

Friedrich Nietzsche's Philosophy of Übermensch (Overman) and Muhammad Iqbal's Philosophy of Insan-i-Kamal (Perfect Man): Comparative Analysis

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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to highlight the concept of man in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and Mohammad Iqbal and present the comparative analysis of both philosophers. Nietzsche introduced the idea of Übermensch (Overman or Superman) in his philosophy of human person in which all humans are called to become superman (Übermensch). For Nietzsche the exemplary human being is Übermensch which must be crafted through self-realization. As individual man must know, improve and master himself in order to live meaningful and fruitful life. While, Mohammad Iqbal centers his philosophy of human person around the idea of *khudi* (selfhood). By realizing his *khudi* man can become perfect man (*Insan-i-Kamal*). His perfect man is embodiment of divine qualities and characteristics. This paper discusses the thoughts and views of Nietzsche and Iqbal regarding the philosophy of human person.

Keywords: Overman (Übermensch), Insan-i-Kamal (Perfect Man), Khudi (Self), Will to Power.

Introduction:

In human civilization the sages, mystics, poets, philosophers and religious thinkers are always concerned with human existence. They have reflected and evaluated human existence from different perspective and point of views. Friedrich Nietzsche and Mohammad Iqbal were also great philosophers of their times and have their own unique approach towards the human existence. They come from two different philosophical traditions; Nietzsche comes from Western philosophical traditions while Mohammad Iqbal comes from Islamic philosophical traditions. Both focus on the existential perspective of man; therefore, Nietzsche presents man as an 'Overman' (*Übermensch*) while Iqbal presents man as '*Insan-i-Kamal*' (the perfect man). This paper is divided in three parts: the first part focuses on Nietzsche's 'Overman' (*Übermensch*) while the second part discusses Iqbal's *Insan-i-Kamal* (Perfect Man) and the third chapter will present the comparative view of both.

Friedrich Nietzsche's Philosophy of Übermensch (Overman) (1844-1900)

Nietzsche was born on 15th October 1844 in Röcken, Germany and died in 1900 at the age of 56. He is one of the most intellectual figures in the history of modern thought. He has influenced the literature and philosophy, particularly the existential thought in the modern era. In his sustained critique he particularly

attacked on three main linking or intertwine ideas, namely; the idea of human or human nature, the idea of God and the ideas of morality. His critique is not only on religion, it goes beyond and presents something much bolder and broader.

In his critical endeavor, he also criticized the Greeks such as Socrates and Plato. He criticized Plato, especially his concept of real world. According to Plato “there is more to reality than the things we experience through our senses.”¹ The things which we perceive real through our senses, may not be real or less real. The world we perceive through our senses is not real because it is changeable while the real world can only be perceived through our intellect and that is the *world of forms*. Plato claimed that the real world is world of forms, which is permanent and unchanging.² This idea of Plato has far reached consequences; it has influenced the religion and morality. According to Nietzsche, “this way of dividing up the world makes the ‘real world’ of the intellect the place where everything of value resides. In contrast, it makes the ‘apparent world’ of the senses a world that is, relatively speaking, unimportant.”³ Some religions and philosophies were built on Plato’s thoughts who insist on the real world which is more important than this existing world. Nietzsche calls this as human error. In *How the ‘Real World’ at last Became a Myth*, Nietzsche says, “we have abolished the real world; what world is left? The apparent world, perhaps?... But no! With the real world we have also abolished the apparent world.”⁴ Nietzsche thinks that this is the tragedy for mankind which prevents people to live realistic, meaningful and full life here on earth. Nietzsche wants to reconsider the values and beliefs which mankind hold. His whole critique is also an invitation to reconsider our values and the meaning of what it means to be human. Nietzsche wants to surpass the old idea of man and replace with the new idea which is (*Übermensch*) ‘Superman’ or ‘Overman.’ Nietzsche’s ‘Overman’ is life affirming idea while the old idea of man is life negating idea. The ‘Overman’ is the realistic vision of Nietzsche about man which affirms life. ‘Overman’ is bearer of life which means life not in the world to come but life here on earth.⁵ Thus his critique to the ‘old man’ and his affirmation to the ‘Overman’ is an affirmation of life. This philosophy of ‘Superman’ or ‘Overman’ is presented in detail in his books, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *The Gay Science*; especially in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, his prophet Zarathustra made the pronouncement of the death of modern man and made the proclamation of the advent of a new man (*Übermensch*)⁶ and Nietzsche writes; thus, Zarathustra spoke to the people (Prologue, 3):

“I teach you the overman. Man is something that shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?”

All beings so far have created something beyond themselves; and do you want to be the ebb of this great flood and even go back to the beast rather than overcome man? What is the ape to man? A laughing-stock or a painful embarrassment. And man shall be just that for the overman: a laughing-stock or a painful embarrassment. You have made your way from worm to man, and much in you is still worm. Once you apes, and even now, man is more ape than any ape.

¹ Samuel Enoch Stumpf & Donald C. Able, *Elements of Philosophy* (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2002) 31.

² Ibid.

³ Cecile Landau, Andrew Szudek, Sarah Tomley, eds., *The Philosophy Book* (London: Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2011), 219.

⁴ Ibid., 220.

⁵ Ibid., 220-221.

⁶ Fortich Ingrid Florez, “Nietzsche’s *Übermensch*: the notion of a higher Aristocracy of the future,” [article online]; available from www.scielo.org.co, 76, September 24th, 2016.

*Whoever is the wisest among you is also a mere conflict and cross between plant and ghost.
But do I bid you become ghosts or plants!*

*Behold, I teach you the overman. The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say:
the overman shall be the meaning of the earth! I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful
to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! Poison-mixer
are they, whether they know it or not. Despisers of life are they, decaying and poisoned
themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so, let them go...*

*Verily, a polluted stream is man. One must be a sea to be able to receive a polluted stream
without becoming unclean. Behold, I teach you the overman: he is this sea; in him your
great contempt can go under... ”⁷*

In order to explain his vision of Overman, Nietzsche holds the view that man had developmental possibilities and potentials. Man goes through different stages. According to Nietzsche's view these stages are animals, humans and lastly the 'Overman.' Paul Kleinman explains, "when humans learned to control their instincts and natural impulses in order to attain greater gains (like civilizations, knowledge, and spirituality), they stopped being animals. Our will to power shifted from outward (controlling others) to inward (self-mastery); however, this process of self-mastery is difficult, and there is a constant temptation for humanity to give up."⁸ When humans keep on going and struggle to gain self-mastery that help them to become 'Overman.' The 'Overman' has self-mastery and has great love for life. His life and struggles affirm life. Therefore, according to Nietzsche, "humanity is not the destination; it is a transition into becoming the Overman."⁹

The precondition of the realization of 'Overman' is the realization of the 'Will to Power.' In order to understand the 'Overman' it is important to have some idea of the 'Will to Power.' In Nietzsche's perspective, in the world everything is changing in a constant move. Everything is dynamic and the static does not have the possibility to exist. Every day the knowledge, truth and the reality are changing and the central point of this ongoing change is 'will to power.' In the universe everything depends on the 'will to power.' This "will to power is an individual's fundamental drive for power, which comes about through dominance and independence."¹⁰ In man the will to power is the stronger drive than the other drives such as survival and sex etc. It can be manifested in two possible ways, namely; inward and outward. If it is manifested outwardly then the possible result could be the domination and violence over others but if it turns inwardly, one must pursue mastery of his own self. Thus, in will to power one is encouraged to have mastery of his own self which can help him to become better human. This is ongoing process and demands enormous effort. The will to power is life affirming philosophy which encourages people to embrace change and that change is constant change. Will to power animate mankind and all living things to life therefore will to power is life-oriented philosophy. Thus, will to power is the desire to assert ourselves and to overcome, therefore Nietzsche says, "only where life is, is there also will; but not will to life, instead - thus I teach you - will to power!"¹¹

The role of the will to power is set up a general course for life and help to conduct social relationship because it determines and preserves life.¹² It affirms our inner powers. According to Nietzsche's critique

⁷ Nietzsche Friedrich, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5.

⁸ Paul Kleinman, *Philosophy 101* (USA: F+W Media, Inc., 2013), 169.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 168.

¹¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 90.

¹² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 15.

the Western morality denies the fundamental role of the will to power. For this Nietzsche accused Christian religion by saying, “I regard Christianity as the most fatal seductive lie that has yet existed, as the great unholy lie.”¹³ He believed that Christian morality opposed life. Therefore, he is in favor that mankind should not become slave to slave morality rather he wants mankind to embrace life-affirming morality and values. Sartre also affirms Nietzsche’s idea by saying “that we must each define the meaning of our own existence”¹⁴ and that is what Nietzsche wants to encourage mankind. Paul Kleinman writes that, “in exposing the truth of morality, Nietzsche did not wish to replace Christian morality with some other form. Rather, he believed that, after realizing the truth behind morality, people would start to become more honest and realistic with regard to their motives and attitudes towards life.”¹⁵ Therefore, ‘will to power’ helps people to know their true human nature and carve their own future and destiny.

Nietzsche’s notion of the will to power is most clearly manifested and represented in the attitude and behavior of the Overman. Overman is the vision of Nietzsche about humanity. As the prophet Zarathustra walks down and reaches the town. There he saw the crowd which was there gathered together to see the acrobat walking on the tightrope. There Zarathustra grab the opportunity and stood in their midst and started to shout. Thus, Zarathustra spoke:

*“I teach you the overman. Human being is something that must be overcome... Behold, I teach you the overman! The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the overman shall be the meaning of the earth!... When Zarathustra had spoken thus someone from the crowd cried out: ‘we have heard enough already about the tightrope walker, now let us see him too!’ And all the people laughed at Zarathustra.”*¹⁶

Thus, overman is the vision of Nietzsche about mankind. The overman is fully realized and superman. Nietzsche believes that overman will be very rare; the one who will be able to reach the highest. Nietzsche states, “everything rare for those who are rare themselves.”¹⁷ Very few understand what Nietzsche offers and the common herd cannot reach the heights of the free spirit which he refers. So Nietzschean overman “refers to those individuals who are seen by Nietzsche as the new philosophers who can transcend the faults and failings of their humanity.”¹⁸ According to Nietzsche history is moving not in abstract direction or development but it is moving towards ‘overman.’ In order to experience the overman, humans need to work on themselves. Mankind needs gradual transcendence; from animals to human and then to the overman. It is overman who represents the highest level of development and transcendence.

Nietzsche portrays overman as an individualistic, exceptional and a new higher type. Nietzsche describes overman as “an individual to posit his own ideal and to derive from it his own law, joys, and rights”¹⁹ (GS, §143). Nietzsche’s overman is more than human being. Only the brave and fearless can experience through their constant struggles. He is free from the false idols of decadent religions and conventional morality. As an atheistic philosopher, he denied the existence of God and announced the death of God. In Nietzsche’s perspective man is defined in terms of God as we find in Christian theology

¹³ Luc Ferry, ed., *Why We Are Not Nietzscheans* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 186.

¹⁴ Cecile Landau, Andrew Szudek, Sarah Tomley, eds., *The Philosophy Book*, 222.

¹⁵ Paul Kleinman, *Philosophy 101*, 170.

¹⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5-7.

¹⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 40.

¹⁸ Jw Phelan, *Philosophy Themes and Thinkers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2005), 227.

¹⁹ Nietzsche Friedrich, *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 191.

that man is created on the image and likeness of God and we are children of God but in case of God's death, man is left alone and the same with modern science and modernity which has robbed us of purpose.²⁰

Nietzsche is also very clear about the idea of morality which he wants overman to practice. In order to explain that he makes distinction between slave or underman and the overman. The opposite of Nietzsche's overman is slave or underman. Nietzsche used the German term *Untermensch* for the underman. Nietzsche used this term for those people who are 'merely human' who cannot live and survive in godless universe. Underman follows the 'crowd' or 'herd' for his identity and purpose and does not have the courage to become an individual and even does not exist as an individual. Those who follow the herd and crowd mentality are always hostile and aggressive towards the individuals (Overman). They create for themselves the slave morality which is based on guilt, fear and distortion of the will. They follow the characteristics of the inferior type such as humility, passivity and dependency. This slave morality gives chance to the powerful to side the weak.²¹ Overall the over manly characteristics, for slave morality, are 'evil', while the characteristics of the underman (*Untermensch*) are considered as 'good.'

The opposite to slave morality is the morality of the overman which is called master morality. In Nietzschean philosophy, "master morality is an aesthetic honor code of the overman; morality that looks to the authentic individual (overman) for values that transcend the slave's good-evil dichotomy with glorious-degrading, honorable-dishonorable, refined-vulgar, and so on. In simple terms, for the overman, 'good' equals 'noble' and 'evil' equals 'vulgar'."²² The overman expresses the will to power openly and honestly. Master morality is life affirming through which one tries to discover his own individuality. He has the courage to be a unique individual. Master morality affirms his own self and it is positive approach in its orientation in which overman is not slave of any limitation but he has free horizon.²³ Nietzsche's vision of new man (overman) can only be realized by creating new morality. Not only new morality but totally a new structure to morality. His philosophy is a call for a new way of thinking. Overman represents a free spirit whose mission is to rethink about morality of everyday and to work on the new way of being human. Nietzsche is in favor of life affirming morality which makes man an overman.²⁴ Nietzsche's overman does not reject morality but reject the negative morality of the herd and crowd. Nietzsche based his morality on the principle of will to power and that is the more honest and realistic version of morality.²⁵ Nietzsche says,

*One thing is needful: To give style to one's character - a great and rare art! It is practiced by all those who survey the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until everyone of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. (GS # 290).*²⁶

²⁰ Soccio Douglas J., *The Anti-Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in Archetypes of Wisdom in An Introduction to Philosophy 6th Edition* (United States: Thomson & Wadsworth, 2007), 480.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 481.

²² *Ibid.*, 484.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ "Nietzsche, Philosophy, and the Overman," uploaded by Roy Angeles [article online]; available from www.academia.edu; 24th September 2016.

²⁵ Stumpf Samuel Enoch & Fieser James, *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 365.

²⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 232.

So here the overman is the one who has self-mastery. Nietzsche sees overman in terms of art. This overman has the redemptive possibilities and potentials in order to become autonomous, individual, unique and creative.²⁷ Especially after the death of God one has to play Godlike role for him or herself. The purpose of Godlike role is to help to create genuine selves. Nietzsche uses the metaphor of art to recreate one's authentic self. The authentic individuals are unique individuals who are like artists who shape freely themselves as the art work.²⁸

He elaborates his idea of art by using the Greek mythological Dionysian figure. Dionysian man is creative and transformative which affirms life in its totality which can help the modern man to redefine and rediscover his humanity and to have creative living.²⁹

Nietzsche is like a prophet who does not need believers. He like people those are faithful to themselves. He wants people independently to follow their own visions and convictions there he says, "faithfully follow your own path; in this way you will follow me. He who climbs by his own might, will bear my image to a brighter light. Now this is my way, where is yours? This I answered those who asked me for 'the way.' The way? There is no such thing! I should like to consort only me, thus making me responsible for them and enslaving me."³⁰

Sir Muhammad Iqbal's Philosophy of *Insan-i-Kamal* (Perfect Man)

Iqbal (9th November 1877- 21st April 1938) was a great *Urdu* and *Persian* poet, politician, social reformer, lawyer and philosopher in British India. He is also considered as first Modern Muslim philosopher and thinker. He is recognized as 'national poet' in Pakistan. He went to England and Germany for his higher studies. During his studies he was inspired by his teachers such as Maulana Mir Hasan, an Arabic and Persian scholar and Sir Thomas W. Arnold a well-known orientalist of government college of Lahore, Pakistan. His famous works are *Javed Namah*, *Payam-i-Mashriq*, *Zabur-i-Ajam*, *Bang-i-Dara*, *Bal-i-Jobril*, *Zarb-i-Kalim*, *Asrar-i-Khudi* (The Secrets of the Self) and *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* (Mysteries of Selflessness). He also published his two other works in prose namely: 'The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam' which comprises of his series of lectures and his dissertation entitled, 'The Development of Metaphysics in Persia.' Mostly his works are in poetical form and deeply rooted in *Quran* and *Sunnah* of the Prophet of Islam. His thoughts and philosophy are profoundly influenced by Rumi, Ghazali, Khaldun, Emerson, Whitehead, Bergson, Nietzsche and Goethe. Overall, his poetry and philosophy are a reconstruction of Islamic thought influenced by Jalal Al-Din Rumi and deeply rooted in religious thought of Islam.

The historical context of writing was the British India (sub-continent) and his focus was the Muslims of British India. Iqbal was not satisfied with the conditions of the Muslims of British India. They were subjected to colonial rule of British and were deprived of their rights and dignity. Secondly, he was not satisfied with the Platonic interpretation of Islam because Iqbal thought that Platonic mysticism has caused the decline of Islam.³¹ According to Iqbal nihilism of Sufism and mysticism are life-negating

²⁷ Perter R. Sedgwick, *Nietzsche: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2009), 112.

²⁸ Golomb Jacob, Santaniello Weaver, Lehrer Ronald L., eds., *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 12-13.

²⁹ Rose Pfeffer, *Nietzsche: Disciple of Dionysus* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1972), 182.

³⁰ Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 21.

³¹ Peter S. Groff & Oliver Leaman, *Islamic Philosophy A-Z* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 107-108.

approach therefore he wanted to bring remedy and change in the approach and attitude of the Muslims towards life because he wanted to awake the consciousness of Muslims of British India. As a result of his efforts and contemplation he came up with new approach and philosophy which affirms life and rejects the life-denying attitudes and approach. With that life-affirming philosophy Iqbal hoped that Muslims will be able to live creative, purposeful and dynamic life and can change their conditions. He named that new philosophy as philosophy of *khudi* (Self or Ego).

Iqbal in his philosophy of *khudi* presents man as *insan-i-kamal* (perfect man). He believes that humans have the power and ability to transcend and carve their own destiny. Therefore, Iqbal's philosophy of man is very Islamic in its perspective and content. His vision of man is 'perfect man' or '*Insan-I-Kamal*' which is very unique in its content. There are different terms which Iqbal used in his philosophy of perfect man such as Man of Truth, Free Man, Believing Man (true Muslim). The perfect man is the one in whom the *khudi* (Self) is fully realized and developed. The perfect man motivates and inspires others to become fully developed human being. He 'infuses life into heart and become the true representative of Allah'³² here on earth. The foundation of his idea of perfect man is the concept of *khudi* which means self, ego or personality. The idea of *khudi* runs throughout his poetic and philosophical endeavor. He uses this concept of *khudi* to explain his concept of *insan-I-kamal* (perfect man) which is dynamic and self-conscious individual.³³

Originally Iqbal's idea of perfect man is not his own; he borrowed from his predecessors but he developed it in his own unique and dynamic way. In Iqbal's concept of *insan-i-kamal* one can find the traces and understanding of Islamic perfect man which was developed by Al-Jili and Iban Arabi.³⁴ According to Al-Jili the intellect and love are the main elements and the sources of human knowledge. The combination and synthesis of these two gives birth to a high man which is called perfect man and he is the living copy of God.³⁵ Further Al-Jili explains the character of the perfect man as such that, "the perfect man in his essence represents all the realities of existence. In his spirituality he corresponds to the Throne of God (*al-arsh*), his *aniyyah* to the Heavenly Chair (*kursi*), his mind to the Exalted Pen (*al-qalam al-a'la*), his soul to the Guarded Tablet (*allauh al-mahfus*), his nature to physical elements, his potentialities to *hayula*, etc., in short, every faculty of the perfect man corresponds to different manifestations in the physical world."³⁶ So Al-Jili's perfect man is the copy of the Divine and lives in solitude. Life of solitude is essential condition for the man to reach at its perfection.³⁷ On the other hand Iqbal reacted to that concept because Iqbal's *insan-i-kamal* or perfect man is active in nature. He not only longs for his own individual perfection but the perfection of others and the society as well. Iqbal's perfect man wants to establish dynamic, just and noble society and for that he is ready for any sacrifice.³⁸ Nicholson explains that, "Iqbal interprets his own way the Sufi doctrine of the *Insan-i-Kamal* or perfect man, which teaches that every man is potentially a microscope, and that when he has become spiritually perfect, all the divine attributes are displayed by him, so that as saint or prophet he is the God-man, the representative and vicegerent of God on earth."³⁹ So therefore in this context Iqbal

³² Mustansir Mir, *Iqbal* (London & New York: I.B. TAURIS, 2006), 35.

³³ Ayesha Jalal, *Partisans of Allah: Jihad In South Asia*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 227.

³⁴ Peter Slater and Donald Weibe, ed., *Traditions in Contact and Change: Selected proceedings of the XIVth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions* (Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983), 438.

³⁵ Dr. Tariq Masoodi, *Educational Philosophy of Iqbal* (New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 2007), 17.

³⁶ N. Hanif, *Biographical Encyclopedia of Sufis Africa and Europe* (New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2002), 99.

³⁷ Dr. Tariq Masoodi, *Educational Philosophy of Iqbal*, 17.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 17.

conceptualizes a new human, the perfect man of future. He visualizes perfect man as comprehensively and integrally developed human beings those who will create just social order. This role man cannot play in a vacuum but in the world and the universe in which he or she is created and lives.⁴⁰

In order to understand the depth of the *insan-i-kamal* (perfect man) of Iqbal, it is appropriate to understand his concept of *khudi*. In the common understanding the word *khudi* has negative connotation and significance which is understood in terms of selfishness and egotism. Mostly in Urdu and Persian languages it is always used in negative sense. But Iqbal tells us that he likes, “a colorless word for Self, Ego, having no ethical significance. As far as I know there is no such word in either Urdu or Persian... (and) considering the requirements of verse, I thought that the word ‘*khudi*’ was the most suitable,” also because “there is ... some evidence in the Persian language of the use of the word ‘*khudi*’ in the simple sense of the Self, i.e. to say the colorless fact of the ‘I’.”⁴¹ Further explaining the word *khudi*, Iqbal states that, “metaphysically the word *khudi* (self-hood) is used in the sense of that indescribable feeling of ‘I’ which forms the basis of the uniqueness of each individual. Ethically the word *khudi* means (as used by me) self-reliance, self-respect, self-confidence, self-preservation, self-assertion when such a thing is necessary, in the interest of life and power to stick to the cause of truth, justice, duty etc., even in the face of death. Such behaviour is moral in my opinion because it helps in the integration of the forces of the Ego, thus hardening it, as against the forces of disintegration and dissolution, practically the metaphysical ego is the bearer of two main rights that is the right to life and freedom as determined by Divine Law.”⁴²

Through this concept Iqbal wants man to be free from the influence and impact of pessimism and defeatism. In his concept of perfect-man he wants to preserve human personality. In his views the foundation of life lies in the recognition of *khudi* or the self. Man should struggle to live authentic life and to develop his uniqueness and originality. In his philosophy of *khudi* or the self he emphasized on the secrets of the self. In the views of Mr. Tariq, ‘Iqbal is struck by the fact that there is individuality in everything that exists in the universe but they do not possess individuality in an equal degree. Every living organism in the opinion of Iqbal is striving towards complexity.’⁴³ Iqbal himself said, “everything is preoccupied with self-expression, every atom a candidate for greatness.”⁴⁴

In nature among all other creatures, man has a unique individuality. That individuality allows and enables the *khudi* (self or ego) to conquer the environment, time and space. *Khudi* also helps man to approach the ‘Greatest Ego’ of all egos. God (Allah) is the absolute and Greatest Ego. According to Iqbal when ‘*Mard-i-Momin*’ (man of faith or true Muslim) come near to God he becomes complete person; in other words when the ego or self comes near to Greatest Ego, the self or ego (*khudi*) becomes perfect and complete therefore affirmation of God (the Greatest Ego) and finds its culmination in that Greatest Ego which is all-knowing. Iqbal states, “if you wish to witness God unveiled, then learn to see your ego in clear manner.”⁴⁵

Iqbal in his critique negate the notion of self-negation especially from spiritual point of view he criticized all those who devalue human personality. The views such as self-negation can harm and become the hindrance in the development and realization of human personality and the society in which

⁴⁰ Ibid., 18.

⁴¹ Riffat Hassan, Iqbal’s ‘Khudi’ - Its Meaning and Strengthening Factors,” in *Iqbal*, vol.23 No.3 (July 1976), 1-2.

⁴² Roy Jackson, *What is Islamic Philosophy?* (London & New York: Routledge, 2014), 85.

⁴³ Dr. Tariq Masoodi, *Educational Philosophy of Iqbal*, 19.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 19.

he or she lives. Those who advocate self-negation, consider life as mere illusion and a shadow only, such as, pantheistic view; Iqbal thinks that pantheistic perception and understanding of the self or ego (*khudi*) can become the cause of destruction of human personality and human society. He criticized all those schools of thought and ideologies who deny the importance of self and negate it. Iqbal writes, “will there remain any luster in the sun, if it grows indifferent to its rays.”⁴⁶

Iqbal emphasized the unique and distinctive role of self. His concept of the self, differs from the pantheistic concept of the self which the pantheistic religious traditions present. Dr. Krishnan explain Iqbal’s view in his own way as he states, “religion is not a mere dogmatic conformity. It is not a question of ceremonial piety. It is not a merely going through ritual prescribed to us. It is remaking of your own self the transformation of our nature.”⁴⁷ Therefore, Iqbal holds the view that denial of self can create great crisis in the world where we encounter a lot of different thoughts and ideologies which present negative thoughts such as renunciation and self-negation and this notion of self-denial and renunciation can be found in many thinking patrons and thoughts which can cause social decadence also. Man occupies a central place in the universe and this universe is on constant move, transformation and development and man has a great role to play in its development and formation.

While presenting and explaining the nature of *khudi* (or self) Iqbal posits this question: what is the reality of *khudi* (or self)? It seems that he tried to find the possible answer by studying Descartes. Tariq Masood states that, “he seems impressed with the Descartes point of view which maintains that one can certainly question the reality of this world but so far as one’s personal existence is concerned, it is beyond any question of doubt.”⁴⁸ The same view Iqbal also expresses in his work “*Gulshan-i-Razi Jedeed*” that the self is aware of its own existence even in spite of doubts. Iqbal states, “if you say that “I” is a mere illusion, an appearance among other appearances, then tell me you are the subject of this illusion? look within and discover the world is visible, then hidden self does not need reason, consider a little and find out this secret.”⁴⁹

Further Iqbal based this idea of *khudi* (or self) on the basis of intuition. The idea of *Khudi* and intuition are connected through intellect and reason. Both are complementary and interconnected. Iqbal says, “nor is there any reason to suppose that thought and intuition are essentially opposed to each other. They spring up from the same root and complement each other. The one grasps Reality piecemeal, the other on the temporal aspect of Reality. The one is present enjoyment of the whole of Reality; the other aims at traversing the whole by slowly specifying and closing up the various regions of the whole for exclusive observation. Both are in need of each other for mutual rejuvenation. Both seek visions of the same Reality which reveals itself to them in accordance with their function in life. In fact, intuition, as Bergson rightly says, is only a higher kind of intellect.”⁵⁰ Radha Krishnan also shares his views regarding intellect and intuition; his views are also similar and closer to that of Iqbal. Radha Krishnan says, “intuitive knowledge is not non-rational, it is only non-conceptual. Intuition gives us an idea of the whole and intellectual analysis of parts. Intuition gives us the object in itself, while intellect details its relations.”⁵¹

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 22.

Along with the intuitive knowledge for Iqbal the most important element in the process of realization of *khudi* or self is consciousness. The irrefutable consciousness is the basic element in one's being. Even the whole universe is also controlled by powerful consciousness. Iqbal names it as *khudi*, he calls it eternal Ego (*khudi*) and the whole universe is created and controlled by the *khudi* (eternal Ego). In other words, the universe is the result of the creative activity itself. It is through this activity that the world itself is striving to realize the ideal of bring about the birth of perfect man and the society of perfect human beings. Though certain elements are common in animals and humans but qualitative behavior and higher consciousness can only be found in man. Through this higher consciousness man can realize his *khudi* (self). In Iqbal's view, "matter is colony of egos of lower order out of which emerges the ego of a higher order, when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of co-ordination."⁵² On part of man his constant and regular efforts can help him or her the development of consciousness which finally help him to the level of realization of his *khudi* (self). Iqbal says, "from the very beginning it is struggling hard to appear in the shape of man, the abode of ego is in your heart. Just as the firmament is seen in the pupil of the eye."⁵³ Iqbal believes in human evolution and the key of his evolutionary struggle, perfection and destiny lies in his own character. According to Iqbal religion, ethics and art must be evaluated and judged from the perspective of (*khudi*) self. The *khudi* must reach to its perfection. That which empowers the *khudi* is good but on the other hand which will make *khudi* weak is bad.⁵⁴ Therefore man should take the initiative so that he can make best of himself because man is bestowed with creative powers and free personality.

In order to reach the perfection and full realization of *khudi* (self) the man has to go through the spiritual evolution. Iqbal in his work entitled, '*Asrare-e-khudi*' mentioned three stages of *khudi*. The seeker has to pass through the three stages of evolution. These stages are namely: obedience to the law of *Allah*, self-control and divine vice-regency (*khilifa*).⁵⁵ Through these stages a seeker becomes the knower of *khudi* (self) and that enables man to become the divine vicegerent. In the first stage of obedience the seeker has to obey all the divine commandments and precepts of *Allah*. He is called to follow the sacred scriptures and the tradition of the prophet of Islam. The perfect man in whom *khudi* is fully developed always carries the divine law and precepts. At this stage the *khudi* (self) learns to submit to highest Self or Ego (*Allah*). Iqbal says, "whoso would master the sun stars, let him make himself a prisoner of Law."⁵⁶

The second stage is the self-control. The goal and the aim of obedience is self-control. In this stage man learn to control himself, not by external forces but he controls himself by himself. Iqbal explains this in his own words, "the soul cares only for itself, like the camel: it is self-conceited, self-governed, and self-willed. Be a man, get its halter in thine hand. That thou mayest becomes a pearl albeit thou art a potter's vessel."⁵⁷ Self-control is not the end but this is only a station, the seeker needs to go beyond and to the higher level and that is to reach at the level of divine vice-regency (*khilifa or nai'b*).

Vice-regency is the highest level or the stage of *khudi* (self) and at this stage the *insan-i-kamal* (perfect man) become the living embodiment of the divine (*Allah*). At this point he totally commits him or herself to the transformation of others (society & the world). The vicegerent has to cooperate and work with other to establish the kingdom of *Allah* here on earth. Iqbal says that, "the link that binds the

⁵² Ibid., 22.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Shireen T. Hunter, ed., *Reformist Voices of Islam* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 166.

⁵⁵ Qamar Hasan, *Muslims in India, Attitudes, Adjustments and Reactions* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1987), 18.

⁵⁶ Abdulkadar Tayob, *Religion in Modern Islamic Discourse* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 35.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 36.

individual to the society a mercy is: His truest Self in the community, alone achieves fulfillment. Wherefore be so far as in thee in close report, with thy society and luster bring. To the wide intercourse of free-born men. He wins respect as being one of them. And the society is recognized. As by comprising many such as he. When in the congregation he is lost. Tis like a drop which, seeking to expand, becomes an ocean. The Self negates itself in the community, that it may be no more petal, but a rosary.”⁵⁸ Beside this the perfect man possesses different qualities such as, “wrath (qahhri), forgiveness (ghaffari), purity (quaddusi), and omnipotence (jabrut).”⁵⁹ These qualities help him to perform different obligations and purposes. These qualities also affirm and appreciate life and condemn nihilism and self-destruction because for Iqbal the aim of life is self-realization and self-knowledge.

Beside the above-mentioned qualities there are different essential factors which can help the *khudi* to become more perfect. The following are the essential factors:

A. At first place Iqbal emphasized on love (*ishq*) because that is the key element to strengthen the *khudi*. The seeker must have great love for life and through love he nurtures *khudi*. Iqbal himself explains the connection between love and *khudi*. He says, “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 illumine the world.”⁶⁰ The strength, success and perfection lies in how much love one put in the struggles and nourishment of *khudi*. Love helps the seeker to transcend to the highest level of perfection as Iqbal says, “be a lover constant in devotion to thy beloved, that thou mayst cast thy noose and capture God. By the might of love evoke an army, reveal thyself on the farm of love. That the Lord of *Ka;ba* (holy and central place for the Muslims) may show thee favor. And make thee the object of the text, lo, I will appoint a vicegerent on the earth.”⁶¹

B. The second essential factor is the ‘desire’ (*tamanna*). The desire to become perfect man must be rooted in the heart of the seeker. The desire makes life enthusiastic and dynamic. Iqbal describes the element of desire as he says, “life is preserved by purpose, because of the goal its caravan bell tinkles. Life is latent in seeking, its origin is hidden in desire, keep desire alive in thy heart, lest they little dust become a tomb. Desire is the soul of this world of hue and scent, the nature of everything is a store - house of desire. Desire keeps the self in perpetual uproar, it is a restless wave of the self’s sea, this desire that enriches life.”⁶² The desire and yearning is very essential for the meaningful and fruitful life. This capacity should be always there in the seeker.

C. The third element which Iqbal stressed is *faqr* or *isteghna* which can be translated as beggar but beggar in the spiritual sense. A true *faqr* never begs and maintains his dignity. Nothing can hinder his way such as material possessions etc.

D. Besides *faqr*, Iqbal also highlights the element of tolerance and forbearance. To tolerate other people and their point of views. The tolerance and forbearance are the key elements of true humanism which promote the spirit of harmony and dialogue.

E. One of the most important and essential element is ‘action.’ Seeker can only become perfect man through the life of activity and creativity. Iqbal explains the element of action by saying, “do not content

⁵⁸ Ehsan Ghodrattollahi, *The Doctrine of Khudi in Iqbal’s Philosophical Thought, Philosophical - Theological Research*, Vol.13, No.1.), 83., [online] available from www.google.com, 24 September 2016.

⁵⁹ Qamar Hasan, *Muslims in India, Attitudes, Adjustments and Reactions*, 18.

⁶⁰ Ehsan Ghodrattollahi, 73.

⁶¹ Ibid.74.

⁶² Ibid.

yourself with resting on the shore: the rhythm of life there is slow. Plunge in the sea and grapple with the waves eternal life consists in struggling so.”⁶³ Without actions there is no creativity, only through actions seeker can make its own *khudi*.

E. The culmination of the behaviour of the perfect man is to become courageous. The courage makes the *khudi* strong. Through courage the seeker rejects what is contrary to *khudi* and also what weakens the *khudi*.

D. Lastly the suffering which is part and parcel of perfect man’s life. In order to arrive at the stage of highest perfection seeker has to bear lot of trials, dangers and sufferings. Suffering enables man to see the whole life. Iqbal says, “the self (*khudi*) becomes more mature through suffering.”⁶⁴

Through the above-mentioned essential factors man can carve his own future and destination. The perfect man does not have any fixed fate or destiny. Though God is the creator of the universe but man has the ability to mold and rebuild it in his own way. According to Iqbal even man can demand his own fate from God. Man is free to make his own choices. Man can elevate and transcends himself to highest realms of perfection because he has tremendous power and abilities. Man must have his own initiatives, activity and originality. Man, himself is the main architect to constitute his own being because his being and *khudi* is not given but can be constituted. He has not only the ability to change and constitute his own being but he can also help other in his society. Perfect man cannot be confined in the shell of his own being but he is free from the dividing lines such as color, race, tongue, or geography etc. He is timeless man, the one who establish *Allah*’s kingdom here on earth.

In the eyes of Iqbal, the perfect example of the *insan-i-kamal* (perfect man) is Prophet Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. Prophet Muhammad is the role model, the supper man for the Muslims and the mankind to follow. According to Iqbal the perfect man can direct and change the history and that is what Iqbal finds in prophet Muhammad. He becomes revolutionary figure who can bring radical change and transformation in the lives of people. The perfect man becomes the embodiment of the divine and of *khudi* who completely fulfills the will of *Allah* and becomes the instrument of *Allah*. The *insan-i-kamal* becomes the divine voice-regent (*khilifa*). The world is looking for that kind of man even in the words of Iqbal, *Allah* himself is looking for such a perfect man.⁶⁵ According to Iqbal Prophet Muhammad is the worthiest of mankind which can be called *insan-i-kamal*. Iqbal sees in Prophet Muhammad a new man who has changed the course of history. In his philosophy of *khudi* he visualizes such man, a new transformed human for future human society and the new social order. Iqbal’s future human is faith-oriented (*moman*) and God-fearing person. Iqbal’s future man is also the initiator and creator of new order where the principles of justice, peace and equality prevails. The perfect man of Iqbal is called to follow the role model of Prophet Muhammad.

Nietzsche and Iqbal: Comparison

Life and works of Friedrich Nietzsche’s philosophy has influenced many scholars which is evident in Muslims scholars too, especially in Iqbal. Iqbal admired Nietzsche and his philosophy and in many of his works he has discussed his ideas and philosophy. Though Iqbal’s *insan-i-kamal* (perfect man) is influenced by Sufi Concept of *insan-i-kamal* but many of the scholars agree that Nietzsche’s ‘overman’ had deeply influenced Iqbal’s perfect man. Some scholars hold the opinion that Iqbal’s *insan-i-kamal*

⁶³ Ibid., 77.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 80.

⁶⁵ Mustansir Mir, *Iqbal* (London & New York: I.B. TAURIS, 2006), 35.

(perfect man) is the presentation of Nietzsche's 'overman.' According to Annemarie Schimmel, "Iqbal himself has always maintained that the idea of the *insan-i-kamal* (perfect man) was Islamic, not Nietzschean, yet Nietzsche's superman may still have acted as an ingredient in the formation of Iqbal's ideas."⁶⁶ There are some similarities and differences between them which can be seen in the following:

1. Overall both Nietzsche and Iqbal are not agreed with Platonism and have criticized his interpretation about life and the world and especially when Plato divides the world into two forms; namely the world of ideas and the apparent world. According to his idea the world in which we exist is apparent world and not real world. This approach has affected many religions and different philosophies of life which have wrong interpretation of religion and nihilistic approach because these elements negate and degrade life and its importance. Both have condemned the negative approaches towards life. Both have defended life and encourage people to live it to the full. Both have unique approach: Nietzsche wants to see man as 'overman' while Iqbal wants to see man as '*insan-I-kamal*' (perfect man).
2. Nietzsche's approach is atheistic approach therefore for him God is dead. His 'overman' (*Übermensch*) can only emerge or can become in the absence of God. While Iqbal's '*Insan-i-Kamal* (Perfect Man) is a believer (*moman*). The strong individual who always strives to the acquire the qualities and will of the eternal *khudi* (ultimate or eternal ego which is Allah)⁶⁷ Nietzsche's overman is guided by his own will while Iqbal's perfect man follow the divine will. In Iqbal's own views, "Nietzsche's 'overman' is a biological product but the Islamic *insan-i-kamal* (perfect man) is the product of moral and spiritual forces."⁶⁸
3. In Nietzsche the fundamental motivating force to become 'overman' is will to power while in Iqbal's approach the fundamental motivating force is his 'concept of *khudi* (self or ego). For Nietzsche the will to power means 'will to live.' This is expressed by Nietzsche himself as he says, "a living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength - life itself is will to power; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results thereof."⁶⁹ In Nietzsche the values which promote life emerge from the will to power as he says, "all valuations are only the results of, and the narrow points of view in serving, this one will: valuing in itself is nothing save this,... will to power."⁷⁰ Nietzsche further says, "the will to accumulate force is confined to the phenomenon of life, to nourishment, to procreation, to inheritance, to society, states, customs, authority. Should we not be allowed to assume that this will is the motive power also of chemistry? - and of the cosmic order?"⁷¹ In Iqbal the motivating force is the realization of one's *khudi* (self) especially when the *khudi* draws closer to eternal *khudi* or ego will reach at highest level of perfection.
4. In the process of self-realization and actualization Nietzsche presents three metamorphoses of the spirit such as camel, the lion and the child. These metamorphoses correspond with the three stages of Iqbal's *khudi* such as obedience to the law, self-control and divine-vicegerent. In Nietzsche the first stage is as camel and camel in nature is very obedient. The man must have the heroic spirit as camel just like the tightrope walker. Camel spirit bears the burden and wills to bear hardest. Willing to take any task even the difficult tasks. The camel stage gives the spirit the heroic and noble nature.

⁶⁶ Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (USA: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 144.

⁶⁷ Rajmohan Gandhi, *Understanding the Muslim Mind* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2000), 61.

⁶⁸ Dr. Tariq Masoodi, *Educational Philosophy of Iqbal*, 18.

⁶⁹ Dr. Nazir Qaiser, *Iqbal and The Western Philosophers* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2001), 40.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Nietzsche's prophet Zarathustra is the manifestation of that spirit. On the other hand, for Iqbal to become *insan-i-kamal*, one must have the courage and brave enough to submit his will to the divine by obeying the commandments of *Allah* (Allah: The Eternal Ego, Self or khudi) and then face the consequences and realities of life. Jackson writes, "for both Nietzsche and Iqbal - one must first of all be spiritually inclined. The camel 'renounces and is reverent'; important qualities for the man of faith to have, Nietzsche is not critical of reverence; to become the *Übermensch* you must revere the *Übermensch*. Thus, to become the perfect Muslim you must revere the Perfect Muslim."⁷² The second stage of Iqbal is also similar to that of Nietzsche. For Nietzsche in the second stage, one passes from the stage of camel to the lion stage which is stage of control and self-determination. In this stage Nietzsche does not have any reverence for the old values which causes decadence. But in case of Iqbal, he presents the second stage as self-control where the perfect man learns to control himself. Instead of those values which destroy and become the cause of decadence, in order to become the perfect man; must redirected and revere oneself to the values of perfect Muslim. In Nietzsche the third stage is that of child. The qualities of the child are that he is innocent, pure, self-propelling and always ready to have new beginning. At this stage the spirit obeys its own will. At the stage of child spirit is on the way to become overman, though it may need some more transitions and transformations but in this stage the spirit is already on the right direction. He creates his own values. This relates to the third stage of Iqbal's perfect man of divine vicegerent who create new values for himself. The divine vicegerent is the perfect man and the perfect man for Iqbal is Prophet Muhammad.⁷³

5. For Iqbal, the *insan-i-kamal* (perfect man) is indeed the Prophet Muhammad, who also possesses the characteristics of Nietzsche's 'overman' (*Übermensch*). Thus, Iqbal is also related to an early form of existentialism, although it is difficult to say to what extent Islam can be existentialist in the way it is understood in the Sartrean sense. Like Nietzsche's prophet Zarathustra, Iqbal sees Muhammad as redemptive figure who confronted the age of *jahiliyya* (ignorance). Nietzsche's Zarathustra was confronted by the death of God and conventional values of decadence.⁷⁴
6. In Iqbalian perspective, Iqbal gives more importance to Ego or the Self and he calls it *khudi*. *Khudi* is the spiritual fact in mankind. It is not a fiction. He expresses it in this manner, "if you say that the 'I' is a mere illusion, an appearance among other appearances, then tell me who is the subject of this illusion, look within and discover."⁷⁵ Iqbal understands *khudi* as spiritual reality. In his view *khudi* "proceeds from the directive energy of God."⁷⁶ But for Nietzsche the idea of *khudi* (ego) is just opposite to that of Iqbal. For Nietzsche the fundamental element is the body as he says, "the belief in the body is more fundamental than the belief in the soul: the latter arose from the unscientific observation of the agonies of the body (something, which leaves it. The belief in the truth of dreams.)"⁷⁷ Nietzsche take ego as mere fancy. According to him, "*subject* is nothing given, but something superimposed by fancy, something introduced behind... is not necessary to set an interpreter behind the interpretation already to hand? Even that would be fantasy, hypothesis."⁷⁸

⁷² Roy Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), 58-59.

⁷³ Ibid., 59.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 83.

⁷⁵ Dr. Nazir Qaiser, *Iqbal and The Western Philosophers*, 35.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 36.

⁷⁷ Ibid.,35.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

7. Nietzsche's overman is aristocrat which has to rise and reign the herd. Because for the Nietzsche the herd and the masses have no value. He himself say, 'not mankind but *Übermensch* is the goal.'⁷⁹ He holds the view that, "the goal of human efforts should be not the elevation of all but the development of finer and stronger individuals,"⁸⁰ but on the other, Iqbal's *insan-i-kamal* (perfect man) can emerge from any class, he wants people to be empowered people therefore his goal is mankind. He wants the entire community to be made up of authentic individuals.⁸¹ Iqbal wants of man is to see man as perfect man (*insan-i-kamal*) who is animated by the divine law, wisdom and intuition. They represent Allah here on earth and become his vicegerent.

Conclusion

Over all Nietzsche and Iqbal have redefine the reality of human person and both tried to find the answer in their own way to their corresponding quests. Nietzsche portrays man as 'overman' (*Übermensch*) and Iqbal as *Insan-i-Kamal* (perfect man). They condemn all those barriers which are hindrances in human growth. They have given mankind the vision to live meaningful, fruitful and authentic existence.

Note:

Conflict of Interest:

The researcher declares that he does not have any conflict of interest for this submitted work.

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⁷⁹ W.H. Werkmeister, *Martin Heidegger on The Way* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 111.

⁸⁰ Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* (New York: Pocket Books, 2006), 553.

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