

Iqbal: The Philosopher Of The Modern Age (In The Light Of Prologue Of Secrets Of The Self)

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Abstract

Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal is not only known as the poet or poet of the east but also one of the significant thinker, philosopher, political leader and advocate of the peace. His inner soul was pure Islamic but his outer intellect comes from modern philosophy, which makes him blend of the Eastern and Western thoughts. In this paper, the author highlights the significance of thoughts and message of Iqbal in the light of prologue of his first Persian poetical work اسرار خودی (The Secrets of the Self) that his message always relevant to the modern age i.e. in mechanical age as well as robotic and Information Technology age. His thoughts are still fresh. His wisdom gives us solutions of the problems of new age. Iqbal's message, which promotes self-empowerment, individual development, and a continuous quest for self-realization, remains remarkably relevant in the modern era. Whether in the age of industrialization, the digital age, or the era of artificial intelligence, his philosophical insights offer valuable guidance. The prologue of Asrar-i-Khudi serves as a testament to his timeless wisdom. It addresses the inner conflict of human beings, urging them to transcend limitations and external control in favor of nurturing their inherent potential. Iqbal's thoughts on the self are not confined to a specific era but are universally applicable, providing solutions to

contemporary issues such as alienation, the loss of individuality, and the challenges brought about by technological advancements

Keywords: Iqbal, Poet, Philosophy, Intellect, Thought, Wisdom, Secrets, Self, Ego, Man, God, East, West, Modernism, Future, Universe.

Introduction

Today, the Muslim world is in the state of deterioration. There is no scheme or plan of unification, nor is there any collective strategy from which the Muslim world can secure its own protection. The economy of the Muslim world is being destroyed by terrorism and many other pretexts and most of the countries depend on the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe. If we go through the contemporary situation carefully, it is revealed that despite there being fifty-seven or more independent Muslim countries, the Muslim World have been suffering from intellectual, social, academic, literary and economic degradation. Muslims have become a picture of desperation and helplessness. One country after another has become a victim of hunger, poverty and anarchy. Today's youth is a victim of religious trends, sectarianism and the duality of society which is a mixture of Eastern and Western cultures, unable to determine the direction of their future. On the other hand, with rapid technological development and attractive career prospects in the West, young people of the Muslim World, from Pakistan to Arabia, Egypt to Malaysia are victims of distractions under the influence of Faison trends, fast food chains, casinos, electronics and social media. Although, Iran has a strong resistance to the Western trends, products, electronics and print media, but they do not have the antidote to stop the British/American tobacco industry, Internet and social media. The Saudi princes apparently did not escape the charm of European and North American gambling houses, casinos and the recent government initiatives in Saudi Arabia, which are seeking to change the norms and enlightened their society. What is lacking in this 'progressive' modern way of life is a reference to the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet PBUH. The new generation is moving away from Quran and Sunnah.

Iqbal, often referred to as "The Philosopher of the Modern Age," made a significant contribution to philosophical thought through his poetic works, especially in *The Secrets of the Self* (Asrar-i-Khudi). In the prologue of this book, he introduces his revolutionary ideas about the self, individuality, and the concept of self-realization. Iqbal emphasizes the importance of the self (Khudi) as the central force for human development and empowerment. He rejects the idea of submission to external forces and advocates for the nurturing of one's inner potential to

achieve greatness. His philosophy promotes active engagement with the world, stressing that true freedom and progress come from within. Iqbal's vision goes beyond personal success; he calls for a collective awakening of the Muslim world, urging them to rediscover their true essence and reassert their cultural and intellectual strength. In doing so, he aligns himself with the ideas of self-empowerment and renewal, which were crucial for addressing the challenges of the modern age.

In such a situation, we look at a single personality of the recent time, in whose thought and philosophy we find the solution to these problems. In the poetry and prose of Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, poet, philosopher, the National Poet of Pakistan and the poet of the East, we find a revolutionary and universal message. His thought is exhorting sovereignty to the Muslim world. Iqbal was fortunate to have a genius like Molvi Mir Hasan as a teacher, who not only taught Persian since his childhood but also taught him Masnavi Maulana Rum. During primary education he could speak Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Punjabi fluently. Taking this intellectual and educational basis, he came to Lahore where a renowned orientalist and philosopher like Arnold became his teacher. On his recommendation and facilitation, Iqbal stepped in to Europe for higher education. As the seed of Islamic thought sown in his heart and mind by Molvi Mir Hasan, he deeply studied the thought and philosophy of Western thinkers. During this period, Iqbal observed crookedness and hollowness of Western civilization.

The Concept of the Self in Iqbal's work

The most popular theory in Iqbal's thought and philosophy is the theory of "Self". The Self is actually used in the Persian language to mean arrogance and pride, perhaps for the first time, Iqbal gave this word a unique and enlightened meaning, due to which it introduces as a term beyond its meanings and became the most important theory of Iqbal. The composition of man's inner consists of two elements, one is thought and the other is attitude. As if these two elements together establish the inner existence of a human being, thought is actually fear, but it usually remains in a state of relaxation, i.e. it remains dreamy. When it is awakened, it differentiates a person from ordinary people. This distinction provides a complete understanding of human nature and the name of this understanding according to Iqbal is the Self. We can interpret it as the term of the awakened intellect, as if the intellect is present with everyone, but the awakened intellect is only with the one whose consciousness has awakened and who has gained knowledge of his own self. Rather, it brings a person to the knowledge of God's Self, as a renowned Sufi quoted "من عرف نفسه" (Translation: "He who has recognized his self has recognized his God"). Even the definition of self is universal.

In the search for the sources of Iqbal's theory of self, Iqbal scholars have linked it to Western thinkers such as Nietzsche, Bergson, Hegel, etc. In the opinion of Khalifa Abdul Hakim, Iqbal was not influenced by Nietzsche, but by Fichte because Nietzsche has denied the existence of God. Iqbal likes that aspect of Nietzsche's teaching which is a distinguishing element of Islamic teaching. On the contrary, the fact is that Iqbal has taken the idea of love in Islamic Sufism from Maulana Rumi. And the revolutionary message of Iqbal's poetry is actually the result of Rumi's grace. Abdus Salam Nadwi writes about this in following words:

"The concept of the self is the base of Dr. Sahib's philosophy and it is the foundation of all his philosophical ideas. It seems that this whole philosophy is derived from Nietzsche in particular, but the fact is that Dr. Sahib got this thought is derived from Maulana Rumi."²

According to Khalifa AbdulHakim:

"Rumi is convinced of individual survival and says that man does not perish in God as a drop of water perishes in the sea. Rather, it is like a lamp burning in the sunlight as iron in a fire, but its individuality remains distinct. The same theory suits for Dr. Sahib's philosophy of self, so he has derived it from Maulana Rumi."³

As discussed, Iqbal's philosophy is derived from Holy Quran, hence, all the basic subjects of his philosophy of the self are derived from the Quran and Sunnah.

His First Long Philosophical Poem Secrets of the Self

Iqbal started poetry right from his student days, but his first poetry collection was "AsrarKhudi" (Secrets of the Self) which was published in 1915. A study of Allama Iqbal's biography written by his son Dr. Javed Iqbal reveals that Allama Iqbal started writing Masnavi "AsrarKhudi" in 1910. Dr. Javed Iqbal quotes a letter written to Ms. AtiyaFaizi.

"My father has asked me to write a Persian Masnavi following Bu Ali Qalandar, although the task was difficult, but I have promised."⁴

The very beginning of Masnavi tells how revolutionary and aggressive Iqbal's thought is. It started it with three verses of Maulana Rumi, the meaning of which is clear that in this land of beasts, he was looking for what is rare, and not found commonly, he was in the search of the rare gem. He was looking for Haidere

Karar and Rustam Zaman. Right after that, in the start of Prologue he quoted Naziri Nishapuri's verses:

There is no flaw in my dry and wet forest

The wood I cannot make a pulpit from, I make Gallows of it

Dr. Abdul Shakur Ahsan writes in his book "A Critical Review of Iqbal's Persian Poetry":

نیت در خشک و تر همیشه من کوتاهی
چوب هر نخل که منبر نشود دار کنم (۵)

"The new concept of self, created a sensation among the readers. Its new meaning was not used in Persian language and literature before Iqbal. When Iqbal expressed about the immense and importance of the individual and the unlimited potential of man's essence, this brought out the reality of human ego or self in a new imaginative and revolutionary color, but it did not reflect on the interrelationship of the individual and the rights and duties of the human being and the power of creating and creating the individual greatness of the human being? The emphasis on subjugation might have given rise to the misconception that this insistence on individual selfhood would destroy the foundations of national life. While in the Mysteries of Selflessness, in the logical manner Iqbal explained the relationship between the individual and the nation, the reality of complete harmony between the philosophy of self and selflessness was revealed."⁶

Iqbal: The Voice of the Other World

راه	چون	شب	مهر	عالمتاب	زد
گریه	من	بر	رخ	گل	زد
اشک	من	از	چشم	نرگس	شت
سبزه	از	هنگامه	ام	بیدار	رُست
باغبان	زور	کلامم	آموزد		
مصرعی	کارید	و	شمشیری	درود	
در	چمن	جز	دانه	اشکم	نکشت
تار	افغانم	به	پود	باغ	رِشت
ذره	ام	مهر	مُمیر آن	من	است
صد	سحر	اندر	گریبان	من	است
خاک	من	روشن	از	جام	جم
محرم	از	نازاد های	عالم	است (ل)	

When the world-illuminating sun rushed upon Night like a brigand,
My weeping bedewed the face of the rose.
My tears washed away sleep from the eye of the narcissus,
My passion wakened the grass and made it grow.
The Gardener tried the power of my song,
He sowed my verse and reaped a sword.
In the soil he planted only the seed of my tears
And wove my lament with the garden, as warp and woof.
Tho' I am but a mote, the radiant sun is mine:
Within my bosom are a hundred dawns.
My dust is brighter than Jamshid's cup
It knows things that are yet unborn in the world.⁸

If we revisit the first verse of the prologue, it has very extramundane meaning within it. The First World War was over. The end of the Ottoman Caliphate was scripted. The grief of the Islamic World was fresh. In this context, Iqbal has used the intensity of his sensation in various gestures and has given a clear message that his poetry and message is for the Islamic World. He said that the flower which is still inside the branch, the flower which is in his imagination, will become the splendour of my garden. The same thought was described in Urdu as follows:

حادثہ وہ جو اچھی پردہ افلاک میں ہے
عکس اُس کا مرے آئینہ ادراک میں ہے (۹)

Events as yet folded in the scroll of Time
Reflect in the mirror of my perception.¹⁰

Comparing himself to a new sun, Iqbal said that by breaking the traditions of the sky, he has risen like a new sun whose effects are not clear yet, which will gradually become clear. That is, the future belongs to his thought and philosophy. The sea is oblivious to the dance of this light, the mountains are unaware of its brightness, as if the Muslim world is still in grief, a time will come when they will be enlightened by Iqbal's universal thought. His morning has just risen from the East and the darkness of the night has just passed. Hewas waiting for the early risers, what a blessed people will be those who take the fire from his fire. He is a song that does not need instruments. He was the voice of the poet of the future, which means that in the future his thought and philosophy will be understood and many revolutions will be borne and followed. History is aevident that the Iranian revolution that occur half a century after Iqbal, the independence movement of the Central Asian states, the Arab Spring, the Chinese industrial and technological revolution and above all the revolutionary movement and government in Turkiye, Iqbal's thought and philosophy is present somewhere behind these historical movements. When Iqbal says," My age is not aware of my secrets and my Yusuf is not for this market", here he has likened Yusuf to the people of the coming age. In his Urdu poetry collection Gabriel's Wing, says:

تیرے محیط میں کہیں گوہر زندگی نہیں
ڈھونڈ چکا میں موج موج، دیکھ چکا صدف صدف (۱۱)

Nowhere near you that shell which holds life's pearl;
I have dragged the waves and searched the ocean's track.¹²

He went on to say that he has disappointed with his old friends, means the poets, writers, intellectuals and philosophers of the sub-continent who had passed before him or were among his contemporaries, they did not understand his poetry. The poets of his time used to write poetry with nature as their theme or love, woman, flower and gardens were metaphors of their poetry. That's why he said that their thoughts and concerns were limited, there was no storm in their ocean and they were calm as dew. While his song is for another world, his bell is for another caravan. He further says that after his death, the eyes of his thoughts and philosophy will be opened, hewould sprout from the soil of his

grave like a flower, i.e. the way a flower seed is sown in the soil, a flower plant will grow from it and then a garden will grow, likewise, he spread his fragrance, his message will not die with his death, but will continue forever. And time proved that as much research has been and is being done on Iqbal's thought and philosophy since his death, this much research has hardly been done on any other poet.

Further, he elaborate that he is a lover, plaint is a part of his faith, which did not need a song maker, it is better if the drop remains unacquainted with his storm. Here, the drop refers to the weak-hearted, the worthless, those who are lazy and sacrifice themselves to fate, they cannot do anything by themselves, but they hope only from Allah that He will do a lot for them, Iqbal is disgusted of them. Again in Gabriel's Wing, he says:

نظر نہیں تو مرے حلقہ سخن میں نہ بیٹھ
کہ نکتہ ہائے خودی ہیں مثال تیغِ اصیل (۱۳)

If seeing eye, you do not own, among my listeners do not pause,
For subtle points about the self, like sword, deep yawning wounds
can cause.¹⁴

It means that if you don't have vision, if you don't have the desire to do something, then there is no point in sitting in his party, because in his party there will be talk of self, solipsism, self-conceit, and self-observant, these points are like a sharp sword. A weak person does not have the courage to hold this sword, and it is the job of lion-hearted people like Haidere Karrar (Hazrat Ali KaramAllahuWajhu).

ساقیا	بر	خیز	ومی	جام	کن
محو	از	دل	کاوش	ایام	کن
شعبی	آبی	کہ	اصلش	زمزم	است
گر	گدا	باشد	پرستارش	جم	است (۱۵)

O Saki! Arise and pour wine into the cup
Clear the vexation of Time from my heart
The sparkling liquor that flows from Zamzam
Were a beggar to worship it, he would become a king.¹⁶

Next he says, O cup bearer! Get up, pour wine into the cup and eliminate the fear of this age from your heart, if you build the love of the Messenger PBUH in your heart, you will be freed from worldly fear. Take the flame of such water in your hand, the source

of which is Holy Water (ZamZam), whose devotees include both paupers and kings. The source of his thought and philosophy is the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet PBUH, by holding on to them, a person is freed from worldly worries and sorrows and resists temporary troubles and calamities. It is the kind of fun that motivates the straw to fight the mountain and the fox to fight the lion. With this wine, the dust is given the height of the earth and the drop is given the breadth of the ocean. It has the ability to create silence and to make the paw of the chakor red with the blood of the falcon. Time has shown that the greatness and effectiveness of Iqbal's universal thought and philosophy awakened the spirit of freedom in the Islamic World. While praying to Allah, he says that he wished to become the apple of the eyes of the people of taste. Hesoughtthe favor from Peer e Rumito reveal the secrets of his office. Just as Pir Rumi gave birth to despair in a despondent nation, so may the people of his nation be blessed by his burning thought. Maulana Rum's caste is rich in austerities while he was like a spark. Pir Rumi turned his dust into an elixir, built a pillar from his dust. A particle wraps its stuff in the dust of the desert so that it can get a ray from the sun, hews a wave and hews sheltered in this ocean to get some depth.

شاعری	زین	مثنوی	مقصود	نیست
بت	پرستی	بت	مقصود	نیست
ہندیم	از	پار	بیگانہ	ام
ماہ	نو	باشم	بیانہ	ام
حسن	انداز	بیان	از	ممن
خوانسار	و	اصفہان	از	ممن
گرچہ	ہندی	در	عذوبت	شکر
طرز	گفتار	دری	شیرین	تر
فکر	من	از	جلوہ	اش
خامہ	من	شاخ	نخل	طور
پارستہ	از	رفعت	اندیشہ	ام
در	خورد	با	فطرت	اندیشہ
خرده	بر	مینا	مگیر	ای
دل	بدوق	خُردہ	ی	مینا
			بہ	بند(۱۷)

Poetising is not the aim of this mathnavi.
Beauty-worshipping and love-making is not its aim.
I am of India: Persian is not my native tongue;
I am like the crescent moon: my cup is not full.
Do not seek from me charm of style in exposition.
Do not seek from me Khansar and Isfahan.
Although the language of Hind is sweet as sugar,
Yet sweeter is the fashion of Persian speech.
My mind was enchanted by its loveliness,
My pen became as a twig of the Burning Bush.
Because of the loftiness of my thoughts,
Persian alone is suitable to them.
O Reader, do not find fault with the wine-cup,
But consider attentively the taste of the wine.¹⁸

In the last stanza, he explained the purpose of writing "Asrar-e-Khudi" (the Secrets of the Self) and said that his purpose of writing this Masnavi (anthology) was not to express poetry, he was resident of India, Persian was not his mother tongue, he was a new moon in Persian poetry, he also said himself an empty scale in this field. He cleared to not to expect poetical qualities from him, though the sweetness of Urdu language is famous, but the splendour of Persian has mesmerized him till his pen become a branch of palm tree. Persian had become the mouthpiece of his lofty thought and great message. He asked reader not to find a fault in the cup, but enjoy the pleasure of the wine inside it, try to keep an eye on the message of freedom hidden in it more than his poetic merits.

The Universality of Iqbal's thought

There are two unique aspects of Iqbal's thought which are very difficult to find in literature, first is the use of contemporary events and accidents in which different aspects of hope are prominent and the second is that, through his poetry he created awareness of world issues and problems of the Muslim World. He had a keen eye on the movements in other countries of the world, such as America, England, Japan, Germany, France, Egypt, Spain, Europe, Greece etc. Iqbal had an eye on the history and movement of those countries and cities as well as contemporary information. But Asia, which is the home of Islam, the rise and fall of Islamic history and civilization was also associated with this soil, the reason for the special attachment to Asia is the religion of Islam alone, says:

سوز و ساز و درد و داغ از آسیاست
هم شراب و هم ایام از آ سیاست (۱۹)

At that time, the scenario that Iqbal presented in his thought and philosophy, the same happened after half a century. It's Iqbal's vision which prescribed this before time. The destiny-defying force of the Central Asians took a new turn. Iqbal was disappointed with the plight of Muslims forced under the rule of Russia. He had seen the second revolution of Russia with his eyes. The reasons found in the thought and philosophy of Iqbal to bring the Muslim World out of its predicament show the value of Iqbal's wisdom and perception, and it is still applicable today. Iqbal is a poet and thinker of humanity who is the true lover of Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa PSBUH. The progress and development of all mankind lies in following his teachings. Our misfortune is that the youth of the Muslim World have forgotten Iqbal's message. If the Muslim World would have applied Iqbal's thought properly, they would have been able to avoid many problems and solve contemporary issues.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, we can conclude on the universality of Iqbal's thought and philosophy and its application in modern times that the foundation of Iqbal's philosophy is based on the Qur'an and Hadith, which makes us believe that this universe is God's creation, which is a balanced combination of spiritual and material forces is created under a higher purpose and also provides guidelines for achieving that purpose. Allah Almighty has given man the abilities that can be used to achieve these goals correctly and completely. It is our duty to follow these principles by following the right path given by Hazrat Muhammad, the last Prophet PBUH. Islamic system is the best conception and universal system developed for mankind in this universe. There is no limit to man's progress, except within his natural covenant with God and his limitations in life. Islam established a system of justice which helps the oppressed against the oppressor. Iqbal denies the Western philosophy and their systems; he eagerly promoted Islamic system as universal system of life and solutions of all the problems of mankind lies within it.

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