion they attach themselves, they speak one language---- the language of love. It is the passion and force that harmonizes all discordant elements, resolves all contradictions and brings unity in diversity. Whitman's and Iqbal's mysticism has its primary goal to know love in all its forms. To them, it is the basis of all relations. Every human relationship is only a symbol of man's relationship to God--- the centre of Love. Again Rumi resonates in American tradition because his vision like Whitman's and Iqbal's reminds us of the radical love, overflowing openness and unquenchable aspiration that fervently fill in the pages of Whitman's and Iqbal's poetry. Rumi describes the feeling of oneness brought by love by

“closing the language door and opening the love window” (Rumi in Barks *The Soul of Rumi* 127). In another verse, translated by Barks in *The Essential Rumi*, Rumi advocates:

Stop the words now
 Open the window in the centre of your chest
 And let the spirit fly in and out.....
The Fount of Immortality
 In love is found (Barks 35).

Immortality of the self can be attained by the spark of love in Rumi’s metaphysics.

Whitman’s poetry is also an exuberant celebration of love — a cosmic force in all its forms and manifestations. The love of man for man, as well as man for woman forms a striking element in his poetry but indeed with Whitman love reaches out all boundaries beyond humanity into the cosmos. The tie that is to bind men together in spontaneous solidarity is love. Nowhere one pays tribute to love in an all embracing manner as does Whitman in “The Mystic Trumpeter”:

Blow again trumpeter and for thy theme,
 Take now the enclosing theme of all, the solvent and the setting,
 Love, that is pulse of all, the sustenance and the pang,
 The heart of man and woman all for love,
 No other theme but love—knitting, enclosing, all diffusing love, —
 I see the vast alembic ever working; I see and know the flames that heat the world,
 Love, that is all the earth to lovers—love, that mocks time,
 Love that is day and night, that is sun and moon and stars,
 Love, that is crimson, sumptuous, sick with perfume,
 No other words but words of love, no other thought but love,
 (LG: The Mystic Trumpeter: Section 5, lines 30-43 P. 469-470)

For Whitman, love makes man’s accession into wholeness possible. In the kingdom of love:

All is one, all is love, even hate is love; even flesh is spirit —
 Whitman is drunk with the new wine of love—with the

strange wine of infinitude— it is man's maximum state of consciousness, his highest state of spiritual being— it is reached through embracing love: And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks, to his own funeral drest in his own shroud (Bradley 845).

As a mystic, Whitman ascertains that it is through the realization of the divine love and seeking of supreme experience of self-realization that the human being dwells within the Supreme Being. God as the source of love is for the mystic a perfect image that can justify the concept of oneness and unity on universal scale. His verse speaks of universal harmony and love, optimism and joy and celebrates the outwardly mundane details of life through words electrified with love. The element of sexual love is unmistakably present and celebrated often:

I am he that aches with amorous love,
 Does the earth gravitate? Does not all matter, aching, attract
 all matter?
 So the body of me to all I meet or know
 (*LG: I am He that Aches with Love. P. 109*)

But it is an emotion directed beyond the singular human figure. This amorous love leads to an awareness of his unity with God, with others, and with nature. This unity is not attained by prayer or meditation (as is the case with Iqbal) but by sexual union which like poetry is a creative act. Whitman realizes the self through erotic acceptance of the body. This leads to the love of God and view of all humanity as one whole. The central structure in God's creation is love. Hence this emotion is interwoven with a divine element. It embraces an intimate and fecundating force incarnated with the human and yet it is beyond human. In words of Havelock Ellis in his essay "Whitman":

He has but to grasp love and comradeship -----He discovers at last that love and comradeship ----adhesiveness is, after all, the main thing, "base and final, too, for all metaphysics" deeper than religion, underneath Socrates and underneath Christ.

With a sound insight he finds the roots of the most universal love in the intimate and physical love of comrades and lovers (Bradley 809).

This celebration of love through the use of erotic imagery is found frequently in Whitman's verse:

I mind how once we lay, such a transparent summer morning,
 How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turned
 over upon me, ----
 Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge
 that pass all the argument of the earth,
 And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
 And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the
 women my sisters and lovers,
 And that kelson of the creation is love.

(LG. SOM: Section 5 Lines88-95)

For a mystic like Whitman, God is incarnated in humanity and his love for humankind can be taken as a metaphor to epitomize the love for the Divine Beloved. Whitman is not the first to merge the mystical and the erotic; in his *Divan: Shams Tabraiz*, Rumi manages to mix mysticism and the deeply spiritual with an eroticism that approaches the sublime. In his book *Walt Whitman*, Fredrich Schyberg captures the relation of the symbolic lover and beloved of Whiman and Rumi; Rumi's symbolic lover merges with the "Beloved" by embracing his spiritual friend Shams Tabriz and Whitman's symbolic lover merges with the "Beloved" in his relationship with his "Great Camerado:

At the end of the road in "Song of Myself", as the conclusion of all the wandering, the transformations and visions, there stand the Great Comerado Whom Whitman mentioned in section 45. We cannot fail to recall the Persian Rumi who also described his reunion with a friend as symbolic of his union with God. By coincidence in world literature, the result of similarity in disposition and way of thinking is extremely noteworthy in the connecting links of literary history.... (Schyberg 93).

So this realization of the unity of The Divine in terms of love serves as a milestone for the self in its journey towards The Self.

For Iqbal, journey to the self hood begins with love. Like Whitman, the word 'love' is used by Iqbal in a much broader and wider perspective. Love is an active force that is very seminal for strengthening the self. Iqbal defines it in his letter to Nicholson as "the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and ideals and it endeavors to realize them" (Nicholson xxv). Iqbal's philosophy is essentially a philosophy of love. Like Rumi, he reaches a dynamic idea of love leading to the attainment of human ideals as well as God's purpose in creation. Dr. Annemarie Schimmel writes in this connection:

To the problem of love a large part of Iqbal's poetical work is dedicated. Love is, in his terminology, the force, which brings man nigh to God and consolidates the ego (the self), and which sometimes even corresponds to intuition. It is the fiery elements which enables the growth of the personality, and without which real life cannot exist (Schimmel 102).

From love, the self acquires vitality and radiance:

The luminous point whose name is the self,
Is the life-spark beneath our dust.
By love it is made more lasting,
More living, more burning, more glowing
From love proceeds the radiance of its being,
And the development of its unknown possibilities
Its nature gathers fire from love,
Love instructs it to illuminate the world
The hardest rocks are shivered by love's glance;
Love of God at last becomes wholly God.
(The Secrets of the Self. P. 28)

Love is the fundamental urge of being. It is the pulsation and foundation of life. In "The Mosque of Cardoba" Iqbal pays tribute to love in the highest possible term:

Love is Gabriel's breath; love is Muhammad's strong heart,
 Love is the envoy of God; love is the utterance of God.
 Even our mortal clay, touched by love's ecstasy, glow;
 Love is new-pressed wine; love is the goblet of kings.
 Love is the priest of shrine; love is the commander of hosts,
 Love is the son of the road, counting a thousand homes
 Love is the plectrum that draws music from life's taut
 strings—
 Love is the Warmth of life; love is the radiance of life
 (Kiernan 38).

Iqbal's perception of love differs from its conventional view in Persian and Urdu poetry in the sense that Iqbal's love does not have anything common with gross sensuality but "it is a creative passion, high emotion and divine spark, enthusiasm for an ideal, ardent self-dedication or the force that drives the individual to realize himself though wrestling with the world and with God" (Kiernan 106). Iqbal perceives it on a metaphysical level and categorizes three stages of love as i- Love of God ii- Love of Prophet ii- And love of perfect men.

Love of God is the highest attainable ideal for a mystic:

The hardest rocks are shivered by love's glance;
 Love of God at last becomes wholly God,
 Imbue thine heart with the tincture of Allah
 Give honor and glory to love;
 (The Secrets of the Self,p.29)

Love of the Holy Prophet is the jewel of a Muslim's heart:

In the Muslim's heart is the home of Muhammad,
 All our glory is from the name of Muhammad.
 (The Secrets of the Self,p.30)

A perfect man is an embodiment of the love of God and the love of Prophet, his love in turn is blessed and favoring:

Transmute thy hand full of earth into gold,
 Kiss the threshold of Perfect Man.

His lovers are fairer than the fair
Sweeter and comelier and more beloved.

(The Secrets of the Self.p.29-30)

For Iqbal, without love, intellect and reason are meaningless and untamed. Love acts as guide to reason and intellect. In his poetry he denounces the purely intellectual and rational outlook towards life because if it is allowed to go unfettered, it would shatter the flow and continuity of forces that constitute life:

Love is the first guide for the reason, soul and vision,
If there is no love, the religion and code of life all
are the temples of ideas (Iqbal in Nuruddin 45).

Hence, love plays an important role in the development of the self; it is the power by which the self is fortified. It is this all embracing, broadening and ennobling notion of love that prevents the mysticism of Whitman and Iqbal from being narrow, orthodox, conventional and dogmatic. It is love that makes their appeal universal transcending the limits of cast, creed religion and even space and time.

The expanding and encompassing notion of love in Whitman's and Iqbal's poetry make them move from particular to general and general to particular respectively. And such a conception of love has led both to the vision of a "spiritual democracy" where the self becomes all selves and all selves become the self. Thus they become true spiritual democrats though there is an underlying difference in their manner and method of approaching the idea of spiritual democracy --- Whitman uses the inductive method ---moving from the individual (the microcosm) to the society (macrocosm) and in case of Iqbal it is deductive method moving from the community (the macrocosm) to the individual self (microcosm). (Details in Ch.3 in the analysis of the poems). They are eloquent advocates of spiritual democracy. This makes another point of connection between Iqbal and Whitman. Both emphasize individual virtue that can give rise to civic virtue. They aim at improving the masses

by improving the individual and vice versa.

On the surface level, Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* is highly subjective but paradoxically it is one of the most objective books in all literature----- as vacillating between the "Me Myself" and the "Kosmos". The self of the poet is of universal import. The poet himself becomes a type for the whole human race; mystically his identity is fused with that of his thousands of fellows:

And what I assume, you shall assume;
for every atom belonging to me, as good belongs to you
(*LG: SOM: Section 1, Line, 2-3. P.28*)

He is a microcosm of humanity ---the fleshy poet of the sensual Body and the mystical poet of the soul, the poet of everyman and the poet of the people and the poet of American Democracy. The opening line of *Leaves of Grass* speaks of Whitman's enterprise:

One's-Self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse
(*LG: One's Self I Sing: Lines 1-2. P. 1*)

Such utterances remarkably highlight Whitman's awareness of the boldness and originality of his enterprise. He raises the question essential not only for the Americans of his time but also for all people, in all nations: how can one be a self, a separate person and at the same time be a citizen, a member of a group that also has an identity. This dual sense of the self: I celebrate myself (*LG: SOM: Section 1. Line1*) and of the social whole indicated by En-masse (be it the United States or the whole humanity which he also loved) is central to the entirety of *Leaves of Grass*.

Throughout the "Song of Myself" Whitman simultaneously integrates the concept of himself as an individual, completely unique in the universe with a sense of himself as a composite of all life, of a kind of divine watcher observing the central oneness of everyone within the context

of their own myriad individualities. "I am" is one of the most revealing phenomenon of his poetry, considers Ezra Greenspan, ---Whitman's poetic "I" gave a new meaning to the concept of self determination. It effectively answered the question "who am I" with the response: I am anyone, any where, any time (Whether it be 1855, 1955, or 2055)" (Greenspan 102).

In Whitman's world, the individual is a microcosm of a macrocosm (society). Just as society can not reject a part of society and remain whole, the individual cannot reject a part of himself and remain whole. He explicates this through many analogies but one of the most powerful images is that of the grass ---that grows in single blades and clusters. "The grass thus becomes a graphic representation of Whitman's central concept of democracy--- individuality in balance with the mass, distinguished singleness in harmony with massive grouping" (J. Miller *Walt Whitman* 115).

His idea of the self and the individual is also linked up with his idea of democracy. He is both a singer of the self as well as a trumpeter of democracy because he believes that the individual can attain self-hood only in a free society. Whitman has used the term "Personalism" in *Democratic Vistas* to indicate the fusion of the individual with the community in an ideal democracy. This idea is in accord with Whitman's notion of the self. His notion of democracy deconstructs the subjectivity in Whitman's poetry. Henry Alonzo Myers in his essay "spiritual Democracy, 1855-1856" enunciates the democratic ideas of Whitman by tracing and justifying their spiritual roots:

Out of American democracy of 1855, Walt Whitman constructed an inner complement to the outer world, a spiritual democracy governed by two principles, one the unlimited individual and, the other the equality of individuals - ---- In society, obvious differences exist between the laborer and the President, between the Magdalen and the Madonna, these are however the surface turmoils and coverings;

underneath them lies the community of equal and infinite souls, equal and infinite in that each soul is commensurate with the world: you and your soul all things regardless of estimation...(Budd 41).

For Whitman, democracy is the spiritual equalizing factor of the soul. In his gospel of democracy, the most appealing ideal is that of equality that leads to the fraternal relationship between the individuals and then the individual and the Over-Soul. His concept of democracy is utterly different from its common meaning. His democratic community is a community of men related by organic satisfaction in work, love and play. In the poem “Starting from Paumanok, he again upholds democracy in the highest sense:

Democracy! Near at hand to you a throat is now
 Inflating itself and joyfully singing
 Ma-femme! For the brood beyond us and of us
 For those who belong here and those to come.

(*LG: Staring From Paumanok: Section 12, Lines.156-58*)

For him, the love of comrades paves the path for the spiritual democracy. In this poem “For You O’ Democracy”, he affirms:

Come, I will make continent indissoluble,
 I will make divine magnetic lands,
 With love of comrades,
 With the life long love of comrades----
 For you these from me, O Democracy----

(*LG: For You O Democracy: Lines .1-5*)

Whitman’s concept of democracy assures complete harmony between the individual and the society. But over and above, he is a spiritual democrat who sees in true democracy the seeds of universal peace, tolerance and brotherhood. Karl Shapiro’s remarks are significant in this regard:

A great poet is not merely the poet of his nation but a poet of all peoples. Whitman, who had little enough reward for his book, and has little enough today, looked beyond literature

and beyond greatness of art. His true personality went out beyond America, beyond religions, and even beyond mankind (Bradley 951).

He was an uncompromising apostle of equality and fraternity. Although he always kept his feet firmly planted on the ground, his ideal of democracy was not absolutely earth-bound; he believed in the divine average and yet he wanted to work for the common salvation of his fellow human beings.

Iqbal's poetry also resonates with the democratic ideals of a higher order. A study of Iqbal's poetry and prose reveals his cherished ideal of a balance and harmony between the individual and the community. He aspires for a society in which the individual would be able to develop his personality to its fullest. Iqbal's perfect Man¹¹ is essentially a unique individual who can constitute unique society. Malik Iqbal Hafeez writes in this regard: "the individual personality must take a social path and devote itself to serve society. This does not at all mean the loss of its individuality on the contrary; the social path enables personality to realize itself" (Hafeez 273).

A deep reading of Iqbal's poetry reveals that the idea of self hood or ego was first conceived by Iqbal as a sociological notion. Afterwards he sought to provide an individualistic ground to it. His notion of the self has social connotation. But social does not mean that it is not applicable to the individual. But this very self hood of an individual has social implications. Unless the personality of individual is strengthened, a strong and stable society in its real sense cannot come into existence. The affirmation of one's self is also an affirmation of others. When the self is manifested; it automatically posits the presence of self other than one's own. The individual reflects in himself the diversity of society, and the diversity of society embodies its unity in the individual:

For man, belonging to society is a blessing.

Society contributes to the perfection of his qualities.
 When man identifies with society
 He is like a drop becoming the ocean within the ocean
 The separate individual knows no goals or ideas
 And cannot find uses for his abilities (Iqbal in Hafeez 273).

In *The Secrets of the Self*, he tries to awaken the sense of self-hood that is the sense of human identity in the individual as well as society. For his notion of the strengthening of an individual's identity should not be interpreted in the sense of imprisoning one's being with the walls constructed around the self and living in isolation, cut off from other human beings. Neither has it meant that one should lose identity among other selves in society. Rather an individual should live in close relationship with the society.

Similar to Whitman's notion of spiritual democracy, Iqbal states democracy "as a spiritual principle based on the assumption that every human being is a centre of latent power, the possibilities of which can be developed by cultivating a certain type of character" (Sherwani 124). Iqbal, by his spiritual democracy, means a democracy where laws of God Almighty are observed and enforced. Laws of God in their meaning and spirit are, nearest to man's nature. In his article "The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam" he gives his definition of democracy:

Humanity needs three things today --- a spiritual interpretation of the universe, spiritual emancipation of the individual and basic principles of universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis ---- (Munawar Iqbal: *On Human Perfection* 138).

As for the terminological difference between the concept of the self of Whitman and Iqbal, it can be deduced that for Whitman, the self is composite of the body and the soul. The soul has its manifestation in body and hence body is also sacred. The body becomes sacred by the infusion of the spirit of God. Whitman exuberantly proclaims:

Divine am I inside and out, and
 I make holy whatever I touch or touched from,
 The scent of these arm-pits aroma finer than prayer,
 This head more than churches, bibles and all the creeds.
 (LG: SOM: Section 24. Lines.525-28)

For Whitman, the soul is immanent in and united with the body. Dualistic interpretation tends towards a division in which the soul is elevated as the spiritual, real essence of the individual and the body is denigrated as merely material. Whitman rejects this division and considers body and soul as equal:

Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that is
 not my soul,
 Lack one lacks both and the unseen is proved by the seen,
 (LG: SOM: Section 3, Lines. 52-53)

He celebrates the body:

O my Body! I believe the likes of
 you stand or fall with the likes of the soul,
 (And that they are the souls).....
 And if the body were not the soul, what is the soul?
 (LG: Sing Body Electric. Section 1)

Hence for Whitman, the mystical truth is directly discerned through the union of the body and the soul ----- this union is a pathway to divinity.

The self for Iqbal is a metaphysical reality. In Iqbal's own words: "It is an emotional unity of a bright thing of the conscience by which all the human ideas and inspirations are enlightened. This is an eternal reality which is a binding force for the scattered and unlimited mental states" (Nuruddin 32). Iqbal considers the self as having two sides-----"the efficient and the appreciative" (Iqbal 48) though it retains its "unity as totality" (Iqbal 48). The efficient side of the self deals with practical side of daily life and is related to ordinary space and time. The appreciative side of the self is the hidden "I" which appears only by deeper analysis of conscious experience.

Iqbal explains it in his lectures as: “It is only in the moments of profound meditation, when the efficient self is in abeyance, that we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner center of experience” (Iqbal 48). The appreciative self, so to speak, is the centre of mystical enterprise.

Iqbal’s use of the word “self” is different from its use in Persian poetry as “vanity or pomp”. He always uses it in metaphysical term: “Metaphysically the word self (khudi) is used in the sense of an indescribable feeling of “I” which forms the basis of the uniqueness of each individual” (Iqbal in Razzaqi 211). Its only aim is self realization and self assertion.

Whether the self is composite of body and soul (in case of Whitman) or a metaphysical reality consisting of efficient and appreciative self (in case of Iqbal), both Whitman and Iqbal present the self as moving back and forth between the conscious and unconscious, between the spiritual and the physical, between itself and its immortal source—the Over-Soul” or “the Ultimate Ego”. Therefore the self celebrated in the poems of Whitman and Iqbal is a universal self. This metaphysical and the universal self provides the key to the most fundamental affinities between these poets.

Notes and References

¹ Rumi—a mystic poet of the 12th century produced a prolific range of inspiring and devotional poetry which encapsulates the Sufi experience of union with the divine. Rumi’s poetry is a reflection of his inner consciousness ---- Love is frequent subject of Rumi’s poems, descriptions of seemingly romantic love are an illusion to the all encompassing pure, divine love.

² Emerson’s term for The ultimate Reality --- God

³ German thinker and writer, Nietzsche, was a multi-faceted genius. His conception of Superman presented in his theory of “will to power” influenced some of modern and postmodern philosophers. Dissatisfied with the Christian way of life, Nietzsche tried the secular philosophy of the

day---- democracy, humanitarianism, socialism---but found them wanting. But in his conception of Superman, the idea of individual freedom is so overwhelming that the individual's relation to society and the universe becomes extremely vague. With Nietzsche, power is the only criterion and his conception of struggle for existence is cruel, pitiless and tyrannical.

⁴ American Transcendentalism was an important movement in philosophy and literature that flourished during the early to middle of the 19th century (1836-1860). It began as a reform movement, in the Unitarian church, extending the views of an indwelling God and the significance of intuitive thought. Transcendentalism affirms Kant's principle of intuitive knowledge derived from the senses. But transcendentalists extended the concept of transcendental knowledge, in a way whose validity Kant had specifically denied, to include an intuitive cognizance of moral and other truths that transcend the limits of human sense experience. It is based on the concept of transcendence, the rising to a state beyond sense experiences.

⁵ Broadly defined pantheism is the view that "God is everything and everything is God". According to the *Encyclopedia Americana*, "Several varieties of pantheism are acknowledged. Some strictly equate God and the universe. Of these, absolute pantheism defines God as the basic reality and the universe merely as the way he appears. Pantheism signifies the belief that every existing entity is, only one Being; and that all other forms of reality are either modes (or appearances) of it or identical with it."

⁶ Pantheism' says that the universe is included in God but that God is more than the universe. It is used to describe the view that the world is a finite creation within the infinite being of God. Pantheism unlike pantheism, which holds to the divine immanence, maintains that the divine can be both transcendent and immanent at the same time. In other words, God might be in everything without being identical with everything. In addition, the pantheist focuses his/her worship on God in the mind and soul. Pantheism is the doctrine that God includes the world as a part, though not the whole, of "his" being

⁷ 'Transcendence' and 'Immanence': these terms describe the manner in which God is related to the world. 'Transcendence' indicates that God cannot be identified with the world but is infinitely above and beyond it. There are different forms of transcendence: Firstly, God is ontologically transcendent, meaning that God is a self-contained reality that is not dependent on anything else for its existence. Ontological transcendence also describes the nature of God's, being unlike that of his creation, eternal and infinite. Secondly, God is epistemologically transcendent; meaning that God's essential nature remains incomprehensible to humankind, for a human's mind is simply incapable of grasping the

Divine. Epistemological transcendence is expressed theologically in terms of holiness, mystery and incomprehensibility. 'Immanence' denotes God's indwelling and omnipresence in the world. Since the world is utterly dependent upon God, his constant presence is a necessity for its continued existence. Theologically, equilibrium must be established between two poles of transcendence and immanence, for if immanence is too heavily emphasized there is a danger of pantheism, and if transcendence is emphasized God is in danger of becoming too distant from His creation.

⁸ *Wahdat al-wujud* (Oneness of Being or Unity of Existence): a technical term of Sufism, which, it is said, has historical connections with the school of Ibn al-Arabi, the great Andalusian Sufi theologian. The expression is built from two words: *wahda* and *wujud*. Islamic theory and practice is grounded in the *shahada* or the giving witness that "there is no god but God" (in Arberry 1995, 54) it is the statement through which God's Unity is declared. The basic sense of *tawhid* or declaration of God's Unity is that everything in creation derives from God, who is One Reality.

⁹ Neo Platonism came into existence as an independent school of thought in the third century A.D by way of interpretations and explanations of the thoughts and ideas of the old Greek Philosopher Plato. This philosophy holds: Existence is actually one and that existence is the main source of all other existence ----it maintains that all things of the world have emanated from "One Being" as a manifestation of "One Being" --- God Himself is the Universe.

¹⁰ Intuition is held to be a faculty of knowledge which is unique and is of different kind from thought and perception that made some to doubt its validity. But the fact is that it is the faculty of knowledge like other faculties. It is qualitatively of the same nature as our ordinary faculties. It is as objection's sense perceptions.

¹¹ Iqbal considers the Perfect Man as an evolutionary stage in the progress of the whole human race. Man according to him is progressing towards divinity. And more individual and unique Man is the more he partakes of God's qualities. Physically and spiritually, man is a self-contained centre but he is not yet a complete individual. The greater his distance from God less is his individuality.

THE VOYAGE OF SELF-DISCOVERY

It is the chief end of man's earthly existence to discover and identify himself with his true self. By doing so he will come to an intuitive knowledge of the Divine Ground and so apprehend the truth as it really is, and not as to our limited human perception it appears to be (Happold 20).

Getting in tuned with the infinite is the highest human spiritual and mystical ideal. It is attainable only through a voyage of self-discovery—a process of growth of the selfhood. By passing through different stages or levels of the self, one becomes conscious of the Higher Reality – the Divine Self. This process can also be called as the process of enlightenment. Irrespective of any religion, it is an accepted mystical fact that self knowledge leads to all knowledge.

The present chapter traces this process of mystical enlightenment and self-discovery as encompassed by Whitman in “Song of Myself” and Allama Muhammad Iqbal in *The Secrets of the Self*. I analyze these poems as a journey of the self through the stages of awakening, purification and illumination with some more intermediary stages as described by Evelyn Underhill in her book *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*. The end point reached by these two mystic luminaries Whitman and Iqbal is the same though the roads taken differ. Overall what immortalizes and universalizes their poems is a state of consciousness defined by their sense of unity and oneness with the universe, overwhelming ecstasy and feeling of love characterized by a huge widening of the sense of the self.

3.1 An Analysis of Whitman's "Song of Myself":

Bibles may convey and priests expound, but it is exclusively for the noiseless operation of one's isolated self to enter the pure ether of veneration, reach the divine levels and commune with the unutterable (Allen 195).

(Whitman: Democratic Vistas)

Some critics interpret Whitman's "Song of Myself" as a merely journalistic report of popular culture of 1850s. For instance Henry James goes so far as to say that "Whitman's verse is an offence to art" (E.H. Miller 16-17). Harvey O'Higgin attacks Whitman as a mediocre journalist, a borrower of the ideas of other authors and a writer of anonymous blurbs of his own works (O' Higgin 23). Descriptions preferring a transcendental interpretation have been read by such critics as imaginative flights of fancy, but before the publication of "Song of Myself" Whitman's notebooks are full of sidelong references to his visionary experiences (Allen *Walt Whitman and the World* 395). He is conscious of an inherent divinity of the self that is self-sufficient in order and harmony. In *Democratic Vistas*, he elaborates on the effects of his mystical experience and its relationship with the traditional church: "upon the inducement of visionary states, churches, sermons melt away like vapours" (Allen *Walt Whitman* 195). Indeed in "Song of Myself" the poet's experience itself transcends every other realm.

In my analysis of Whitman's "Song of Myself", along with tracing Whitman's debt to dynamics of Sufism, I attempt a new angle oriented around the transpersonal perspective. Regarded as the fourth force in contemporary psychology (as already explained in Ch.1 p.34), the transpersonal field recognizes the non-ordinary state of consciousness to be identified. The psychological paradigm that encapsulates these moments of intense union with the Divine is "transpersonal" because it acknowledges their existence. Otherwise, relegation of such experiences is regularly employed by contesting interpretations in the three other fields of psychology (see details in ch.1 p.31-32).

Transpersonal interpretation of Whitman's "Song of Myself" is further supported by Maslow's explication of "peak experience" mentioned in his theory of Self-actualization.¹ Whitman's mystical experience would be seen in the light of psychological interpretation of such an experience described by Maslow in his book *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences*. Maslow describes "peak experience" as sudden feeling of intense happiness and well being, and possibly the awareness of the ultimate truth and unity of all things. Such an experience is accompanied by a heightened sense of awareness. The experience fills the individual with wonder and awe. He feels at one with the world and is pleased with it; the individual sees and identifies the ultimate truth or the essence of all things. I breakdown the important elements of peak experience to describe and identify their presence in Whitman's "Song of Myself".

The process of growth of the selfhood in "Song of Myself" stands as a confession and testament not only for Whitman's self but for all selves. His self refers to whole humanity. The poem is not about a self- idolizing author who claims enlightenment just for himself; instead he is playing a symphony that encompasses the whole humanity as its individual notes. Whitman's experience is the experience of all alike because it has universal parameters. Whitman's journey of the self hood can be divided into four stages. In the first stage, he becomes conscious of his self; in the second his concept of the self expands to include the souls of all men; in the third it embraces God and in the fourth the entire universe.

From the very beginning, Whitman invites the readers to become his fellows in the voyage of self-discovery while establishing a primary atomic connection:

I celebrate myself and sing myself
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belong to you

(LG: SOM: Section 1, lines 1-3, P. 28)

In the journey of the selfhood the distinction between “I” and “you” blurs to become one. Whitman is optimistic about the mystical and divine potential of every man. It is not the prerogative of the few but can be discovered by all by expanding their self to “the other, another and then to God” (Eliot 200). Whitman addresses the world upon a pedestal, inviting all to stand and explore with him the unknown----- What is unknown is the realization of the self-hood. James Miller states in *Walt Whitman* in this regard: “His self – celebration is to serve as a signal for each man to discover his own selfhood” (J.Miller 79). In Whitman’s view, everyone is capable of self realization. In his domain of the self, the “average” becomes the “divine average’ because of its potential for self-realization. Whitman himself suggested in one of his anonymous reviews of the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, his motive for focusing attention on the self in his poetry:

Other poets celebrate great events, persons, romances, wars, loves, passions, the victories and power of their country, or some real of imagined incident – and polish their work and come to conclusions, and satisfy the reader. This poet (Whitman) celebrates natural propensities in himself and that is the way he celebrates all (J.Miller 67).

“Song of Myself” envisions the “I” enraptured by senses, embracing all people and places from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. More central to his transpersonal flight is the view of the poem as a means of expressing his “self” in universal terms. In essence Whitman’s goal is to erase or ignore all boundaries, geographical and temporal, in an effort to bring forth the true spirit of humanity. Whitman’s individual being is recognized as the centre of entire universe. A cosmic consciousness manifests and the individual of Whitman’s imagination is finally attuned with the infinite. And when the depth of this realization is achieved, there is an onset of fervent understanding. In normal consciousness, the phrase *God is love* is no more than a wishful positive thinking;

from the perspective of mystical consciousness, love, in all the senses of the word, imbibes everything.

In the first stage of its growth, the self enters into a kind of mystical state to be conscious of itself. It is through his physical contact with the external world that Whitman makes his entry into that state:

I loaf and invite my soul,
I lean and loaf at my ease observing a spear of summer grass
(*LG: SOM, Section 1, Lines 4-5, P. 28*)

The poet loafs on the grass and invites his soul to appear. The use of the words “loaf” and “lean” implies the possibility of such an experience for each and every individual while the “ease” epitomizes his serene, relaxed and casual mood of festivity at the sight of a single spear of the summer grass. Here spear of the summer grass is symbolic of the fact that the mysteries of existence are not contained in far fetched objects but in the common and familiar. The contact with the spear initiates the mystical journey of the poet. The soul is the beloved that is invited to lie and loaf on the grass and loaf with the lover, the body. Whitman bids the soul remember their first union:

I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning—
(*LG: SOM, Section 5, lines 87-90, P. 33*)

Here the erotic imagery of laying together is a metaphor for the mystical copulation of the soul with the body that lends spirituality to the self. Whitman employs natural elements as means of revealing his mystical ideas. It is the physical that leads him to the metaphysical world. He uses nature to acknowledge and understand God through self-knowledge. Through physical (sexual) energy Whitman identifies himself with the fundamental generative forces in nature, the life force that unites all into one creative whole. Whitman expresses the joy he feels through his senses. He is enthralled by the ecstasy of his physical sensations. In words of David Daiches:

Sensation for Whitman was not merely a bridge between the self and the external world; it was a method of learning to know the external world from inside, so that it ceases to be external and becomes part of one 's self (Daiches 65).

With this entry into the mystical state, the self starts asserting its identity, declares its separateness from civilization and its closeness to nature:

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes
(*LG: SOM*, section 2, line 13, P.29)

Here perfumes are symbols of other individual selves; but outdoors, the earth's atmosphere denotes the Universal Self. He is over enthusiastic to the point of madness to be in contact with this Universal Soul. He wants to be in touch with it by shedding all guises. In fact, the poet sees a kind of spiritual undressing pre-requisite for getting attuned to this Universal Self:

I will go to the bank by the wood and become undisguised
and naked;
I am mad for it to be in contact with me
(*LG: SOM*, Section 2, lines 19-20, P. 29)

The union of the soul with the body leads to an experience bestowing the seeker with an intuitive knowledge. Whitman uses a great deal of sexual imagery to describe his identification and eventual ecstatic union with his soul and then the Universal Soul. It is interesting that "Song of Myself" begins with "I" and ends with "you". It is as if he found that the secret of overcoming the duality in his life was to merge with the unity that underlies all creation. The soul and the body in unity can have mystical experience so they are not to be segregated. Together they can have a vision of God. The unity that Whitman talks about here is the unity of body and soul. Hence the role of sex is clearly metaphoric here: a union of the body and the soul. Held in a trance like grip of the soul he declares emphatically:

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge
 that
 Pass all the argument of the earth;
 And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own;
 And that all the men ever born are also my brother, and the
 women my sister and lovers,
 And the kelson of creation is love

(*LG: SOM*, section 5, lines 91-97, P.33)

The poet has a feeling of fraternity and oneness with God and all his fellowmen that has led him to this wider communion with the divine, human and natural orders. Rather than losing touch with the external reality, “he sees clearly the limitless array of leaves, brown ants, wells, mossy scabs, heaped stones and plants. He sees that even the humblest of objects contains the infinite universe” (Woodress 263).

And limitless are leaves stiff or drooping in the field
 And brown ants in little wells beneath them,
 And mossy scabs of the worm fence and heaped stones----

(*LG: SOM*, Section 5, Lines 96-98, P. 32)

This entry into the mystical state acquaints the self with a revelation of and a participation in the larger dynamics of the cosmos. Like the gravity that pulls all together, the self is pulled into union with others through the miraculous power of love. This participation departs Whitman from the Hindu ascetics and brings him closer to dynamic Sufism propagated by Rumi and Iqbal (Details in 2nd Ch.) Like them it is through the love of beautiful forms that Whitman tries to understand the essence of things. He believes that the external expression is the key to understanding the inner world by evolving mechanism of love, as Rumi interprets that the universe and its evolution arises from the process of love. In fact “love” becomes the only vehicle of transformation. So by love “the individual both disperses and fulfils himself, both scatters his self and concentrates it” (Daiches 66). In “Song of Myself” this expansion, concentration, transcendence and manifestation of the self can be clearly seen in the course of Whitman’s voyage.

This entry into the mystical state is followed by a wonderful awakening of the self to the mysteries of universe. This awakening is epitomized in the emphatic question:

What is grass?

(*LG: SOM, Section 6, Lines 98, P.33*)

Here grass seems to represent the unknowable. The seeker guesses that:

The grass is itself a child, the produced babe of vegetation
Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic

(*LG: SOM, Section 6, Lines 104-106, P.33*)

Another possibility may be:

--- it is the handkerchief of the Lord

(*LG: SOM, Section 6, Line 103, P. 33*)

The bunch of grass in the child's hand becomes a symbol of regeneration in nature. But it also signifies a common material that links disparate people together: grass, the ultimate symbol of democracy, grows everywhere. Grass suggests the divinity latent in the ordinary things. The nature and significance of grass unfolds the themes of death and immortality, for grass is symbolic of the ongoing cycle of life present in nature. No one really dies. Even:

The smallest sprout shows there is really no death
All goes onward and outward nothing collapses

(*LG: SOM, Section 6, Lines 126,129, P. 34-5*)

Grass becomes an image of God, a language underlying everything, and God in macrocosmic as well as microcosmic sense. It is the secret of man's relationship with the Divine. With this kind of awakening of the self, the seeker can easily discover life in all creatures:

He may perceive that the very life essence has changed from inorganic to organic, the organic substance to living animals, to man; he then perceives new form of life beyond this form --the seeker then experiences a unity in diversity of forms and longs for intimacy (Arasteh 77).

Awakening of the self gives rise to its continual expansion with a declaration:

I ---- am not contained between my hat and boots
 (LG: SOM, Section. 7, Lines. 133, P. 35)

Whitman's self carries universal dimension that sees all and condemns nothing. This, for Whitman is the dynamic of becoming human. The self goes forth to unite with the other as a part of its own identity. Through his bipolar movement the macrocosm becomes personalized and a microcosmic self is enriched. Through the experience of becoming many, the richness of one is increased; through diversity one paradoxically finds its unity as Whitman affirms:

I resist anything better than my own diversity,
 Breathe the air but leave plenty after me,
 And am not stuck up, and am in my place----
 (LG: SOM, Section. 16, Lines. 349-351, P. 45)

Hence the self has ability to recognize its place within the larger order but at the same time it conforms itself to the whole of that order. He exclaims:

In me the caresser of life wherever moving, backward as well
 as forward sluing,
 To niches aside and junior bending, not a person or object
 missing,
 Absorbing all to myself and for this song.
 (LG: SOM, Section. 13, Lines. 232-235, P. 40)

As a caresser of life, Whitman aligns himself with every bit of creation and finds divinity permeating through all objects. As David Daiches has observed: "Whitman's vision is essentially cosmic, its identifying gaze moves ever outward from the self, and the observing and imagining self moves progressively across American and across the world" (Daiches 74).

Whitman's mystic vision includes identifying with things, becoming the things. Hence for him, the drama of self-identification is to be completed by experiencing both the

world within and the world without. Here again Whitman departs from the Indian mysticism that considers the material world as an illusion (Details explained in chapter1) In Whitman's mysticism it is a medium to attain the selfhood in its Sufi context.

Whitman's belief in the equality and union of all things in creation does not exclude his awareness of man's capability and potential. This brings him close to Iqbal's concept of man, the one who attains selfhood, as an active co-worker in the eternal process of creation. Man is always the perfection that forever exceeds all other perfections in creation. Whitman often moves towards understanding of his own place in the order of things:

What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest is Me,
 Me going in for my chances, spending for vast returns,
(LG; SOM, Section 14, Lines 259-601, P. 41)

The human's role in evolution is to love nature, to elevate it and to carry the earth process forward as Whitman affirms in 1872 Preface to *Leaves of Grass*:

We see, as in the universe of the material kosmos , after meteorological vegetable and animal cycles, man at last arises, born through them, to prove them, concentrate them, to turn upon them with wonder and love—to command them, adorn them and carry them upwards in superior realms (Bradley 745).

The long catalogue, of all the seeker sees, conveys a feeling of infinite extension. It combines the irreconcilable opposites of Whitman's experience of cosmic consciousness: mortal body, and immortal soul; finite matter and unbounded mystical consciousness. The catalogue shows seeker's movement from "the singular to the cosmic, from loafing individual to active spirit" (Budd 187) from knowing the self to The Self. And reaching the climax of the self – awakening, he utters emphatically:

Of every hue and caste I am of every rank and religion,
 A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker,
 Prisoner, fancy man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.

(LG: SOM, Section 16, Lines 346-348, P. 45)

Hence this awakening of the self originates an intense feeling of joy and exaltation as Underhill elucidates in *Mysticism*: “--- The awakening of the self is to a new and more active plane of being, new and more personal relations with Reality; hence to a new and more real work which it must do” (Underhill 192).

The process of purification of the self starts with the awakening and expansion of the self into all inclusive consciousness. It is a cleansing stage that begins with self-examination. In case of Whitman, purification involves an acceptance of body and all its functions. This acceptance reflects his goal to achieve mystical experience through physical reality. This is in opposition to the traditional mystical concept of the realization of the self through mortification of the self and instead there is an assertion and glorification of the self. In his perception of the self, the self is purified not through purgation but through acceptance of the physical followed by the mergence of physical reality with the universal reality.

In traditional mystical experience, the purgation involves detachment from the things of the world including material and physical desires and mortification. “The death of selfhood in its narrow individualistic sense is then, the primary object of mortification” (Undrehill 221) In Whitman’s case, this process of purgation is by transfiguration and an assertion of the self with a feeling of self-sufficiency:

I exist as I am that is enough,
 If no other in the world be aware I sit content
 One world is aware and by far the largest to me that is, myself
 (LG: SOM, Section 20, Lines 413-417, P. 48)

He calls himself “Cosmos” meaning a universal self who loves all—a representative of all humanity, the voices of diverse people speak through him—voices of men, animals and even instincts:

Through me many long dumb voices,
Voices of the interminable generations of prisoners and slaves----

Through me many long dumb voices,
Voices of sexes and lusts, voices veiled and I remove the veil,
Voices indecent by me clarified and transfigured.

(*LG: SOM, Section 24, Lines 508, 516-518, P. 52-53*)

He speaks of lust and the flesh also. Each part of the body is a miracle because of the divinity of the soul residing in it. So body is extolled in excitement:

I believe in the flesh and the appetites,
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles and each part and tag of me, is a miracle.

Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touched from

The scent of these arm-pits aroma finer than prayer

This head more than churches, bibles and all the creeds.

(*LG: SOM, Section 24, Lines 522-528, P. 53*)

Here Whitman speaks in confident tone asserting his divinity that is the outcome of the process of purification. Maslow affirms this feeling of elevation as an important aspect of peak experience:

In peak experience cognition a person is most easily seen as a person, in himself, by himself, uniquely and idiosyncratically as if he were the sole member of his class. Of course, this is a very common aspect not only of religious experience but of most theologies as well, i.e., the person is unique, the person is sacred, one person in principle is worth as much as any other person, everyone is a child of God, etc. (<http://www.druglibrary.org/shaffer/lsd/maslow.htm>).

In the process of purification, Whitman is in a quest for an affirmation of his body’s sensory awareness. The sense of

touch also brings him the joy. He is overwhelmed by it and he asks:

Is this the touch? Quivering me to a new identity,
 Flames and ether making a rush for my veins----
 ----- on all sides,
 prurient provokers stiffening my limb,
 Straining the udder of my heart for its with held drip.

(*LG: SOM, Section 28, Lines 619-620, P. 57*)

Human sensuality thus becomes the conduit that bridges the spirit and the flesh:

Apparently, “the prurient provokers” who threaten to rob the “udder” of the Whitman’s heart of its “withheld drip” have failed; he has retained enough of his semen to “super think”. Perhaps the person was only fantasizing the sensation of sexual energy while conserving the flow of his blood in order to conjure up the “full-sized” and “golden”(Budd 286).

The union of the spirit with the body thus becomes a natural, common pathway to divinity. The emphasis is on his search for individuality, an aspect of his evolving self.

His self-assertion and self appraisal is one of the keynote of his realization of the selfhood:

Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan, the son,
 Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking and breeding,
 No sentimentalist, no stander above men or women or apart
 from them

(*LG: SOM, Section 24, Lines 1-4, P. 52*)

His awareness of the universe, or cosmic consciousness is expressed when he calls himself a “Kosmos”. He accepts all life naked or bare, noble or ignoble, refined and crude, beautiful and ugly, painful and ecstatic; both are aspects of his vision, which has an organic unity like the unity of the body and the soul. Maslow describes it as:

The world seen in the peak- experience is seen only as beautiful, good, desirable, worthwhile etc. and is never experienced as evil or undesirable. The world is

accepted.....evil itself is accepted and understood and seen in its proper place in the whole, as belonging there, as unavoidable, as necessary, and therefore, as proper.....It is as if peak-experience reconciled the people to the presence of evil in the world (<http://www.druglibrary.org/shaffer/lsd/maslow.htm>)

Whitman realizes that physical and spiritual both are the epitome of divinity rather the physical leads to the spiritual. His self is a microcosm for the macrocosmic Self:

His well-known description of himself emphasizes the paradox: in being most himself, his complete bodily self without repression, he becomes the proper equal to others and can, by the exercise of the sympathetic imagination, identify himself with them---. To be capable of the proper kind of imaginative expansion, the self must not deny any of its aspects. All human functions, all human capabilities are sacred, and the fulfilled personality who is at once most himself and most capable of entering into the lives of others—denies none (Daiches 66).

Whitman is an earthbound mystic in a sense that he beholds no visions of visible things in heaven or hell unseen to other men. He rather sees with extraordinary precision the realities of our earth but he sees them in a mystic mood as symbols of the impalpable and spiritual. They are hieroglyphs most clear cut, most brilliant and still expressive of something unforeseen. All phenomena are texts that reveal the unity and holiness of and the interrelationship between the soul and the body, the mind and the matter, each and all.

Now the seeker of the selfhood becomes receptive to the multitude of sounds and sights that betokens humility. In an ecstatic mood having “acquired a sort of microscopic vision” (Woodress 265), he gains a sense of the wonder even of the smallest being:

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey work of stars,
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren-----

(LG: SOM, Section 31, Lines 662-664, P. 59)

Here Whitman celebrates the minutest wonders of nature. He compares the importance of a leaf of grass to the celestial bodies. He gives extreme significance to everything.....every minute detail in the great scheme of things. So he has an overwhelming sense of oneness with all the things.....with the entire universe. In the simplest terms, the message here is to take time to smell the roses, to notice the beauty of “little things” and to realize the wonders and miracles of life.

At this point, the purification stage bleeds over into the illumination stage in which the self begins to experience inner voices and visions. The self is illumined with genuine truths, the truths that cannot be found in conventional or rational ways. In such a mood of illumination, Whitman declares:

All truths wait in all things,
They neither hasten their own delivery nor resist it,
They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon,
The insignificant is as big to me as any---
Logic and sermons never convince,
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul.

(*LG*: SOM, Section 30, Lines 648-654, P. 58)

The evident truth is the immanence of God in His creation if only the self is attuned to it. The word “wait” suggests that the self must be receptive to truths otherwise they remain undiscovered, for they do not “hasten their delivery”. No “hidden guides” are required to find these truths; they stand ready for anyone willing to see. Those who rely on “philosopher’s logic” or “minister’s sermons” to reveal the “hidden truths” are missing the point, for these truths are self-evident when the perception reaches to a heightened level. Underhill explains it in these words:

The self perceives an added significance and reality in all natural things: is often convinced that it knows at last “the secret of the world”. In Blake’s words “the doors of perception are cleaned” so that “everything appears to man as it is infinite (Underhill 240).

The self experiences a spiritual illumination to finally achieve perfection. Now he understands the power of his vision which ranges everywhere:

Space and Time! Now I see it is true, what I guessed at,
 What I guessed when I loaf on the grass-----
 I skirt sierras, my palm covers continents,
 I am afoot with my vision.

(*LG: SOM, Section 33, Lines 710-715, P. 61*)

This vision includes all times and all modes of life, it is a journey of intense optimism in which the poet identifies himself with the mankind. He seems to be transcending the borders of space and time:

His secret of power is identification. Since everything emanates from the universal soul, and since his own soul is of the same essence, he can identify himself with every object and with every person living or dead, heroic or criminal. Thus he is massacred with the Texans at Goliad, he dies on the cross and rises again (Bazalgette 117).

Everything appears to be:

Replenished with supreme power, one of an average unending procession

(*LG: SOM, Section 38, Lines 969-970, P. 72*)

The catalogue of people and places extending over to five sections from 33-38 is an attempt to encompass the totality. Ordinary life becomes permeated with mystical significance. Whitman identifies himself with every being and every object and his identification forms an integral part of what "I am":

I take part; I see and hear the whole

(*LG: SOM, Section 33, Lines 864, P.67*)

The process of identification arises out of belief that his self is a part of the Universal Self:

He does not draw aside, like the ascetics, to contemplate his own self. More and more he consorts to his friends, the

people—stage drivers, boatmen, travelers, men of street. There is something intensified, more fervent, in the affection drawing him to them (Bazalgette 117).

It is Whitman's embraciveness that puts him as a mystic of the first rank. Even the presence of suffering and evil did not diminish existence for him. The horizon of his love and compassion is large. The mystical knowledge makes him realize the pain and stark realities of life:

Agonies are one of my changes of garments,
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself
become the wounded person
(*LG: SOM, Section 33, Lines 843-845, P. 67*)

and

Askers embody themselves in me and I am embodied in them
I project my hat, sit sham-faced and beg
(*LG: SOM, Section 37, Lines 959-960, P. 72*)

In fact, the realization of his own self brings him to the realization of other selves as well. It acquaints him with the pain and suffering of others. So quite paradoxically, as Maslow explains in his book, the person with self realization-- -- the one who has discovered his identity is the one who can become selfless: "It has also been discovered that precisely those persons who have the clearest and strongest identity are exactly the ones who are most able to transcend the ego or the self to become selfless" (<<http://www.druglibrary.org/shaffer/lsd/maslow.htm>>).

The illumination of the self leads to the ultimate goal of the mystic--- the unmediated union with God. This point at which the soul attains oneness with God is the mystical ecstasy in which all barriers seem to sweep away and a new insight is imparted to the seeker. This moment of the self is the moment of getting in tuned with the infinite. The self purified of all its grossness comprehends the Divine Reality. The inspired and illumined self venerates The Self. The result is a beatitude and joy inexplicable. The self is conscious of its

newly acquired, holy and superhuman power resulting from the union of the self with the Divine. In a state of spiritual absorption and mergence, it is endowed with divine and superhuman powers. Whitman assumes the role of the prophet of new religion, incorporating all religions. He has achieved almost god like perception and this has also been identified as one of the higher dimension of the mystical experience. In Maslow's words: "The peak experience seems to lift us to greater than normal heights so that we can see and perceive in a higher than usual way. We become larger, greater, stronger, bigger, taller people and tend to perceive accordingly"

(<<http://www.druglibrary.org/shaffer/lsd/maslow.htm>>).

This is what Whitman declares emphatically:

Magnifying and apply come I ---
 Taking myself the exact dimension of Jehovah,
 Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules his
 grandson,
 Buying drafts of Osiris , Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha,
 In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on leaf, the
 crucifix engraved

(*LG: SOM, Section 41, Lines 1026-1032, P. 75*)

He is the healer, comforter and a lover of humanity who merges with all other identities. He practices all religions as a precursor of spiritual democracy:

I do not despise you priests; all time the world over,
 My faith is the greatest of faiths and the least of faiths,
 Enclosing worship ancient and modern and all between
 ancient and modern,

(*LG: SOM, Section 43, Lines 1096-1099, P. 78*)

The mergence of the self with The Self and yet retaining and being conscious of its individuality is the key-note of Whitman's mystical experience and the realization of the self-hood. It aligns him with the sufi consciousness of Rumi and Iqbal. The self that can expand to include the diversity of space can also expand to include the diversity of the ages that

went before:

I am an acme of things accomplished, and I am encloser of things,
 ---- to be
 All forces have been steadily employed to complete and delight me,
 Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.
 (LG: SOM, Section 44, Lines 1148-1149, P. 81)

The self is conscious of its confrontation with limitless time and space and this insight makes it ask fundamental questions of existence:

The clock indicates the moment—but what does eternity indicate,
 (LG: SOM, Section 44, Lines 1136, P. 80)

And

I open my scuttle at night and see the far sprinkled systems.
 (LG: SOM, Section 45, Lines 1184, P. 82)

And these questions lead him to an intuitive belief:

I know I have the best of time and space and was never measured,
 And never will be measured
 (LG: SOM, Section 46, Lines 1201-1202, P. 83)

Such a feeling of eternity irrespective of space and time characterizes the voyager of the self. Maslow brings into focus this fact:

In the peak-experience there is a very characteristic disorientation in time and space, or even lack of consciousness of time and space. Phrased positively, this is like experiencing universality and eternity. This kind of timelessness and spacelessness contrasts very sharply with normal experience. The person in the peak-experience may feel a day passing as if it were a minute or also a minute so intensely lived that it might feel like a day or a year or an eternity even
 (<<http://www.druglibrary.org/shaffer/lsd/maslow.htm>>).

Towards the end of this journey of the evolution of the self, the seeker beholds the Divine Beloved:

My rendezvous is appointed, it is certain,
 The Lord will be there and wait till I come on perfect terms,
 The great Comrado, the lover true for whom I pine, will be
 there,

(*LG*: SOM, Section 45, Lines 1197-1200, P. 83)

The moment of acquaintance of the self with The Self is the moment of revelation and inspiration. It directs the self to the reality of immortality and closeness of creative essence—God. It enters the climax of its being and sees God immanent everywhere so he is not curious about Him. He clearly chants his vision of God:

And I say to mankind, be not curious about God,
 I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God
 not in the least
 Nor no I understand and who there can be more wonderful
 than myself
 Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
 I see something of God each hour of the twenty four and
 each moment then,
 In the faces of men and women, I see God, and in my own
 face in the glass,

(*LG*: SOM, Section 48, Lines 1277-1285, P. 86-87)

Here, one may say that Whitman like a Sufi reaches to the “Shahud” one of the sufi stages, where he can see the Absolute. He knows that the Divine essential nature is not fully comprehensible to humankind however it brings his self to such a level that it can experience its divine nature by being in love with Him—the love that makes the self eternal and immortal:

And as to you Death and you bitter hug of mortality, it is idle
 to Try to alarm me

(*LG*: SOM, Section 49, Lines 1288-1289, P. 87)

He is not afraid of death because death, too, is a creation of God and through it one can reach God. Hence this

moment of union with the Divine is the climax of the growth of the selfhood that attunes it with the infinite. As a result, the self becomes a part of eternal life process. Eternity is endless and so is the self. Hence it is in a constant flux – evolving every moment. The culmination of the poet’s mystical experience is revealed in his vision of eternal life. Life is neither chaotic nor finite; it is harmonious, reflecting the union of the poet’s individual soul with the Divine Soul.

In the last two sections of “Song of Myself” the journey and quest for the selfhood have now come full circle. He began by describing to loaf on the grass and ends by:

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from grass I love,
 If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles.
 (LG: SOM, Section 52, Lines 1346, P. 89)

Now it is the time of emergence from mystical trance with an invitation to the readers to launch their own mystical journey:

I stop somewhere waiting for you
 (LG: SOM, Section 52, Line 1364, P.89)

“Somewhere waiting” implies that the poet’s own journey has also not ended. Zweig notes “The grass will continue to grow, the singer will be waiting for you; the cycles of death and resurrection, like the cycle of day and night, will continue. The poem’s end will not be a true ending, merely an articulation of endlessness” (Zweig 261). The last word, according to E. H. Miller will probably never be found, for, as he claims, “Whitman himself saw to that!” The poem, like the poet, will always be waiting for us. As Miller beautifully notes, “The sound of the poet’s voice fades into a very faint but most seductive pianissimo, a whisper that itches at our ears.” (E.H Miller 139). This emergence from the mystical trance does not stop the process of evolution of the self and it continues eternally.

The mystical experiences of all the seekers are ineffable and so is that of Whitman: “It follows from this that its

quality must be directly experienced; it cannot be imparted or transferred to others --- no one can make clear to another who has never had a certain feeling, in what the quality or worth of it consists” (W. James 371). Whitman also finds him at a loss to describe the real nature of his experience:

I do not know it – it is without name—it is a word unsaid;
It is not in any dictionary, utterance, and symbol.

(*LG*: SOM, Section 50, Lines 1314-1315, P. 88)

Like all other mystic poets, Whitman also comes across the problem of expressing the unsubstantial impalpable reality in language. So this unsubstantial is suggested through images as “the unseen is proved by the seen” (SOM, Section 3, line: 54). Whitman’s metaphoric symbolic language is designated to impart new knowledge (mystical knowledge) that can not be expressed through literal language. His revelation is the result of mystical experience, an experience characterized by its ineffability. So the language plays the substitutive function and also imparts a new vision of reality.

There is no language that can really embody his experience but one thing he knows is:

It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—it is eternal
Life—it is Happiness

(*LG*: SOM, Section 50, Lines 1321-1322, P. 88)

Realizing the ineffability, obscurity and paradoxical nature of his experience he declares emphatically:

Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes)

(*LG*: SOM, Section 51, Lines: 24-26)

Whitman has discarded all pretenses. Awakened, Whitman sees the fullness he contains and recognizes his own godliness and vastness of multitudes. This knowing happens in a moment, a moment precious and eternal in which all things are interconnected, alive and infinite. These

contradictions are the outcome of the diversity that he contains. For Carlisle, Whitman not only accepts that he is simply a poet and not a philosopher here, but he also “accepts the illogicalities and contradictions in reality in order to find that new way of dealing with the multiplicity and crises of existence.” (Carlisle 204). What makes him contain multitude is his identification with the cosmic and life forces more than ever:

He soars in space until his elbows rest in sea- gaps and his palm cover continents”. Yet far or near looking down at the grass or up at the stars, he is reminded of “perpetual transfers and promotions” of the soul in its endless journey. This finally is the meaning of self a link in the great chain of life (Allen *Walt Whitman* 7).

So his mystical experience results in an embrace of life in all its diversity rather than negate it. This embraciveness makes him assert his self rather than renounce it as is the case with traditional mystics. So his is dynamic mysticism that links him with the dynamic sufism of Iqbal.

The poem beings in the self, returns repeatedly to the self and at the end come around again to the self, a circle of circles. The final line epitomizes the fact that his experience of unbounded self hood is not eccentric, but universal. It is not just his song but the song of all. In the first section he told the reader to assume what he assumed and in the last section “he stops somewhere waiting” he promises that the reader too will one day discover the unbounded self.

Whitman’s mystical journey can be interpreted as a movement from “**intrapersonal**” (a union of the body and the soul) to “**interpersonal**” (a sense of oneness and embraciveness with the humanity) finally leading him to “**transpersonal**” (having a vision of the Higher Reality). Throughout the poem, the self constantly expands, as Whitman draws and re-draws the boundary of “myself” in greater and greater circles, encompassing people, creatures, time, space, and God.

Being capable of carrying the entire world within him, he can create an elaborate analogy about the spiritual democracy which would, like the self, be capable of containing the whole world. This gives a freedom to the self to manifest itself. Freedom celebrated in the poem is also reflected in the freedom of his verse. Whitman with his bold, free verse pattern rejects the system of regularity. So his great long irregular lines rumble on and on, every verse declaring its independence from those old restrictive systems. The freedom of the verse is only one sign of how seriously Whitman takes the project of freedom at large with the promise that all living things are created free and equal. This is the spirit of true democracy.

3.2 An Analysis of Allama Iqbal's Poem *The Secrets of the Self*

Just as the conception of the selfhood in Whitman and Iqbal converges and diverges at many points (as mentioned in Ch. 2) so are their processes of self-realization. Getting in tuned with the infinite is the ideal for both but their manner of describing it is utterly different. In case of Whitman (as is seen in the analysis), he describes and shares with the readers the whole process of his mystical experience and the realization of the selfhood. He speaks in a more personal idiom. In case of Iqbal, he suggests the way of approaching the Higher Reality not in a traditional mystical way but by suggesting ways and means to the reader about achieving selfhood like the one who has mastered the self. His tone is more didactic than that of Whitman. In other words, Whitman deals with the process of self-realization on personal level and thus generalizes it for every individual (inductive approach). Iqbal deals with the process of self-realization on a social level and thus individualizes it (deductive approach). All these intricate elements would be looked up in Iqbal's poem *The Secrets of the Self*.

In my analysis of the poem, I focus on the stages of the

growth of selfhood as delineated by Iqbal while comparing them with that of Whitman's in "Song of Myself". It is also worth-while to compare Maslow's concept of self-actualization with that of Iqbal. Maslow, like Iqbal believes that man possesses an inner urge to self-actualize. He shares with Iqbal the view that self-exploration and action are necessary steps for self-actualization. The deeper the self-exploration, the closer one comes to self-actualization. In their concept of self-actualization both Iqbal and Maslow have formulated the hierarchic stages in which it can be achieved. Both believe that the human self has potential for achieving the higher level of being that Iqbal terms as "Perfect Man" and that Maslow terms as "Self-actualizing person".

The Secrets of the Self (first published in 1915) marks the beginning of a new stage in Iqbal's creative work. *The Secrets* is connected with the turning point of Iqbal's outlook which took place after the poet's return from Europe. The poem contains Iqbal's innovative doctrine of the self; and all the subsequent works of Iqbal supplemented and further refined this central concept.. Before giving an interpretation of the poem, it is but seminal to look into what Iqbal himself said about the poem. While dictating his views to Nazir Niazi in 1937, Iqbal explicitly stated that the poem is based on two principles:

"a) that the personality is the central fact of the universe; b) That personality "I am" is the central fact in the constitution of man. The first principle is described in the Old Testament "as the great I am". The second principle of the smaller or dependent I-am is variously described in the Quran as weak or ignorant yet it is also described as the bearer of the Divine trust---. It has the quality of growth as well as corruption, it has the power to expand by absorbing the elements of the universe of which it appears to be an insignificant part, it has also the power of absorbing the attributes of God" (Wahid *Thoughts and Reflection of Iqbal* 243).

This personal comment of Iqbal serves as a gateway to the vistas of meaning contained in the poem. The central idea that Iqbal stresses is that knowing oneself is in fact an immediate perception of God. He focuses his attention on the individual “I”, thus shifting the emphasis from divine to human. The path of recognition of the self is the path that takes one to a contact with the Absolute. As he writes in introduction to *The Secrets of the Self* translated by Nicholson:

Physically and spiritually man is self-contained centre, but he is yet a complete individual. The greater his distance from God, the less is his individuality. He who comes nearest to God is the complete person. Nor that he is finally absorbed in God. On the contrary he absorbs God in himself (Nicholson xix).

Subverting the traditional concept of mystical experience, Iqbal revolutionized it as for him the fully developed self does not dissolve even when the reality is seen face to face in mystical experience. So the retention of individuality is the highest point of the development of the self. And what he actually means by the idea of “absorbing God in himself” is to cultivate and create the attributes of God and by doing this “the man becomes unique by becoming more and more like the most unique individual” (Nicholson viii). It is only after the realization of one’s own self that the real meaning and purpose of human existence dawns upon consciousness.²

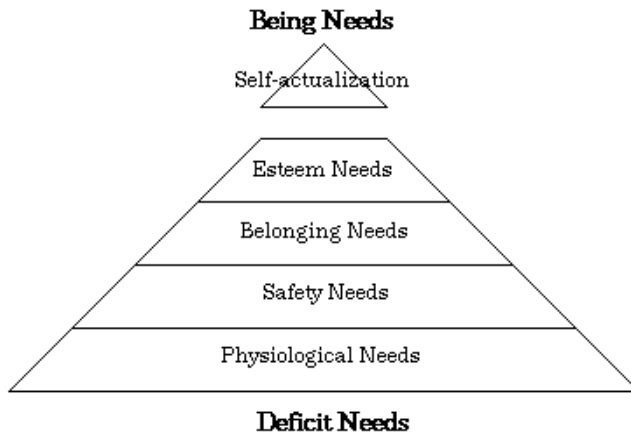
In Psychology, the Humanistic school with its most prominent figure Maslow recognizes this human potential for self actualization. Maslow defines self-actualization as:

ongoing actualization of potentials, capacities and talents, as fulfillment of mission (or call, fate, destiny or vocation), as fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person’s own intrinsic nature, as an unceasing trend towards unity, integration or synergy within the person (Cloninger 441).

Maslow postulated a hierarchical theory that is often represented as a pyramid, with the lower levels representing

lower needs, and the upper point representing the need for self-actualization. Susan c. Cloninger explains in *Theories of Personality: understanding Persons*: “This hierarchy consists of five levels: four levels of deficiency motivation and a final, highly developed level called being motivation or self-actualization” (Cloninger 436). Maslow divides these needs into two main classes: D-Needs and B-Needs: D-Needs mean that whenever there is deficiency in the fulfillment of these needs there is a motivation to eliminate them. B-Needs are the self actualizing needs concerned with the need to know Truth.

Fig: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs



Maslow saw human needs arranged like a ladder. The highest one is the need for self-actualization but that cannot be reached without stepping the other needs of this ladder. The most basic needs, at the bottom, are physical—air, water food, sex. Then there are the safety and psychological needs— for belonging, love and acceptance. At the top are self-actualization needs— the need to fulfill oneself. And at this level, most of the self-actualization people have “peak experience” (Maslow’s term defined in ch. 3.1). “Peak experiences” are profound mystical moments of love,

understanding, happiness or rapture, when a person feels more whole, alive, self-sufficient and yet a part of the world, more aware of truth, justice, harmony, goodness and so on.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is based on the universal fact of human nature. Man's spiritual needs are undeniable and without moral and ethical concepts life is empty. There is a lot of truth in the maxim that "man does not live by bread alone;" though the converse is as much true and as much applicable that man cannot live without bread. The human self can develop and prosper only when his basic needs are properly and adequately supplied. He must have sufficient clothing and a house to live. These are the primary adjuncts of life and their absence retards the growth of the self. These are the basic physical demands and the need for these is not only pressing but universal.

Iqbal also takes into consideration the importance of these needs. He does not deny them as is the case with the traditional mysticism based on asceticism. As study of Iqbal's poetry and prose reveals that he believes that the individual has potential to develop his personality to its full capacity. The society plays a dominant role in developing human personality. Disconnected from the environment, man's capacities remain undeveloped. The self cannot develop without the mutual invasion of the self and the environment. Iqbal states in *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*:

It is our reflective contact with the temporal flux of things which train us for an intellectual vision of the non-temporal. Reality lives in its own appearances, and such a being as man, who has to maintain his life in an obstructing environment, cannot afford to ignore the visible (Iqbal 14).

Like Whitman, Iqbal emphasizes the paramount place of the physical world in an effort to realize the spiritual ideal of growth of the self-hood.

Similar to Whitman, Iqbal's whole conception of the growth of the selfhood consists of three levels:

- i. the self and “I am ness” (intrapersonal)
- ii. the self and the other (interpersonal)
- iii. the self and God (transpersonal)

These levels have been wonderfully described by Iqbal in *Javed Nama* in an excerpt that he himself placed at the end of his philosophic masterpiece *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*:

Art thou in the stage of “life”, “death” or “death-in-life”.
 Invoke the aid of three witnesses to verify thy station.
 The first witness is thine own consciousness –
 -see thyself, then with thine own light
 The second witness is the consciousness of another ego--
 See thyself, then with the light of an ego other than thee.
 See thyself then with God’s light----
 If thou standest unshaken in front of this light,
 Consider thyself as living and eternal as He!
 That man only is real who dares----
 Dares to see God face the face----
 No one can stand unshaken in His presence;
 And he who can, verily, he is pure gold,
 Art thou a mere particle of dust?
 Tighten the knot of thy ego; ----
 Rechisel then, thine ancient frame;
 And build up a new being.
 Such being is real being;
 Or else thy ego is mere ring of smokes (Iqbal 157).

The first level of the self and “I am ness” can be likened to the first (lowermost) level of physiological needs in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. At this level the self is just conscious of its own self. This “I am ness” marks the first awakening of the self. The self cannot think beyond itself until and unless the physiological needs are satisfied. In this connection, Maslow’s observation is worth mentioning:

When the body has an absolute, unsatisfied needs for food, all other needs will be pushed into background---- such a state may even change a person’s view of the future, for the seriously hungry person, freedom, love, community, feeling,

respect, philosophy and so on may all be waved aside and the person may think if only he or she is guaranteed food for the rest of life, happiness will be complete. But once hunger is satisfied the person will immediately begin to think of other needs (Hall 203).

So these needs are indispensable for the body to function.

The second level of “the self and the other” can be likened to the psychological and social needs in Maslow’s theory. After the satiation of the biological or physiological needs, the self yearns for security and stability. Here, at this level, the self is able to recognize the other that is to see oneself in the light of the other. When physiological and safety needs are fairly satisfied as Maslow suggests “People have belongingness and love needs --- they feel the need that they belong somewhere instead of being transient or newcomers---”(Hall 204). So without the relationship with society, the self cannot develop properly. Relatedness is a need of belongingness, which starts from our natural ties with our mother and reaches to universal comradeship with all human beings. In his book *Iqbal Today* Dr. Nazir Qaiser relates the idea:

This need is behind all phenomenon which constitute the whole gamut of intimate human relation of all passions which are called love in the broadest sense of the word--- there is only one passion which satisfies man’s need to unite himself with the world, and to acquire at the same time a sense of integrity and individuality and this is love (Qaiser 107).

The development of the self does not take place in a void or seclusion. Iqbal also affirms this universal comradeship with all human beings in the following verse cited by Nazir Qaiser in *Iqbal Today*:

The individual owes his existence to social cogency and is nothing aloof,
The wave exists only in river and is absolutely nothing outside
(Qaiser 105).

The third level of “the self and God” is the recognition of God--- to see oneself in the light of God. This level can be likened to the “Need of self-actualization” in Maslow’s theory. When all other needs are satisfied, Maslow states: “A new discontent and restlessness will develop unless the individual is doing he individually is fitted for. A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write” (Hall 206). So in Maslow’s terms, at the level of self-actualization, an individual is able to explore his creative potential. This sense of creativity makes him a co-worker with God in Iqbal’s terms. For Iqbal, the self actualization is the cultivation of God in human self. Dr. Javed Iqbal writes in this connection: “Iqbal through the constant strengthening of ego (self) expects man to become a Divine Being in creating a more perfect universe” (J.Iqbal 11). It is the pinnacle of self-actualization and self-realization that endows the self with the moments of great awe, understanding and rapture as characterized by Maslow. Peak experiences may be creative periods or they may be of contemplative nature. Maslow explains:

During a peak experience, the individual not only experiences an expansion of self but also a sense of unity and meaningfulness in his/her existence. For that moment the world appears to be complete, and he or she is at one with it. After the experience is over and the person has returned to the routine of everyday living, the quality that transforms one’s understanding so that things do not seem to be quite the same afterward (Maslow in Kaiser *A Criticism of Western Psychology and Psychotherapy and Iqbal’s Approach* 96).

Iqbal’s “Perfect Man” at the highest level of self-realization attains a spiritual power. The absorption of the Divine attributes makes the Perfect Man closer to God. Dr. Anne Marrie Schimmel rightly observes: “The faithful who has realized in himself the Divine call, and who has consolidated his ego (self) so much that he is able to have a person-to-person encounter with his creator is, for Iqbal, the Perfect Man, the Free Man” (Schimmel in Kaiser *A Criticism*

of Western Psychology and Psychotherapy and Iqbal's Approach 117). He is capable of getting himself in tuned to the Higher Reality in mystical experience. Iqbal delineates the dimensions of such an experience in *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* in detail:

The mystic state brings us into contact with the total passage of Reality in which all the diverse stimuli merge into one another and form a single unanalysable unity in which the ordinary distinction of subject and object does not exist---the mystic state is a moment of intimate association with a unique other self---(Iqbal 23-24).

This intimate contact with the Divine whole makes the self all embracing and all encompassing at one with the whole humanity. As Maslow affirms:

All mystical or peak experiences are the same in their essence and have always been the same; all religions are the same in their essence and always have been the same---. As a matter of fact, I can go so far as to say that this intrinsic core experience is a meeting ground for Mohammedans, Christians, for scientists and artists, for men and for women. (<<http://www.druglibrary.org/shaffer/lsd/maslow.htm>>)

So the self attains its highest goal by becoming deeply related to God making possible a union of the temporal and the eternal. When one becomes aware of it, his knowledge leads him to know that he has an intimate relation to his world. He then knows that the world has been created for him and he is for the world. His self-knowledge is transformed into action with full involvement into world's affairs and not an annihilation of it. Iqbal expounds this onward marching of the self towards its realization very comprehensively in *The Secrets of the Self*. In ongoing pages, this growth of the self would be traced in Iqbal's poem.

In *The Secrets of the Self*, Iqbal has pictured the infinite potentialities of the human self. He formulates the hierarchic stages in which it can be achieved. "In the poem he has defined what an individual life is, what is its motive power, in

what way it should be developed, what is its goal, and how that goal is to be reached” (Ali 208). The creative unfolding of the human self is at the heart of Iqbal’s concept of self in the poem. He believes that the function of the human self is to strengthen it to such an extent that it becomes co-creator and co-worker with God Himself, involved in the creative unfolding of the universe around him.

At the start of the poem Iqbal, like Whitman, invites the readers and gives a call for realization of the self-hood:

This bell calls other travelers to take the road,
 No one hath told the secret which I will tell or threaded a
 pearl of thought like mine come, if thou would’st know the
 secret of everlasting life!
 Come, if thou would’st win both earth and heaven!
 Heaven taught me his lore,
 I cannot hide it from comrades.

(The Secrets of the Self: Lines. 42-43, 67-72 P. 4-6)

In a confident and candid tone, the poet invites the readers to taste the secret of eternal life that lies in the realization of the self-hood. Moreover he is certain and sure of the fact that the “bell” he is ringing would be responded positively and this assurance comes from his own strength that he has gathered after mastering the self. The use of the word “comrades” again reminds one of Whitman’s use of the same word with the spirit of fraternity and bond of love that binds and holds the whole creation and brings them on one level.

After his motivating and inspiring call, Iqbal prepares the reader for an entry into the process of the realization of self-hood and that can be equated to the entry into mystical state in case of Whitman:

And advance hotly on a new quest
 And become known as the champion of a new spirit:
 Take a draught of love’s pure wine.
 Strike the chords of thine heart and rouse of tumultuous
 strain.

(The Secrets of the Self: Line 88-90, 118-120 P. 8, 10-11)

Here Iqbal has given a clue to the reader that the pathway to the realization of the self is demanding and it calls for a life of action and love. Iqbal also explains it in the introductory note to *The Secret of the Self*:

Personality is a state of tension and can continue only if that state is maintained, if the state of tension is not maintained, relaxation will ensue--- that which tends to maintain the state of tension tends to make us immortal (Nicholson xxi).

In case of Whitman, the inspiration to enter into the mystical state begins by “loafing” on the grass, here for Iqbal, it is Rumi who inspires him to take a voyage of the selfhood:

His soul is the flaming furnace
I am but as the spark that gleams for a moment
His wine overwhelmed my goblet---

(*The Secrets of the Self*: Lines 96-100, P. 9)

Enriched and infused with this inspiration, the chord in his heart is touched:

I rose like music from the string
To prepare a paradise for the ear
I unveiled its wondrous secret.

(*The Secrets of the Self*: Lines 147-150, P. 13)

Iqbal acknowledges that it is the spirited verse of Rumi that has inspired him to delve deep into the secret of the self. Rumi’s verse has moved him to listen to the symphonies of the soul, its music that serves as the “paradise of ear” for him. He is enthralled and elated at the prospects of such a journey.

Before letting the reader to start the voyage, he makes them conscious of the all pervasive and all embracing power of the self thus “showing that the system of the universe originates in the self, and that the continuation of the life of all individuals depends on strengthening the self” (Iqbal in Nicholson 16):

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.
 A hundred worlds are hidden in its essence:
 Self-affirmation brings Not-self to light.

(*The Secrets of the Self*, Lines 84-92 P 16)

Iqbal regards the existence of nature relative to the self, if there is no self there can be no Not-self. “The Not-self has thus the signet of relativity impressed upon it and only exists because the self affirms itself” (Ali 209). So the Not-Self has its identification because of the self. He believes:

This the nature of the self to manifest itself
 in every atom slumbers the might of the Self

(*The Secret of the Self*, Lines 227-230 P. 19)

He has firm faith in the hidden potentiality of the self. Using beautiful similes he poses a deep-seated faith in the expansion of the self:

When a drop of water gets of self's lesson by heart,
 It makes its worthless existence a pearl
 And when the grass found a means of growth in its self,
 Its aspiration clove the breast of the garden.

(*The Secrets of the Self*, Lines 264-266, P. 22)

It is this consciousness of the self that makes a particle of dust shine like star, a drop of water radiates and sparkles like a pearl and makes a delicate leave of grass sprout through hard ground. When once this consciousness manifests itself, the self moves forward to a continual expansion.

When the self becomes conscious of its significance, it moves one step further to the stage of awakening of the self. In Iqbal, awakening of the self is characterized by burning the passion of desire and the creation of ideals. Purpose and desire are seminal for the growth of the self towards actualization and realization. Iqbal also emphasizes it in *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*:

Life is only a series of acts of attention, and an act of attention is inexplicable without reference to a purpose, conscious or unconscious. Even acts of perception are determined by our

immediate interests and purposes. Thus ends and purposes, whether they exist as conscious or sub-conscious tendencies form the warp and woof of conscious experience (Iqbal 52-53).

Hence purpose preserves the life of the self:

Its (self) origin is hidden in desire
 Keep desire alive in thy heart,
 Lest thy little dust become a tomb
 Desire keeps the self in perpetual uproar
 It is restless wave of the self's sea
 Negation of desires is death to the living
 Even as absence of heat extinguishes the flame
 Rise intoxicated with the wine of an ideal,
 And ideal shining as the dawn

(The Secrets of the Self: Lines 270-273, 283-285, 287-289, 314-315)

The recognition of the self serves as a gateway to the noble objectives of existence. A burning passion of desire, a longing and yearning is required for the realization of these objectives. Thus to Iqbal, awakening of the self means a life fraught with meaning, purpose, and ideal; without it, it is dreariness, decay and finally death. In Whitman also, the awakening of the self opens up the mysteries of the universe to be explored. In case of Iqbal, awakening occurs through the burning passion of desire-----the desire to explore, discover and bring to light the secrets and mysteries of existence. Yearning is therefore the soul of the world:

we live by forming ideal,
 we glow in the sun-beams of desire

(The Secrets of the Self: Lines. 321-22, P. 27)

According to Iqbal, desire is the spring from which the self draws sustenance. Dr. Ruffat Hassan observes: "Iqbal calls desire by several names such as *suz*, *hasrat*, *justuju*. Desire is a creative power even when it remains unfulfilled" (Habib 50).

This awakening of the self with the burning passion of desire leads it to the process of purification with the magical

power of love. The road to the self is the road of love. Only true love can instill faith in man's soul and lead him to the deep apprehension of the Divine:

The luminous point whose name is the self
 Is the life- spark beneath our dust
 By love it is made more lasting,
 More living, more burning, more glowing
 From love proceeds the radiance of its being
 And the development of its unknown possibilities
 Its nature gathers fire from love

(*The Secrets of Self*: Lines. 323-329, P. 28)

Like Whitman, in the philosophy of Iqbal, love is a much broader passion. It is the greatest force in human life—and essence and nectar of life that can obliterate death. Iqbal uses the term “Ishq” for it. Ishq is the higher form of love. Iqbal explains “Ishq” in *Reconstruction* as:

the desire to assimilate, values and ideals and the endeavour to realize them. Love individualizes the lover as well as the beloved. The effort to realize the most unique individuality individualizes the seeker and implies the individuality of the sought, for nothing else would satisfy the nature of the seeker (Iqbal 169).

So by love the self comprehends all the implications of Reality.

After the nourishment of desire, love of purpose mobilizes all the resources of the self to achieve the object of desire. The love of ideal thus keeps alive the desire and purifies the self of all other petty concerns by inculcating the singleness of purpose. Love, which is the all assimilative power of action, thus strengthens the self. In Iqbal's metaphysics, love always has an ideal—for example; Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H) is one major ideal for Muslim lover to attain:

In the Moslem's heart is the home of Muhammad,
 All our glory is from the name of Muhammad

(*The Secrets of Self*: Lines 351-352, P. 30)

And this love of the Prophet leads to the love of God:

Be a lover constant in devotion to thy beloved
That thou mayst cast thy noose and capture God.

(*The Secrets of Self*: Lines. 425-26)

Hence the strength and potency of the self depends on the degree and depth of love. If one is steadfast in love, one can win all things and even “capture God”.

The self further strengthened and purified by love then illuminates with an eternal light. It becomes one with the Divine Reality—The Self:

When the self I made strong by love
Its power rules the whole world
Its hand becomes God’s hand,
The moon is split by its fingers.

(*The Secrets of the Self*: Lines 984-85, 486-7, P. 43)

Here Iqbal alludes to a well known miracle of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) also mentioned in Quran (Ch. 54, V. 1). It is the beauty of Iqbal’s poem that here this growth of the selfhood does not remain a poetic experience but he does prove its validity from the true historical instances. For Iqbal love is the desire to assimilate and absorb; so it is the love of God that ultimately involves absorption of the Divine Individuality by the self. It demands the assimilation of the attributes of God within the self to become a co-worker with God in the process of creation.

In the next part of the poem Iqbal describes some further stages of growth of the selfhood. He further tells that the self should be educated and trained in order to become perfect. It has to go through three stages after the above mentioned preliminary stages of the self. The self cannot be left unbridled. It must first cultivate the habit of obedience. Like camel the self should toil, and carry the burden of duty preserveringly and with patience:

So wilt thou enjoy the best dwelling
Place, which is with God

Endeavour to obey, o heedless one!
 Liberty is the fruit of compulsion.

(*The Secrets of the Self*: Lines 826-829, P. 73)

Without proper self-restraint and commitment of obedience, the freedom enjoyed by the self leads him to astray. He gives the example of music that it is just a discordant sound without a mechanical compulsion and it is to this compulsion that music owes its strength and its magic-power. The whole idea is beautifully expressed thus:

The air becomes fragrant when it is imprisoned in the flower bud;
 The perfume becomes musk when it is confined in the navel of the musk-dear.
 The music is a controlled soul,
 When the control is gone, the music is turned into noise.

(*The Secrets of the Self*: Lines 832-835, P. 73-74)

The second stage that the self must pass through in order to become disciplined and

strong is self-control. Iqbal emphasizes:
 He that does not command himself
 Becomes a receiver of commands from others

(*The Secrets of the Self*: Lines 853-854, P. 75)

Iqbal believes that belief in God and His commandments confers self-control. The belief, that there is no supreme power in the world except God, safeguards the self against a submission to fear of different kinds.

The third and the final stage of the development of the self is Divine vicegerency that is attained when the self, as Iqbal explains in *Reconstruction*, “achieves a free personality, not by freeing himself from the fetters of the law but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depth of his consciousness” (Iqbal 171). At this stage the self reaches what is practically the condition of “the infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite” (Iqbal in Nicholson xxix). It is the final destination of the self, the absorption of the

Ultimate Self into the self:

Tis Sweet to be God's vicegerent in the world
 And exercise sway over the elements
 God's vicegerent is as the soul of the universe,
 His being is the shadow to the Greatest Name.

(*The Secrets of Self*: Lines 893-900, P. 79)

This stage of the vicegerency of God can be equated to the stage of mystical union with the Ultimate in case of Whitman. Though seemingly different ideas, their basic content is the same. In case of Whitman, it is the vision of the Absolute in mystical union that makes his self eternal and immortal and the most individual and unique. This confrontation with the Divine imbues him with the divine and superhuman power and Whitman assumes the role of the prophet (as mentioned in Ch. 3). And here in Iqbal's world, the culminating point of the selfhood is to cultivate the attributes of God within the self to achieve the status of vicegerency. For such a realized self Iqbal uses the term of "Perfect Man". Iqbal's perfect Man with his fully developed self does not dissolve even when the Reality is seen face to face. Iqbal enumerates this idea in *Reconstruction* as "The end of the ego's quest is not emancipation from the limitations of individuality: it is, on the other hand, a more precise definition of it" (Iqbal 171). In this connection Dr. A Schimmel truly depicts Iqbal's view as:

The idea of "Fana" which has been taken in the meaning of "obliteration, annihilation of the self" is completely unacceptable to Iqbal. He has felt with fine psychological instincts that this notion had, in early Islamic mysticism, not a metaphysical sense but was given that only in the course of time. Essentially it is annihilation of human qualities and their substitution by more sublimated, even divine qualities, according to the prophetic tradition "create in your selves the attributes of God (Schimmel in Qaiser *Rumi's Impact on Iqbal's Religious Thought* 36).

So the highest hierarchic rank—the vicegerency of God is achieved when man is able, not to be absorbed by Him and

lose his identity, but to absorb within himself as many of God's attributes as possible.

Iqbal interprets in his own manner the doctrine of the Perfect Man. It advocates that every man is potentially a microcosm and that when he has become spiritually perfect, all the Divine attributes are displayed by him:

His hidden being is Life's mystery,
 The unheard music of Life's harp
 Nature travails in blood for generations
 To compose the harmony of his personality
 Appear, O rider of Destiny!
 Appear, O light of the dark realm of change!
 Illumine the scene of existence

(The Secrets of the Self: Lines. 937-47)

For a Perfect Man the blessing of the selfhood, with attainment of the highest stage, range from the conquest of destiny to the spiritual conquest of the universe. Dr. A Schimmel puts it this way:

What he aims at, is not man as a measure of all things but as a being that grow the more perfect, the closer his connection with God is; it is man neither as an atheistic superman who replaces a God who has died nor as the Perfect Man in the sense that he is but a visible aspect of God with whom he is essentially one—but man as realizing the wonderful paradox of freedom and servanthip (Schimmel 382).

So this Perfect Man of Iqbal is not a super-man nor is he above men

Iqbal's message is meant to shock man into constructive action. This is the key feature of his dynamic Sufism that has a note of universality in it. Iqbal as a universal thinker is standing on a high mountain developing lofty, liberating thoughts about the importance of individualism. His Perfect Man does exhibit the qualities of Maslow's self-actualized person and Whitman's "Divine Average" but does excel in the manifestation of his individuality and his spiritual ideal.

“His Perfect Man is democratic in origin—is a spiritual principle based on the assumption that every human being is centre of a latent power, the possibilities of which are developed by cultivating a certain type of character” (Stemmer 29). His Perfect Man attains capacity to build a much vaster world in the depth of his own inner world and earns immortality through action and assertion rather than annihilation. Therefore, central to Iqbal’s drama in the poem is his concern with human individuality. His vision is reminder of the universal commonalities of human diversity and the creative powers that may well be the most unifying force in the global family. It is worth while to quote his own words that he wrote in a reply to Dickenson when the latter objected that Iqbal’s message lacked universality in the poem:

The object of my Persian Masnavis is not to attempt an advocacy of Islam. My real purpose is to seek a better social order and to present to the world a universally acceptable ideal (of life and action), but it is impossible for me, in the effort to define this ideal, to ignore the social system and value of Islam whose most important objective is to demolish all artificial and pernicious distinction of casts, creed, color and economic status. Islam is violently opposed to the idea of racial superiority, which is the greatest obstacle in the way of international unity and cooperation; in fact, Islam and racial exclusiveness are absolute antithetic. The racial idea is the greatest enemy of mankind and it is the duty of all well-wishers of the human race to eradicate it. When I realized that the conception of nationalism based on difference of race and country was beginning to spread to the Islamic world also and that the Muslims were in danger of giving up the universality of their ideal in favor of narrow patriotism and false nationalism, I felt it my duty, as a Muslim and a well-wisher of humanity, to remind them of their true role in the drama of evolution. No doubt, I am intensely devoted to Islam But I have chosen the Islamic community as my starting point not because of any national or religious prejudice but because it is the most convenient way to approach the problem (Ishrat 242).

The analysis of the poem makes it quite evident that by discountenancing mysticism based on renunciation or self-annihilation and imparting universality to his thought, Iqbal has widened the scope of the poem. Hence this emphatic assertion of the self and the universality of his ideas bring him close to Whiman. Both Whitman and Iqbal with their deeper insight, spiritual vision and universal import are one of those poets who have stood the test of time and their poetry radiates with the luster of eternity. With their enlarging mystical outlook they transcend the barriers of culture, religion, space and time and rather than to be put in one single category, they belong to the whole mankind. Even at this moment in history when the author is considered to be a mere convention and a fallacy, the insight of these poets stuns us.

Notes and References

¹ Maslow in his “theory of self-actualization” talks about peak- experience. For him the self-actualizing people have such kinds of experiences. Maslow describes such experiences as self-validating, self justifying moments with their own intrinsic value; disoriented in time and space; and accompanied by a loss of fear, anxiety and doubts.

² Iqbal believes in man’s capacity for attaining the self-hood. He says in *Reconstruction* that “man is capable of building a vaster world in his inner being, on one hand, and has the power of shaping and directing the forces around him on the other” (Iqbal 12). He believes in hidden potentiality of everyman. In his inmost being man “is a creative activity an ascending spirit who in his onward march rises from one state of being to another” (Iqbal 12). He emphasizes again and again the importance of the realization and development of self: “If he (man) does not take the initiative, if he does not evolve the inner richness of his being, if he ceases to feel the inward push of advancing life, then the spirit within him hardens into stone and he is reduced to the level of dead matter” (Iqbal 12).

CONCLUSION

The Self as a Process

In the final analysis, it is inferred that both Whitman and Iqbal consider the self to be an entity containing both the body and the soul. The message that they impart to their readers is that of reconciliation of the spirit and the matter. One needs not to go back to either exclusive materialism or exclusive spiritualism as both have their foundation in the self. This is the fact accepted by both these poets though approached differently as is seen in the detailed analysis. Both of them are panentheists in their conception of the Divine; they consider it as both immanent and transcendent according to their own individual understanding. For both it is “intuition” rather than “intellect” that makes the voyage of self-discovery possible. Both of them propagate the idea of “spiritual democracy”. Hence there are various thematic connections between these two poets. On technical level, Whitman’s poem “Song of Myself” is apparently more subjective and personal in tone whereas Iqbal’s poem *The Secrets of the Self* is more objective and didactic in tone.

Both Whitman and Iqbal embark on the journey of the self-hood moving from intrapersonal via interpersonal to transpersonal. In this process both are rewarded with a kind of illumination that comes either by absorbing the self in the Divine (in case of Whitman) or by absorbing the Divine in the self (in case of Iqbal). Whatever the case, the self becomes immortal after getting attuned with the Divine. Immortality of the self entails its continuity and endlessness. Hence **the self is a process**-----always in a flux. It is fluid in nature as it

is always changing. There is nothing static about the self. Its growth never stops. It is always in the process of becoming---constantly coming into being.

For Whitman the self is a process as all life and experience, reality itself is a process---- a ceaseless, continuous and all embracing flow. That is the reason that Whitman describes his poetry as “a passage way to something rather than the thing in itself concluded” (Pearce 86). What more than any thing else appeals about Whitman’s self is its continuity. Richard Maurice Bucke (famous biographer and critic on Whitman) makes a wonderful observation in this regard:

“It has unlimited vistas. It clears the way ahead, with allowance and provision for new advances far, far beyond anything contained in itself. It brings no one to ‘a terminus’, nor teaches anyone to be ‘content or full’. It is a ceaseless goad, a never resting spur. To those to whom it speaks, it cries continually, forward! forward! and admits of no pause in the race” (Woodress 143).

To Whitman, life appeared to be an endless procession. He could find no end to this eternal march, no port where the ship of his self would come to final rest. The process of the self discovery is to be perceived as constant and this exploration never ceases. Denis Donoghue perceives this continuity in these terms:

He begins by saying, Let x equal the self. Then x equals A plus B plus C plus D plus E, and so on, where each letter stands for a new experience contained and possessed, and the self is the sum of its possession. This is the law of Whitman’s lists. If you say that the self- x - is the sum of its possessions, A, B, C, D, and so on, then more you add to the right-hand side of equation, the more you enrich the left, and you do this without bothering the “nature” of the x . You assume that the self is not at any moment fixed, complete, or predetermined, and then you are free to develop or enlarge it at any time by adding to its experience” (Bradley 964).

Iqbal also has strong vitalistic tendency in this regard. Iqbal's self is on the move. There is no limit to the development of the self because of its potential immortality. The self never reaches the final stage but keeps on going higher and higher as life is continuous. Iqbal iterates this fact in his lectures:

“Man marches always onwards to receive ever fresh illuminations from an infinite Reality which every moment appears in a new glory and there are always new opportunities for the self of creative unfolding” (Iqbal 123).

To Iqbal the joy of the journey is not in the arrival, but in the perpetual tramp, with always the possibilities of new adventures. Ceaseless effort and not repose is what gives the zest to life. Hence the self is dynamic in character. It is constantly changing as everything that happens enriches and modifies the self.

Owing to their unique individualistic concept of the self both Whitman and Iqbal are spiritual democrats in their own particular ways. They advocate the individuality and integrity of the human self that can lead to the solution of many problems faced by humanity overall. The problems have now assumed a global dimension, transcending the barriers of race, color, language, geography and social, political and religious ideologies. And in this scenario, the message of love, self-development, perseverance, dignity and freedom, given by these poets may attempt to address these challenges faced by humanity. In this new millennium, Whitman's and Iqbal's compassionate and humanitarian outlook together with their spiritual vision can continue to inspire us. These poets do offer us a vision of humanity that seems, even next to our contemporary notion of multi-culturalism, boundless in its vitality and compassion. Also I must concede that it is my purpose to show, rather indirectly, that the great imaginative thinkers of the world, whether or not they are demographically, historically and geographically linked, have common concerns, which categorize them all as human

beings and that all cultures of the world are parts of a “unified nexus”¹ (Hoffmeister 11).

My research brings me to the point that the concept of the self has a broad spectrum. It is multidimensional. Moreover it is not a static concept but an ever changing and ever developing phenomenon. What I have touched upon is perhaps the tip of the iceberg or one drop of the ocean of the self. The comparison between Whitman’s and Iqbal’s mystical self is interesting enough to justify further investigation. And this insatiety in reading this study would motivate the readers to research on it further. I have focused on one dimension with still so many areas to explore. I hope that this work would inspire the inquisitive minds to undertake the further research on the topic.

Notes and References

¹ Gerhart Hoffmeister uses the term, “unified nexus,” to describe Herders understanding of the cultures of mankind.

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