

## ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVES ON IQBAL'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

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### ABSTRACT

Allama Mohammad Iqbal, the renowned poet-philosopher of Islam, presents a profound educational philosophy rooted in Quran and Sunnah, critiquing modern systems for promoting wrong ideals, fragmenting knowledge, and ignoring the soul in favor of the mind. In his key work, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, he urges Muslims to rethink faith through modern science without breaking from tradition, Islamize knowledge by blending reason, intuition, and Faqr for holistic selfhood (Khudi), and oppose borrowed Western education's expansionism, liberal individualism, and secularism that produce superficial individuals lacking moral and national ideals. Iqbal views education as inseparable from culture, essential for preserving traditions and fostering communal perfection as outlined in *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi*, while praising selective adoption of scientific methods if subservient to Deen, transforming knowledge from poison to a blessing for justice and self-awareness.

**KEYWORDS:** Iqbal's Educational Philosophy; Islamization of Knowledge; Khudi (Selfhood); Reconstruction of Religious Thought; Critique of Liberal Education

### INTRODUCTION

It is a well known fact that Allama Mohammad Iqbal was originally the poet-philosopher of Islam. He laid down the foundation of a great concept through his marvellous prose and poetry. Among the modern Muslim thinkers, Iqbal holds a unique distinction. He studied life with all its philosophy and message. He had a broad intellectual canvas, which stored a rich knowledge of world intellectual traditions. He reflects on life in its universal



Islamic content. As a fruit of his global perspective, he is not only one of the thinkers of Muslim culture, but also he is one of the universal thinkers of humankind.

Allama Iqbal derived this whole humanism from Quran and Sunnah of Hadith. In fact he was fully influenced from Islamic concept, that is why he vehemently declared in his Persian poetry. Iqbal says that, many new worlds are concealed in its (Quranic) verses and countless ages yet to come are hidden in its wisdom. Its different interpretations can resolve the problems of the past, present and future ages, provided that the Muslims are able to reconcile “Reason” with “Love” and realise that the new world lying buried in their hearts is anxiously waiting to unfold itself on hearing the word ‘be’ from them [1].

There have been many exposition on the nature of knowledge in Islam more than in any other religion, culture and civilization, and there is no doubt due to the preeminent position and paramount role accorded to Al-illm by Allah in the Holy Quran. These exposition, though apparently varying in substance, encompass the nature of knowledge in its totality. There have been distinctions made between Allah’s knowledge and the knowledge of man about Allah and religion and the world, things sensible and intelligible about spiritual knowledge and wisdom. Allama Iqbal, as I mentioned earlier influenced much from these sign about Education are knowledge.

### **Iqbal's Philosophy**

It is a well-known fact that Allama Mohammad Iqbal was originally the poet-philosopher of Islam. He laid down the foundation of a great concept through his marvellous prose and poetry. Among modern Muslim thinkers, Iqbal holds a unique distinction, having studied the soul and life with all its philosophy and message, drawing from a broad intellectual canvas rich in world traditions. He reflects on life in its universal Islamic content, making him not only a thinker of Muslim culture but also of humankind.

### **Iqbal's Humanism from Quran and Sunnah**

Allama Iqbal derived this whole humanism from the Quran and Sunnah of Hadith, fully influenced by Islamic concepts. He vehemently declared in his Persian poetry that many new worlds are concealed in its (Quranic) verses and countless ages yet to come are hidden in its wisdom. Its different interpretations can resolve the problems of past, present, and future ages, provided Muslims reconcile “Reason” with “Love” and realize the new world buried in their hearts awaits unfolding on hearing the word ‘be’.

### **Islamic Knowledge and Its Expositions**

Many expositions on the nature of knowledge in Islam surpass those in any other religion, culture, or civilization, due to the preeminent position of Al-Ilm by Allah in the Holy Quran. These encompass knowledge in its totality, distinguishing Allah's knowledge from human knowledge of religion, the world, sensible and intelligible things, spiritual knowledge, and wisdom. Allama Iqbal was much influenced by these signs about education and knowledge.

The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam, Iqbal's philosophical magnum opus, still awaits a detailed study. The seven lectures of the book bear the mark of a brilliant intellect that is seriously engaged with the vast and diverse western and Islamic philosophical and literary traditions, offering a keen analysis of issues and often presenting an original synthesis of ideas.

Allama Iqbal's aim in the above mentioned book is to meet "the demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge by attempting to reconstruct Muslim religious philosophy with due regard to the philosophical tradition of Islam and the more recent developments in the various domains of human knowledge [2].

In accepting as legitimate the demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge and the challenge to make Islam accessible to the modern, scientific minds Iqbal parts company with two Muslim groups of colonial India. The first consists of those traditionally minded Muslim scholars who, being unwilling or unable to engage with modernity, were content with a world-view of Islam that had changed little since medieval times. The second consists of those secularly minded Muslim intellectuals who, being unable or unwilling to draw strength and inspiration from their own long-standing religious tradition, were only too ready to receive the baptism of western modernity. Bearing in mind the attitudes of these two groups will help us to appreciate the importance of Allama Iqbal's project and to understand accurately his fundamental philosophical stance.

Educational dimension of life is very important for Iqbal, because Education is a part and parcel of the culture of a nation, and it is the very important instrument through which a culture perpetuates itself. Therefore the two cannot separate from each other in just as the flesh cannot be separated from the bone.

According to him, one country safely profits from the experiences of others. But great care should be taken in respect of values, principles and ideas. Because consciously or unconsciously blind adoption of other culture and education can destroy the entire fabric of a particular nations culture, So Allama Iqbal is very clear on this point and cautions us that,

Look into thy own clay for the fire that is wanted. The light of another is not worth stinging for. Thus, it is clear that Allama Iqbal was totally opposed to borrowed educational and cultural ideas. According to him, every system, programme or plan of education is the creation of an ideal. To him Education, like Ethics, politics and philosophy, is not an independent system of knowledge. The text books, the mentality of the teaches and his general attitude towards life, the views of the managing and governing authorities, whether they are public or private bodies, the environment and the atmosphere of the school in so far as they uphold that system, and programmes or plans of education, reflect the ideal. Therefore the ideal is continually attracting pupils towards itself. Education is a servant of ideals, whether wrong or right, and can be adopted to serve every one of them equally. Moral behaviour, in accordance with absolute and universal principles of morality, is impossible without a strong love of the Right Ideal which it should be the object of education to create [3].

### **Iqbal's Critique of Modern Education and Vision for Ideals**

The learners are inspired by the love of wrong ideals, imperceptivity, through the agency of the schools that embody the educational systems created by those ideals. As Iqbal says:

The school personnel have already throttled thee, where form can now come the voice of  
'None is worth of worship except Allah. In another Persian poetry, he says:

The school is unaware of its aims and objects, until it has an access to the urge within. In an another place he says:

As long as knowledge does not taste the fruits of love, it is nothing but an exhibition of thoughts. In the present, way of teaching, he was never satisfied with it, instead he proclaimed that:

*These idols of the present era, the product of the school, are endowed neither with the manners of the infields nor with the masterly cut of Abraham's father.*

The knowledge of human nature is a matter of inner experience and Allama Iqbal is, to me the best exponent of that knowledge. Every science of knowledge, in order to be definite, has to develop around it self and ideal or a view of human nature. But at present, all the educational system of different sciences are confused or vague, because none of them specifies what the ideal of men should be. Infact all the activities of man are determined by the single uniting force of the ideal.

Allama Iqbal loved modern scientific education from a widest perspective which necessitated a critical view of western culture, one of its off sheets ebbing education. Taking a critical view of the whole problem he condemned it for its expansionism in the human world, particularly the whole world of Islam. In spite of his unqualified appreciation of the material and scientific advancement brought about by the west, he felt duty bounds, to subject the uncritical acceptance and whole sale adoption of its ways on the part of the peoples in the East because of their indolence, inaction and inertia. He advised the muslims of the present era with full confidence in his famous lectures entitled, ***“The Reconstruction of Religious thought in Islam”*** that:

*“The task before the modern muslim is therefore immense. He has to rethink the whole system of Islam, without completely breaking with the past... The only course open to us is to approach modern knowledge attitude and to appreciate the teachings of Islam in the light of that knowledge, even if we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us”.*

Allama Iqbal at the same time stress to follow the glorious tradition and adhere them. In his famous Persian collection ***“Rumuz-i-Bekhud”*** he captions a chapter as follows *“That the perfection of communal life is attained when the community, like the individuals, develop the sense of selfhood, and that the propagation and the perfection of this sense is made possible through the perpetuation of national tradition”.* That is why he never neglects past glorious traditions and says: *The record of the past illuminates the conscience of a people. The memory of the past achievements makes it self-aware.*

But if that memory fades, and is forgot, the folk again is lost in nothingness. Know, then it is the connecting thread of days that sticks up thy life’s loose manuscript. According to a well known Educationist, ***Dr. G. R. Abdullah***, “What qualified him (S. M. Iqbal) especially for the great mission was the mastery that he had gained over the cultural traditions, eastern as well as western concurrently” [5].

Iqbal totally criticized the more liberal education, because in the modern age, liberal education, individuality was emphasised at the cost of all other considerations. Education has been divorced from ethics and religion. Freedom now become the catch word. It has been asserted now that a student should be given ample freedom to grow and develop according to his latent faculties and no external influence be allowed to cast his thinking or character into specific moulds. This kind of education because very common in the united states and gained ground in European countries as well. The results which liberal education has produced are in no way encouraging because this educational system failed to develop social ideals among

the students. It is crystal clear that when people lack ideals which may in spite them to action and sacrifice, they gradually lose their grip on history and their decline follows.

Therefore Allama Iqbal says in this content that:

*Life of the individual depends on the relationship of the body and the soul. Life of the nation depends on the preservation of its tradition and culture. Individual dies, if the life-flow ceases Nation dies if the ideal of life is spurned.*

So, the modern education failed to instill moral values in the hearts and souls of the new generations. It deals merely with the demands of the mind and fails to cater to the demands of the soul. A dichotomy occurs between the two and this results in a great national loss. That is Allama says:

*Knowledge is a snake for your, i.e. your poison, if you use it to increase your material, body (alone). If knowledge is used for the emancipation of the soul, then it is your best friend.*

This kind of education has resulted in the departmentalisation of knowledge. Liberal education fails to organise or integrate knowledge into any one consistent whole. In this system of knowledge students begin to see life and the world in small, unrelated fragments and fails to develop a sense of their unity and meaning they only see the trees not the world at large.

Later on this liberal education produces those persons who do not have any grip over the basic and living issues of life. Nor they are able to face the grim and grave problems of this life.

Therefore, in actual practice their knowledge proves too superficial to be of any empire value. From the national point of view, such education fails to deliver the goods.

These basic drawbacks of the modern liberal education are now becoming more and more manifest.

In real sense, education must instill those beliefs and ideals for which the nation stands. Preservation and promotion of the religion and culture of the people should be the purpose of education.

A.N white head emphasis this point when he says that “the essence of education is that it be religious” [6].

Allama Iqbal held the view that Islam and Islamization should be the basic purpose of our life and education. He writes in a letter to **K. G. Sayeedin**.

“By Illam I mean that knowledge which is based on senses. Usually I have used the word in this very sense. This knowledge yield physical powers which should be subsequent to deen

(i.e, the religion of Islam). If it is not subsequent to den then it is demonic, pure and simple. It is incumbent on muslims to Islamize knowledge. “Abu Lahab should be metamorphosed into Haiyder”. If this Abu lahab becomes Haider-e-Karrar, or in other words, if it (i.e knowledge and the power it wield) becomes subservient to deen then it would be an unmined blessing unto mankind” [7].

From the above whole discussion, it becomes clear that Allama Iqbal wanted to give education an ideological orientation and regarded that knowledge and education which is natural towards religion. He showed absolute dissatisfaction with the educative role of conventional Muslim educational centres, Deoband and Nadwah. According to him, both these institutions lack in fulfilment of current aspirations of the Muslim society [8].

He says about the *Madars Molvi* of teaches that:

*The teaches (of Maktaba) lacking intellectual equipment and insight;  
And is not aware of his true stature.*

The short-sighted approach of a teaches has damaged the whole Muslim society. It also damaged the real objective of education. The student in this situation cannot explore his latent potentialities and becomes a passive agent of the society. Allama Iqbal analysis it as a criminal negligence on the part of teacher. With this non-ideal and irresponsible role, according to him, the falcon like child starts to learn to do merely mundane tasks. He says:

*My complaint against mentors of the school is this:  
To eaglets they impart the lesson of earthliness.*

Allama Iqbal wants a resourceful system of education which could nourish a sensitive heart in the student, who may prove themselves as creators and sustainers of a new era of hope and justice. So in the attainment of knowledge he condemns the speculative attitude. Mere speculation, he maintains, can neither grasp the material world nor can it give us any definite knowledge of the ultimate reality. So in order to reach concrete finding of what life is composed of, he combines reason and intuition to attain a true vision and knowledge of the self and deprecate that knowledge which is not so characterized. In this regard he says;

*That knowledge is blindness which is not combined with,  
The vision of a prophet and observation of a thinker.*

In short a comprehensive view of Iqbal's ideas about education would reveal that he tried to reconnect the broken links of diverse educational activities.

At one side Faqr (purity of heart and vision) in the philosophy of education gives a high intellectual and emotional importance to the individual. On other side knowledge purifies men's intellect but with the assimilation of Faqr man's heart and vision get purified.

The goal of knowledge is the clarity of thought and understanding. While the goal of Faqr is the purity of heart and vision.

Another side, he makes the point clear to the Eastern people that the strength of the West does not lie in music nor in their dance of unveiled daughters. Their power and vitality rests on their arts and sciences. In the attainment of knowledge of different subjects, Allama emphasis their teaching, provided it does not undermine the growth and development of Khudi, or our Islamic values.

For the promotion of our knowledge in general, modern scientific education becomes inevitable according to Allama Iqbal. So it is not sin, to derive the Western scientific method of knowledge. In this regard, he say

*The western learning is like a tavern to all;  
Drinks of modern knowledge are no sin;*

According to him, imparting religious education will not yield any proposed result, unless it is related to the basic needs and necessities of present circumstances. That is why in 1933, he issued the following statement: "Personally, I believe that complete Secularization, of education has not produced good results. Nor is there any absolute system of education. Each country has its own needs and its educational problems must be solved in the light of those needs.

## CONCLUSION

Allama Iqbal critiques modern education for promoting wrong ideals, divorcing knowledge from love, ethics, and religion, and fragmenting human potential through liberal and secular approaches. He advocates Islamizing knowledge, blending reason with intuition and Faqr for holistic growth, while selectively adopting Western science without undermining Islamic values or traditions.

Iqbal's educational vision reconnects fragmented knowledge with spiritual ideals, urging Muslims to rethink Islam in modern light for selfhood and communal perfection, ensuring education serves Deen as an unmined blessing.

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