

IQBAL'S HUMANISM

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It must be admitted that sufficient research has not yet been made on the works of the great philosopher-poet Iqbal. Many people know him only as a great poet. His philosophy, his deep insight into the ways of human life and society, his exposition of a new out-look of life and his contemplated pattern of a new society, are subjects still to be studied deeply to be understood in their real perspective.

Iqbal was born at a time when the Muslim society of this sub-continent was in a stagnant state of progress, if not, definitely decadent. The people had in them a mighty life-force lying latent and they wanted somebody to move them on. This stirring of new life came from this great poet and philosopher, Sir Md. Iqbal. The poet breathed new life and enthusiasm into the decadent Muslim society and opened before them a new vista of life and light. He was not merely a dreamer but a practical man. He taught people that man should strive hard to reshape the destiny of this world. He despised passivity, quietism and inaction. He inspired them to throw off the inertia and inhibition of the past.

In his opinion a man is endowed with full freedom to develop his unlimited potentialities in active contact with his environment. The world is dynamic, it is ever growing and it offers scope to man to develop his free and creative activity, to conquer nature and to develop the latent powers of his individuality. Man is essentially a creative activity.

It is not a fact that the destiny of man is a sealed matter. For every individual the future exists as an open possibility. Man must develop that by constant effort and activity. He never tolerated the escapist attitude of avoiding struggle. This reminds us of the 19th century Indian Sannyasi-Swami Vivekananda who preached boldly that “Struggle is life and inactivity is death”. Poet Iqbal spoke with convincing passion that a man was capable of evolving Divine qualities in himself by ceaseless activities. He elaborated a message of dynamic activism and of a potentially glorious future.

Poet Iqbal placed greatest emphasis on human achievements. Here we find him in line with the German philosopher Nietzsche. Man was glorified, human genius exalted. He taught that man must strive hard to reshape the destiny of the world. He condemned those who recoiled from struggle and loved peaceful quietism. He called it sinful to indulge in a feeling of passivism and inactivity. He could never reconcile with the idea of resignation. He said the goal of humanity is as not submission but supremacy. Poet Iqbal spoke with supreme eloquence:—“Your heart beats like a coward at the thought of struggle. That is life but death when it loses desire for combat?” Again he said:—”Dive into the river of life and fight the waves. Everlasting life is the outcome of conflict.” Struggle was the soul of these verses.

With poet Iqbal life was a ceaseless endeavour.

In the opinion of Iqbal, man is the centre of creative and dynamic energy. He can defeat the inertia of matter and effect changes in the existing state of things. By his ceaseless effort he

can overcome his own limitations and realise himself and become a God. But the man. The poet adored was not the present man. He was actually dissatisfied with men as he saw, inferior in calibre, limited in intellect. He urged that the object of evolution was to bring such ideal men. So we find the quest of ideal man.

He emphasized on the personality of man. He argued that in a social environment individual personality found better scope to develop, and opportunities for expansion of life. In a society, a man, con-fronted with opposing views and forces, found greater fillips to fortify and strengthen his personality. Isolated individuals are forgetful of higher ends of life.

He visualized an ideal society where the spirit of brotherhood and love, social service and spiritual warmth would permeate every heart. There would be no aggressive wars, no colour or race or class or national distinctions. The ideal society would consist of strong personalities.

Aim of life according to him was to achieve a dynamic personality with a strong sense of ego-hood. This could develop only in a new social order, providing equal opportunities of life for all and free from present ills and evils of life. He said the ethical ideal of man was to develop a strong personality and for that he recommended ceaseless activity. His total emphasis was on activities, on work. By ceaseless activity a man would conquer nature and develop the latent powers of his individuality. He believed that man might evolve divine qualities in his self by endless activity. He wrote that when “Man realises himself and all

his potentialities, he becomes God". The same idea e find in the Hindu Upanishads "Know thyself".

The motive force in work is love. It is love that directs human activities to the working out of God's increasing purpose on earth. A perfect individual is he who has absorbed the divine purpose. He works out the divine plan. In Iqbal's views, man works out the plan of God and becomes co-worker with God. In his opinion the true believer is he who does develop all his latent potentialities and use them for the conquest and remarking of the world. Iqbal finds the differences between a believer and a non-believer, not in a narrow theological difference but in a fundamental attitude in our life. He said con-quest of nature through knowledge was an act of prayer.

He emphasised on love as the motive force of all activity. He emphasised on a balance between intellect and love. He said intellect must be inspired by love, science by faith otherwise intellect would be mere trickery.

The great poet and thinker Iqbal was not only the architect of n, he was really the architect of a new, vigorous and going ahead Muslim society that bids fare today to make remarkable progress in every sphere of life. His clarion call to robust activism gave a new impetus to the people. He called the Muslim people to wake up.

The poet is remembered today with highest honour and respect in Pakistan.