

EDUCATION OF THE YOUTH IN THE LIGHT OF IQBAL'S PHILOSOPHY

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In this age of decadence of moral values when we are faced with all kinds of hypocrisy, dishonesty and lowliness, it is vitally important to analyse what different aspects of character building should be cultivated and encouraged in our young generation. I propose to examine, in this paper, the implications of the philosophical ideas of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, who was a great poet and thinker, not only of his time but still is a guiding force for our nation. His poetry, like any other fine arts, has a great message to impart. It is not only a lyrical expression of the poets' emotional experiences and moods but it lends itself to the philosophical discussion and guiding principles of character building. His poetry like all fine arts is genuine and significant. It impinges dynamically on life, deepening its meaning, quickening its pulses and interpreting its fundamental purpose.

اے اہل نظر نوق نظر خوب ہے لیکن
جوشے کی حقیقت کو نہ سمجھے وہ نظر کیا؟
مقصود ہنر سوز حیات ابدی ہے
ایہ ایک نفس یا دو نفس مثل شرر کیا؟

Valuable is the taste for art, ye, man of vision

But vision that perceives not the Reality, is useless.

The goal of art is the flame of immortal life

Not this fleeting breath transitory like the spark.¹⁰⁸

Iqbal is primarily a thinker and a philosopher not concerning himself with abstract and remote issues and speculations which have no bearing on the living problems of the present, but bringing his intelligence and trained mind to concentrate on real problems of life and to suggest their solutions. Iqbal was not an educationist, in the limited every day meaning of the word. He was never engaged except for a comparatively brief period-in teaching. He has not put anywhere, in a consistent form, any comprehensive study of education. But there is a justification for undertaking the implementation of his philosophy in education. Firstly as education, in its correct significance, must be visualized as the sum total of all the cultural forces which play on life of a person or a community. If this is conceded and accepted, it follows that the contribution of an outstanding creative thinker, who has a distinctive message to impart, is a phenomenon of the greatest interest for the educationist. Secondly every philosophy of life, in so far as it throws any light on the problems of life, implies and postulates a philosophy of education since both are concerned, from their own angles, with similar issues and problems. They both touch the meaning and purpose of human life, the relation of the individual to the community and environment and to the problems of values. Any coherent system of ideas, which provides guidance in facing these problems or offers a critical view of existing cultural institutions, social practices and ways of credence must necessarily modify (in so far as we accept that school of thought) the basis of our educational theory and practice. Education is viewed as a process through which one generation transmits its acquired knowledge, experience, competencies, beliefs, traditions and attitudes to the next generation. In this way it is a means of evaluating and effectively transmitting the cultural heritage.

In this paper I shall be referring mostly to Iqbal's collection of Urdu and Persian poems. Poetry, by its nature, is much more flexible and sensitive medium of expression than prose. But it does not possess the same objectivity or precision of thought as a piece of a careful, systematic prose. It lends itself to a greater variety of interpretation but I will be careful to attach

to Iqbal's verses the meaning which the general trends of his ideas seem to justify. Every important verse has a definite meaning and it can, if properly understood, be fitted into the general system of his ideas.

The Concept of Individuality

No one can develop any intelligent theory of education without consciously having some concept of the nature of the individual to be educated. For the essence of the education process, reduced to its most elementary terms, is the fact of a living human organism. The organism which is in constant interaction and contact with a vast and complex environment, and which keeps on changing and growing as a result of this continuous inter-communication. Like a philosopher, the educator must necessarily inquire into the characteristic nature of these two terms of his activity the individual and the environment which ultimately determine the solution of all his problems.

In order to grasp Iqbal's concept of the nature and the function of the individual who is the object of the educator's attention we must try to explain his concept of "Ego" or "Individuality" which is the central idea of his philosophy. This was presented by him in a popular but forceful form in his famous Persian masnavi *Asrar-i-Khudi* (The Secrets of Self) published in 1923, it has been developed in his poetical works and more systematically in his lectures.

To, him ego or khudi is a real and pre-eminently significant entity which is the centre and the basis of the entire organization of life. For Iqbal the movements which deny the reality of the self are dangerous in their social consequences and misleading as intellectual hypotheses. Iqbal affirms that the negation of self, or its absorption into some Eternal self, should not be man's ideal. He should, instead, strive to retain his infinitely precious

individuality and strengthen it by developing greater originality and uniqueness.

“The End of the Ego’s quest is not emancipation from the limitations of individuality; it is, on other hand, a more precise definition of it.”¹⁰⁹ He points out that the true interpretation of human experience” is not the drop slipping into the sea but the realization and bold affirmation of the reality and permanence of human ego in a more profound personality”.¹¹⁰

This movement towards the achievement of a profound individuality is not confined in the development of all living organism. He believes that all living organisms are struggling to achieve a more or less complex individuality. In man, the creative impulse has succeeded and he has developed powers which have opened up before him the possibilities of unlimited growth and freedom.

ہر چیز ہے محو خود نمائی
ہر ذرہ شہید کبریائی
ہے ذوق نمود، زندگی موت
تعمیر خودی میں ہے خدائی
اک تو ہے کہ حق ہے اس جہاں میں
باقی ہے نمود سیمیائی!

Everything is preoccupied with self expression

Every atom a candidate for greatness,

Life without this impulse spells death

By the perfection of his individuality man becomes like God

Thou alone art the reality in two

Universe All the rest is a mirage (Optical illusion).¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Lectures, Page 198

¹¹⁰ Ibid, Page 91

¹¹¹ Kulliat-e-Iqbal (Urdu) P 345

Of all the living creatures, man had achieved the highest measure of individuality and is most conscious of his own reality.

“It is with the irreplaceable singleness of his individuality that the finite ego will approach the infinite ego to see for himself the consequences of his past action and judge the possibilities of his future.”

Thus, according to Iqbal neither education nor other social and cultural institutions can have any higher aim than that of strengthening the individuality of the educates for the realization of their limitless possibilities. It was profound study of decadence of the Eastern Nations, which made him concentrate so strongly on the doctrine of individuality. He was driven to the conclusion that this feeling of defeat and despair, this loosening of the fibers of national life was due to the conscious or unconscious adoption of paralyzing doctrine of self negation. He, therefore, preaches the doctrine of the fullest development and affirmation of the self in this world with all its forces material, cultural and spiritual. Self is always in the making and is a reservoir of yet untapped powers and possibilities. Its development requires that the individual should throw himself open to all kinds of formative and challenging experiences. If he withdraws from the world of strife, his individuality will shrink and wither.¹¹²

This note of self-realization runs through his poetry and his philosophy, and he regards the cultivation of individuality as the first and the highest goal of all social and educational efforts.

The question arises, how does this -individuality grow? What are the conditions, external and internal, which favour its development? Iqbal frequently stresses this point that the self or individuality is not born in itself but is an achievement. The fruit of a constant effort and struggle against the forces of the external environment as well as the disruptive tendencies within man himself. Iqbal explains.

¹¹² Lectures, P. 117

“The life of the Ego is a kind of tension caused by the Ego invading the environment and the environment invading the Ego.”¹¹³

Therefore, it is essential that the living intimacy of the relationship between the individual and his environment should be preserved. A life of solitary, self sufficient contemplation which cuts him from the stimulus and vigorous currents of social life, is apt to make him egocentric and limited in his interest and sympathies.

Iqbal also defines the nature of the environment which would be favourable to the growth of the self. True self-expression, whether of the individual or of the community can be secured only when the self feeds on, and draws its inspiration from ones own cultural heritage and achievements. People must have the capacity for the active understanding, assimilation and reconstruction of the existing culture. Only then they can shape for themselves an individuality which is both original and enduring. Any form of education which ignores this fundamental truth is foredoomed. That is why Iqbal has repeatedly stressed that سوال (asking dependence on others, slavish imitation of ideas and culture) always weakens the self and that unless the individual as well as the community develops self-reliance and inner richness of their own being, their potentialities will remain repressed.

Iqbal’s poetry gives this message as the second condition for education again and again.

تاڪے	پروانہ	نارائي	دلا
تاڪے	مردانہ	شيوہ	نگيرى
سوز	خويشتن	بسوز را	يڪے خود
تاڪے	بيگانہ	آتش	طواف

How long, O heart, this burning like the moth?

How long this aversion to the ways of true manhood?

¹¹³ Ibid, P. 97

Burn thyself once for all in thy own flame,

How long this fluttering around the stranger's fire?¹¹⁴

Again:

ز خاک خویش طلب آتشی کہ پیدانیست
تجلی وگرے در خور تقاضانیست

Look into thy own clay the fire that is lacking the light of another is not worth striving for.¹¹⁵

He criticizes those who, without appreciating the true values of Western culture, try to imitate it by coping its externals only.

علم و فن را اے جوان شوخ و شنگ
مغز می باید نہ ملیوس فرنگ
اند رہیں رہ جز نگہ مطلوب نیست
ایں کلہ یا آن کلہ مطلوب نیست
فکر چالا کے اگر داری بس است
طبع ذرا کے اگر داری بس است

Arts and sciences O lively and eager youth,

Requires a keen intellect not Western clothes

What is needed in this quest is Vision?

Not this or that particular head-dress.

If you have a subtle intellect and a discriminating mind they would suffice to guarantee success.¹¹⁶

When education is organized under the inspiration of a healthy ideology, it will aim at strengthening people's individuality and culture it will use its best efforts to quicken their creative activity.

¹¹⁴ Kulliat-e-Iqbal. Persian P. 199

¹¹⁵ Ibid p. 705

¹¹⁶ Ibid p. 760

The third condition which Iqbal regards essential for the education of true individuality is Freedom. He believes that life cannot unfold all its possibilities. nor can the individual develop all his latent powers, except in the atmosphere of Freedom.

بندگی میں گھٹ کے رہ جاتی ہے اک جوئے کم آب
اور آزادی میں بحر بیکراں سے زندگی!

Enslaved, life is reduced to a small rivulet

Free, it is like the boundless ocean.¹¹⁷

Unfolding of an individual's latent possibilities can best take place in an atmosphere of freedom. He further makes the significant point that creativity, which is the highest attribute of man and links him with God and originality which is a condition for all progressive change of a society, also demands freedom as a pre-requisite for all cultivation.

Iqbal exhorts his readers not to be intellectually timid but to go out boldly to conquer new domain of knowledge. The student should be unafraid of the pitfalls and dangers which beset the way and be a threat to the established institutions.

تراش از تیشہ خود جادہ خویش
براه دیگران رفتن عذاب است
گر از دست تو کار نادر آید
گنا ہے ہم اگر باشد ثواب است

Cut your path with an axe of your own

It is a sin to tread the beaten paths of other

If you achieve something unique and original

Even a sin becomes a virtue¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Kulliat-e-Iqbal (Urdu) p. 259

Such a view of intellectual education demands the rejection of all those elaborate, foolproof strictly logical and graded methods of teaching which eliminate initiative and ingenuity. The method which does not allow making mistakes and learning from them is not good. Though Iqbal is conscious of the significance of intelligence and knowledge he does not believe in blind worship of the intellect which gives one sided view of reality.

He is with those modern thinkers who sound a note of warning against an “Over intellectualistic” conception of education. He holds a balanced view which gives due weight to all the elements of experience-cognitive, psychomotor and affective, which make up life.

Another factor which Iqbal considers important in the development of individuality is the formation of new purposes and objectives to determine the direction of our activity and control the evolution of the “self”. It is the ceaseless quest for new and greater creative purposes which adds zest and meaning to life and disciplines the growing powers and activities of individuals. This yearning for the unattainable or striving for it is the mark of a true artist.

چو نظر قرار گیرد بہ نگار خویروئے!
تپداں زماں دل من پئے خوب تر نگارے
ز شرر ستارہ جویم ز ستارہ آفتابے
سرمنزلے ندارم کہ بمیرم از قرارے
طلبم نہایت آن کہ نہایتے ندارد
بہ نگاہ ناشکیبے بہ دل امید وارے

When the eye beholds an object of beauty

The heart begins to yearn for a more beautiful for

From the spark of the star, and then from the star to the sun

Is my quest;

I have no desire for a goal

For me rest spells death¹¹⁹

With an impatient eye and a hopeful heart I seek for the end of that which is endless.

His entire philosophical thought is an eloquent plea for a life of strenuous activity and endeavour in which the self interacts with its material and cultural environment. Action is the pivot of life. Man grows to his full stature and realizes his great destiny through a life of strenuous activity.

From it follows that if education is to be a preparation for life, it must be achieved through active participation in life. The growth of individuality demands intense and manifold activity on the part of the growing individual, in vital contact with the culture of his group.

The Individual and the Community

Stress on individuality raises several questions. What is the nature of the relationship between the individual and society? Does the cultivation of the individuality mean that educated men and women will be unmindful of their social obligations and their dependence on the cultural achievements of their people? What is the respective importance of the individual and of the group of which he is a member? Should the development of the individual be regarded as the supreme end of life process and the community an instrument of his development? Iqbal attaches the highest value to the individuality. But he does not take an extreme position and duly recognizes the importance of the culture pattern of community life. He does not overlook the fact that the growth of a full and free personality is impossible

¹¹⁹ Ibid p 297

only when it draws its spiritual substance from the culture of the group to which it belongs.

فرد قائم ربط ملت سے ہے تنہا کچھ نہیں
موج ہے دریا میں اور بیرون دریا کچھ نہیں

The individual exists in relation to the community Alone he is nothing

The wave exists in the river, outside the river it is nothing.¹²⁰

Iqbal explains how, through such relationship, the individual may even transcend mortality and gain an every abiding significance. The individual who loses himself in the community, in the service of its great and worthy ideal and purposes, reflects both the past and future as in a mirror so that he ‘transcends mortality and enters into the life which is infinite and ever lasting.

It may be asked what is the right basis for the unity of a community? Iqbal is strongly opposed to the ideas of race and colour and to a narrow nationalism and patriotism because they obstruct the development of a broad humanitarian outlook. Unity of emotions and outlook of purpose and endeavour and the merging individual selves in the service of great, cooperative ideals and objectives unite a collection of individuals into a perfect community. When such unity of outlook has been achieved, it becomes good or evil, and a source of unlimited power for individual as well as the community. Without such unity the community becomes disorganized, feeble and dead.

زنده فرد از ارتباط جان و تن
زنده قوم از حفظ ناموس کہن
مرگ فرد از خشکی رود حیات
مرگ قوم از ترک مقصود حیات

The individual exists through the relation of the body to the mind

¹²⁰ Kulliat-e-Iqbal (Urdu) p 190

The nation exists through conserving the honour of its past

The individual dies if the river of life goes dry

The nation dies if it lets go off the purpose of life.¹²¹

Iqbal also holds that in the periods of decadence a people can gain new vitality by turning to the healthy sources of their past culture. By striking their feet firmly on the ground of their culture, they gain fresh power and inspiration.

مضمحل گردد چو تقدیم حیات
ملت از تقلید می گیرد ثبات
بحر گم کردی زیان اندیش باش
حافظ جوئے کم آب خویش باش

When the texture of life has become weak and worn out

The community gains stability through imagination

Thou hast lost the ocean, learn to count thy loss

Guard carefully the water in the small stream.¹²²

When community becomes lazy, slothful and averse to change, some great individual is born to give a new impetus:

تا خدا صاحب دلے پیدا کند
کو ز حرفے دفترے املا کند
ساز پردازے کہ از آوازہ
خاک را بخشد حیات تازہ
تازہ انداز نظر پیدا کند
گلستان در دشت و در پیدا کند
بند ہا از پاکشاید بندہ را
از خداوندان ربا ید بندہ را

God then brings into being some inspired person

¹²¹ Kulliat-e-Iqbal (Persion) p 118

¹²² Ibid p 124

Who expands one word into a volume
A player who, with his musical notes
Endows this clay with a new life
He creates new lines of insight
And brings the garden to blossom in desert
He strikes off the fetters from the feet of the slaves
And frees them from the tyranny of gods.¹²³

In an over-organized society an individual is altogether crushed out of existence. He gains the whole world of social thought around him and loses his own soil. Thus false respect for past history, constitutes no remedy for the people's decay. The only effective power, therefore, that counteracts the forces of decay in a society is rearing the self concentrated individuals.

Iqbal has faith in his fellow beings and in the power of the right ideology and right education to transform them by developing their inner richness. We find a note of optimism about the future of mankind, at least, as frequent as disappointment with his actual achievements.

ز انجم تا به انجم صد جہاں بود
خرد ہر جا کہ پرزد آسماں بود
و لیکن چون بخود نگرستم من
کران بے کراں در من نہاں بود

There are a hundred worlds from star to star
Whenever Intellect flies, it finds new skies
But when I look deep into myself

¹²³ Ibid p 89-90

Lo a boundless ocean was hidden within me. ¹²⁴

The Concept of Good Character

It is necessary for every system of educational philosophy to define clearly the type of human being which it aims at producing. The ethical value of any particular educational theory depends ultimately on the quality and character of the individuals produced under its inspiration. I propose to sketch briefly the portrait of the “good man” as it emerges from a study of Iqbal’s writings.

Firstly the life of a good man must be a life of active efforts and struggle, not one of withdrawal or stagnation. This activity must not run into routine pattern instead it must be creative and original. For Iqbal creativity is the most valuable and distinctive gift of God through which man has been able to transform his crude world and fill it with order and beauty it can claim.

دمبدم مشکل تر و آسان گزار
دمبدم نو آفرین و تازه کار

It is ever welcoming the difficult, ever rejecting

Ever creating, ever achieving new thing¹²⁵

Iqbal exhorts his readers to strengthen their Ego, abandon their dependence on others and achieve a respected and self respecting individuality.

Secondly the “good man” must learn to apply his intelligence increasingly to the exploitation of the forces of Nature, adding to his knowledge and power.

¹²⁴ Ibid p 220

¹²⁵ Ibid p 134

ہر خاکی و نوری پہ حکومت ہے خرد کی
بابر نہیں کچھ عقل خداداد کی زد سے
عالم ہے غلام اس کے جلال ازلی کا
اک دل ہے کہ ہر لحظہ الجھتا ہے خرد سے

Intellect reigns over all beings of clay and light

Nothing is beyond the reach of God-given mind

The entire world bows to its eternal glory

The heart alone challenges its sway at every step.¹²⁶

Intellect gives power, but this power can be utilized constructively for the good of humanity only if it is guided and controlled by Love. This Love is not a mere vague humanitarian sentiment. It is an active force which gives a quality to Individuality when it is pressed into the service of worthy ends.

In order to develop a character which has both sensitiveness and strength (the sensitiveness to the good of humanity and to ideal values, and strength in carrying out his purposes) there are three other qualities which education should cultivate Courage, Tolerance and Faqr (فقر).

Iqbal believes that the cultivation of an attitude of courage is essential for the proper education of character. He considers Fear to be one of the most degrading emotions. Just as Love strengthens the self, Fear which is the negation of Love, weakens it and becomes the source of all kinds of corruption in the individual's character.

لابہ و مکاری و کین و دردغ
ایں ہمہ از خوف می گیرد فروغ
پر شربنہاں کہ اندر قلب تست
اصل او بیم است اگر بینی درست

Flattery, treachery, cunning and spite

Are all nurtured in the bosom of fear

Every hidden evil, nestling in our heart

Is the product of fear it' your will rightly regard.¹²⁷

His exhortation to our generation is:-

خوف	حق	عنوان	ایمان	است	و	بس
خوف	غیر از	شرک	پنهان	است	و	بس
فارغ	از	اندیشہ	اگیار	شو		شو
قوت	خوابیده	بیدار		شو		شو

Fear of God is the beginning of faith

The fear of others is veiled idolatry

Relieve yourself of the fears of others

You are a power-asleep, shake yourself awake.¹²⁸

The second quality which Iqbal considers to be essential constituent of the good character is Tolerance. It is necessary factor in any scheme of thought which lays stress individuality. “The principle of the ego sustaining deed”, remarks “is respect for the Ego in myself as well as in others which clearly implies that unless education strengthens in us sense of respect for others’ individuality-their opinions a beliefs, their thought and behaviour, their differences with us our own individuality will remain weak, distorted incomplete. Iqbal’s tolerance is born out of strength, not of weakness. It is the tolerance of a man of strong faith, who possesses strong convictions of

¹²⁷ Kulliat-e-Iqbal (Persian) p 96

¹²⁸ Ibid p 99

his own, realizes that respect is due to others. Iqbal considers tolerance to be the bases of true humanity.

حرف بد را بر لب آوردن خطا است
کافر و مومن همه خلق خدا است
آدمیت احترام آدمی!
باخبر شو از مقام آدمی!
بنده عشق از خدا گیرد طریق
می شود بر کافر و مومن شفیق
کفر و دین را گیر در پنهان دل
دل اگر بگریزد از دل، وائے دل
دل اگر بگریزد از دل، وائے دل
گرچه دل زندانی آب و گل است
این همه آفاق، آفاق دل است

It is a sin to utter harsh words

For the believer and non-believer are both children of God

What is humanity? Respect for man

Learn to understand the dignity of man

The man of Love learns the ways of God

And is benevolent alike to the believer and the non-believer

Welcome faith and unfaith alike to the heart

If the heart flees from the heart, woe betide the heart

The heart, no doubt, is imprisoned in water and clay

But the whole of the universe is the domain of heart.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Ibid p 52

The third quality Faqr has come in with great stress in the writings of Iqbal. There is not one single word, in the English language, which could convey its full and concise significance.

Iqbal rejects the idea of renunciation and advocates an active way of life.

But he is keenly conscious of the fact that the highest aspirations of man are apt to become stifled by the weight of his material possessions. Riches often curtail the growth and expansion of the spirit.

گرچه باشی از خداوندان ده
فقر را از کف مده، از کف مده
اے بسا مرد حق اندیش و بصیر
می شود از کثرت نعمت ضریر
کثرت نعمت گداز از دل برد
ناز می آرد، نیاز از دل برد

Even if you belong to the lords of the Earth

Do not forego the grace of Faqr

Many a man who understand truth and possess vision

Becomes corrupt by an excess of riches

The excess of riches steals compassion from the heart

And substitutes pride for humility.¹³⁰

Iqbal believes that while man is engaged in the conquest of this world, he should retain an inner attitude of detachment and superiority to the material possession. Only then can he guard himself against becoming a slave to them and use them for the service, instead of the exploitation of his fellowmen. Faqr is also the satisfaction not in an increase of material possession but in the selfless service of some great purpose and leading a life of voluntary poverty and self denial.

¹³⁰ Ibid p 793-4

Now we can sum up the character of a “good man” in educational terms. He is a man who develops all his powers and strengthens his individuality through active contact with his material and cultural Environment. This strong individuality, sharpened through a life of active experience in an atmosphere of freedom, is dedicated to the service of human being by conquering the world. He is strong enough to stand aloof from temptations which weaken the moral fibre. His self-respect gives him courage. His tolerance and respect for others, make him sensitive to the claims which the common humanity makes on him. In the pursuit of his ideal he is strong enough to defy the interests and forces which stand in the way of its realization. This is Iqbal’s challenge to mankind.

یہ عالم یہ ہنگامہ رنگ و صوت
یہ عالم کہ ہے زیر فرمان موت
یہ عالم یہ بت خانہ چشم و گوش
جہاں زندگی ہے فقط خورد و نوش
خودی کی یہ ہے منزل اولیں
مسافرا! یہ تیرا نشمین نہیں
جہاں اور بھی ہیں ابھی ہے نمود
کہ خالی نہیں ہے ضمیر وجود
پر اک منتظر تیری بلغار کا
تری شوخی فکر و کردار کا
یہ ہے مقصد گردش روزگار
کہ تیری خودی تجھ پہ ہو آشکار
تو ہے فاتح عالم خوب و زشت
تجھے کیا بناؤں تری سرنوشت
فروزاں ہے سینے میں شمع نفس!
مگر تاب گفتار کہتی ہے بس!

This world which is a riot of colour and sound

This world which is under the sway of Death

This world which is an idol-house of sight and hearing

Where life is naught but eating and drinking

It is only the first stage in perfection of Ego

Traveller! it is not thy goal
There are many worlds still unborn
For the mind of existence is not a void
All are awaiting thy triumphant advance
And the subtlety of thy thought and action
What is the purpose of this whirling of time?
Than thy Ego may be revealed to thee.¹³¹
Than art the conqueror of the world of good and evil
I dare not reveal thy great destiny
My heart is aflame with the light of inspiration
But the power of my speech confesses its defeat.¹³²

Notes

¹³¹ Ibid p 794

¹³² Kulliat-e-Iqbal (Urdu) p 420-21