

Iqbal: The Man and His Mission in Life¹

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Abstract

After the time of the Prophet of Islam, Muslims and their civilization started to flourish giving rise to many vast empires stretching from Granada to Indonesia. Muslim scholars became great authorities in many fields of knowledge. During the Golden Age of Islam (750-1258), Muslims were the pioneers, inventors, and innovators in the human and natural sciences. Practically, they were interested in all areas of investigation that later became the foundation and spark for further development of science and technology during modern times of humanity. All these great achievements went missing when the Islamic empires started to fall and disintegrate. This situation started to deteriorate further in the Muslim world with the coming of the era of colonization and neo-colonization. During the time of mental crisis, intellectual lethargy, backwardness and loss of direction that happened within the Muslim Ummah there came great minds calling the masses to the ideal situation once they enjoyed on the world stage. One among the many reformers that came to call Muslims to return to their dynamic lifestyle, vision and mission in life was Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1937). Iqbal, who has been taught by the best minds of the East and West later developed and formulated solutions of his own to remedy the many shortcomings of the Muslim Ummah. As a poet-philosopher of international repute, Iqbal called for the co-existence of civilizations and the creation of a better world. This small-scale qualitative research is a humble attempt to introduce and highlight some of Iqbal's life history, formulation of his philosophy, mission and vision of his life and challenges faced by him.

Keywords: Iqbal, Man, Mission, Life

Introduction

This paper is an earnest attempt to analyze some aspects of Allama Muhammad Iqbal's biography, mission and vision of his life. Very precisely, this humble attempt by the researcher will focus on the unfolding of historical events that were happening in his life and around him till to the last days of his life. Moreover, this paper will also explain on the formulation of Iqbal's philosophy and the challenges he had to go through in his life. It is hoped that this paper in its own capacity would be able to introduce and create interest in the young generation of today to take a deep into the philosophical ideas of Iqbal, who has been well received by people in the East and West.

The Life & Work of Iqbal

Iqbal, who was well-known by the title Allama Mohamed Iqbal, was born on 22nd Feb.1873, in Sialkot, a place in northern India. His roots go back to his ancestors who originated from the region of Kashmir in the Indian subcontinent. Prior to their conversion to Islam, his ancestors belonged to the upper-class Brahmin of the Hindu caste system. They were guided towards the religion of Islam by the preachings of Syah Hamdani, a pious religious personality who lived during the time of the last ruler of the Mogul dynasty. The fall of the Mogul dynasty made Iqbal's ancestors migrate from Kashmir to Sialkot (Mohd Abbas, 1992).

Iqbal's parents were pious and upright Muslims. His father Nur Muhammed was a tailor who practised Sufism. As a religious man, Iqbal's father contributed a lot to the cause of the Muslim

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society, which pathetically lost all political and social standings under Hindu rule. As a young boy, Iqbal received his elementary education from his father and was later sent to a Sufi scholar by the name of Mir Hasan. It was from this scholar that Iqbal learnt the Islamic sciences, Arabic and Persian. When he had finished his primary level of education, Mir Hasan recommended Iqbal enroll in the Scottish Mission School. The contribution of Mir Hasan in moulding Iqbal's character cannot be denied. As an acknowledgement of this enlightening personality of his teacher, later in life when Iqbal became an established poet, he wrote these lines to express his indebtedness toward Mir Hasan:

That light of the exalted family of Ali,
Whose threshold will always be sacred like the Ka'ba to me,
Whose breath enabled the bud of my desire to blossom.
Whose kind enlightenment developed my critical faculty (Iqbal in Sain, 1989: 34-35).

At the Scottish Mission School, Iqbal started to show great talent in poetry in his mother tongue, Urdu. As a young amateur in writing creative poems, Iqbal used to send his works to a renowned Urdu poet by the name of Dagh (1831-1905). Dagh was one of the last famous poets of the Mogul era of India. By the time Iqbal started to write his poems, poets of his time had already shifted from their old ways of writing poems. Instead of appreciating the aesthetic beauty of the world, they wrote on contemporary issues like politics, social and national life. Dagh as a renowned poet, after going through many of Iqbal's beautiful lines of poems, acknowledged Iqbal's extraordinary talent and commented that his poems were of a good standard and the need to correct them was unnecessary (Ashraf Nurdin, 1985; Matthews, 1993).

In 1895, after completing his studies with excellent results at the Scottish Mission School, Iqbal went on to study at the Government College in Lahore. It was there that, Iqbal a budding poet, had the opportunity to read his poems to a gathering of students and academicians. His poems not only lured the intellectual circle of the academia but also got the attention of the local newspapers and magazines, especially *Makhzan*, an Urdu journal. One of his well-known poems on the Himalayas published in this journal introduced him to a wide circle of admirers all over India (Vahid, 195_).

At the time when he was studying at the Government College, Iqbal got very close to one of his teachers, an Englishman by the name of Sir Thomas Arnold. If in Sialkot, it was Mir Hasan, who had a great influence on Iqbal in teaching him the past intellectual heritage of the Muslims, over in Lahore, it was Thomas Arnold, the cultured Englishman who was the one who introduced Iqbal to many of the positive aspects of the Western culture and civilization. It has been highlighted by many scholars that it was through his acquaintance with Thomas Arnold that Iqbal learned to be a critical scholar. As an appreciation of the contribution of this English teacher, later in life, Iqbal dedicated his doctoral dissertation to the good name of Thomas Arnold (Ashraf Nurdin, 1985).

In the year 1899, Iqbal graduated from the Government College with an M. A. in Philosophy. In recognizing his mastery of English and Arabic and taking into consideration of his future intellectual development, Thomas Arnold recommended Iqbal pursue his studies at Cambridge University in England. Thus, Iqbal became the first son of India who was given a place to study in Cambridge. Over at Cambridge, he took some courses in moral philosophy under the tutelage of Dr. Mc. Taggart and Dr. James Ward. As a student of Mc Taggart, Iqbal shared many similar views with his teacher in the areas of philosophy and mysticism. During his early days in Europe, like Mc Taggart, Iqbal

was also more of a pantheist in his concept of God. After finishing his course in philosophy, Iqbal intended to embark on his doctorate programme at Munich University. To earn his doctorate degree, he conducted research on mysticism and wrote a dissertation entitled 'The Development of Metaphysics in Persia'. Prof. F. Hammel was his supervisor who guided him in his research. Upon getting his doctorate degree, Iqbal returned to England to study Law at Lincoln's Inn. While doing his bar, he also attended lectures at the School of Political Sciences (Effendi & Hadi, 1986).

All throughout his stay in Europe, Iqbal used to meet Western scholars to discuss matters pertaining to education and philosophy. After discovering Iqbal's potential, Western scholars without fail used to invite him to deliver lectures on the Islamic civilization. Starting with his lecture at Caxton Hall, Iqbal delivered a series of captivating lectures at many different places in the UK. In many of the lectures that he delivered, he highlighted the shortcomings of Western civilization. His thought-provoking lectures caught the attention of the Western media.

Going to Europe changed Iqbal in many ways. One marked transformation that happened to him was that he began to perceive humanity as a whole without looking at it based on colour, caste, nationality and geographical differences. This psychological makeup of a new Iqbal can be seen in his philosophy and poetry as he dedicated himself to highlighting the great culture and spiritual heritage of man. It was also around this time in Europe, that he started to think of Islam as a universal religion that can provide humanity with much-needed peace, security and prosperity. In stark contrast to his thoughts, he also witnessed that the Muslim world had many shortcomings because many did not follow the true spirit of Islam. While assessing the situation in Muslim countries, Iqbal found out that the people were caught in the meshes of superstitions, inactivity and ignorance. In his opinion, the prevalence of such scenarios caused the Muslims to dwindle in their spirit rather than pursue a dynamic way of life. In realizing the predicament of the Muslims, Iqbal wanted to bring an Islamic Renaissance by directing his philosophy and poetry aimed at awakening the Ummah from its deep slumber toward realizing the demands of the modern world. As a result of his visit to Europe, his message to the Muslims was aimed at calling them to renounce backwardness and to have a positive attitude towards scientific learning and exploration in broadening the horizon of their thinking. Iqbal became an advocate for scientific research in the Muslim world of his time. In many ways, this resembled Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the founder of the Aligarh University of India (Kazmi, 1995).

After making a diagnosis of the problems battering the Ummah, Iqbal without any self-proclamation took on the role of a religious reformist. It was his intention to revive the Ummah of its religiosity towards Islam and to restore its dignity and glory, which were once enjoyed by it during the Golden Age of Islam. This role of Iqbal as a religious reformer was recognized by many scholars in Iqbal. Attitudes of total belief and dedication for a rightful cause and for a higher purpose in life were seen in Iqbal as a preparation for the task of bringing change. Bilgrami (1996), in his writing on Iqbal, was able to capture Iqbal's passion and compassion in wanting to change the mindset of Muslims of his time, when he wrote:

Iqbal has rightly been called the mainspring of the Muslim renaissance. He devoted the best part of his life to the careful study of Islam, its laws, polity, culture, history and literature. He was convinced of Islam 'as a living force for freeing the outlook of man from its geographical limitations.' He firmly believed

that ‘religion is a power of utmost importance in the life of individuals as well as states’ and in order to convince the world of these eternal truths he did not merely devote his life in giving expression to his thoughts and feelings in his philosophy and poetry but also passed many restless nights praying to God (iv-v).

In the year 1908, after completing his studies in Europe, Iqbal returned to his native India. Upon setting foot in India, he started his career as an advocate, and this happened to be his permanent profession until 1934. Besides this, as a scholar endowed with great knowledge in many different disciplines, Iqbal for a brief period of time taught Philosophy, Arabic and English Literature on a part-time basis at the Government College. His involvement in teaching did not last very long and this was not attributed to his lack of passion for teaching but mainly due to the restriction laid by the British on what to teach. This lack of freedom made Iqbal resign from his teaching activities two years after joining the Government College (Mohd Abbas, 1992).

In politics, he won the admiration of the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. His views and ideas gave the much-needed impetus to the Muslim minority of India to demand their rights. His ideas and principles in politics were based on Islamic values, which ran parallel to some of the ideas present in humanistic philosophy. Through such ideas, he called on the Muslim *Ummah* to work hard, *jihad* (strive for excellence) and self-sacrifice in life. His relentless voice that echoed through his poems and philosophical discourse all throughout India was an admonition for the Muslims to seek freedom and to lead a dignified life. In 1922, Iqbal wrote an elegy upon hearing about the death of Queen Victoria. This was much appreciated by the then Governor of Punjab Sir Edward Macleagan and the British government. In recognition of his contributions to politics and scholastic works, the British government conferred the knighthood upon him, which carried the title ‘Sir’ (Ali, 1988).

In the year 1927, Iqbal was elected as a legislative member of the state of Punjab. Three years later, in 1930 he was elected as the President of the Muslim League of India. It was during that time as a president, that he suggested ways and means how to solve the communal crisis faced by both the Hindus and Muslims of India. In 1931 and 1932, he was invited by the British to attend the ‘Round Table Conference’ in London. These two meetings were initiatives taken by the British government to draft a constitution for the good use of the people of the Indian subcontinent to resolve their communal problems (Ashraf Nurdin, 1985).

In finding a solution to solve the conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims, Iqbal was the first leader in the Indian political arena who boldly proposed the formation of Pakistan as a homeland for the Muslims. In his efforts to establish Pakistan, he went through the Muslim League, an organization that stood for Muslim rights and solidarity. Iqbal in addressing the Muslim League at Allahabad in 1930 articulated his concept of a homeland for the Muslim society of the subcontinent by stating the proposed regions to be included. He stated:

I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-governed with the British Empire or without the British Empire; the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India (Iqbal in Sayeed, 1968:103).

In proposing a homeland for the Muslims, Iqbal envisioned a free state for them to live without any intimidation from the other races of India and a place whereby the Muslims can adhere to the Muslim way of life. He also wanted the place to cater for the Islamic culture to bloom and flourish. All of Iqbal's hard work and strenuous efforts in politics were highly appreciated and praised by Muahmmad Ali Jinnah, one of Iqbal's friends who played an important role in the Muslim League. Upon hearing the death of Iqbal, Jinnah mourned the death of his friend in the following words:

I am extremely sorry to hear the sad news of the death of Sir Mohammad Iqbal. He was a remarkable poet of worldwide fame and his work will live forever. His services to his country and the Muslims are so numerous that his record can be compared with that of the greatest Indian that ever lived. He was the President of the Provincial Muslim League of the Punjab, till a very recent time when his unforeseen illness compelled him to resign, but he was the staunchest and the most loyal champion of the policy of the All-India Muslim League. To me he was a friend, guide and philosopher and during the darkest moments through which the Muslim League had to go, he stood like a rock and never flinched one single moment (Jinnah and Ahmad, 1992: 249).

As a reformist and educationist, Iqbal's ideas were not just relevant to India alone. His ideas also found validity in neighbouring Afghanistan. In 1933, he was invited together with Sir Ross Masood and Sulaiman Nadvi by the Government of Afghanistan to re-evaluate the educational system in the country and to suggest some changes to improve the educational system at Kabul University (Azzam, 1985).

During the many years of being a barrister, he was also actively involved in producing anthologies of poems and other philosophical works. As a poet, Iqbal was prolific in producing anthology after anthology. Although he was recognized by the world as one of the greatest Muslim poets of his time, Iqbal was humble in his admission that he was not a poet in the actual sense but merely needed poetry as a vehicle to get across his message to people. As a matter of fact, his passion for writing poems, which started from a very young age, lasted until his later years in life. His poetical works were of exceptional qualities. Unlike many other poets of his time, Iqbal did not just write his poems to lull the masses to ecstasy, but he wrote to produce a change and revolution in their mindset towards living a dignified life. Most of his poems carried an underlying philosophy. In realizing the predicament of the Muslim Ummah at that time, Iqbal utilized his works in poetry to call the Muslims to come out from their state of backwardness and to go on a forward march in life as individuals who are creative, progressive and innovative. Though his poems were both in Urdu (his mother tongue) and Persian, he somehow preferred to write in the Persian language. He thought that the Persian language was more suitable for explaining things, which are spiritual in nature. His anthology of poems entitled *Asrar-i-Khudi* (1915) (The Secrets of the Self) occupies a pre-eminent place among all his poetical works. It is in this poem that Iqbal lucidly explains his ego philosophy. Besides this, he also came up with his other collection of poems known as *'Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* (1918) (Mysteries of Selflessness) and after that, he wrote *Payam-i-Mashriq* (1923), *Zabur-i-Ajam*(1927), *Gulshan-i-RazJadid*, *Bandigi Nama*, *JavidNamah* (1932), *Bal-i-Jibril*, *Zarb-i-Kalim*, *Musafir* (1936), *Armughan-i-Hijaz* (1938), *Bangi-i-Dara* (1924), etc. (Qadir,1991).

May (1974) in giving her comments on the significance of the *Asrar-i-Khudi* in understanding Iqbal, his struggle and aspirations, said the following:

- 1) It is Dr. Muhammad Iqbal's first major poetic volume;
- 2) It sees the primary way to reconstruction in psychological terms: the reawakening of the self (buddhi) is preliminary to further development (*khudi* or "selfhood");
- 3) It teaches and preaches action in the name of love of self and, ultimately, love of freedom;
- 4) It contains criticisms and warnings; in its criticism of the Muslims it connects with the *Jawab-i-Shikwah*; in its warnings, it seems closer to the *Shikwah*; with its compassionate strain;
- 5) Its reiteration of major themes, such as love, reawakening, the call to action, show that Dr Iqbal's mind had been set before he wrote the *Asrar* and that it remained unchanged between 1910 and 1915;
- 6) It is universalist in nature in spite of its immediate concern with the Muslims, who are not often mentioned in it by name;
- 7) It reflects its author's deep attachment to his co-religionists;
- 8) It shows his love for freedom;
- 9) It teaches sedition by calling the Muslims to the battle;
- 10) It is written in such a lyrical vein that it appealed not only to the intelligentsia, but also to the masses (93-94).

Besides poetry, Iqbal also wrote and delivered lectures on philosophical issues. One such remarkable work was 'The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam'. This book is a compilation of lectures delivered at academies. The first six of the lectures were delivered in Madras in 1928 and the last one in England. It was in these lectures that Iqbal lucidly expressed his philosophical thoughts, which are based on the Qur'anic teachings. Through these lectures, Iqbal also ventured on to explain in philosophical terms how the Qur'anic concepts pertaining to Islamic values should be translated into the cultural contexts of Muslim communal life (Qadir, 1991).

Iqbal the poet-philosopher, thinker and statesman started to suffer from kidney problems in the year 1924. Apart from that, in 1934 Iqbal who was known as the poet with the 'golden voice,' lost his voice due to an ailment in his throat. From then on, his health started to deteriorate. In 1935 due to poor health conditions, Iqbal declined an invitation from Oxford to be its Rhodes lecturer. Although he was suffering from poor health conditions, he never showed any lack of enthusiasm in his work as a Muslim scholar. He managed to maintain his reputation and prestige as one of the most creative, prolific and progressive Muslim scholars of his time (Vahid, 195_).

Since the start of the year 1938, Iqbal's health began to deteriorate from bad to worse. On his last night, April 20-21, Iqbal had severe asthma attacks and started to spit blood. Finally, on the predawn of 21st April 1938, Iqbal breathed his last breath. He was buried in the compound of the Shahi Mosque of Lahore, Pakistan. Later when a mausoleum was erected in recognition of Iqbal's contributions to the Muslims and the world at large. The government of Afghanistan contributed lapis lazuli marble as its token of appreciation for the great ideas the poet had given to improve the educational system over there, and also for his contribution to the cause of Islam

(Malik & Malik, 1971). It has been highlighted by many writers on Iqbal that before the great poet departed from this world; he stated these words as his last lines of poetry:

The departed melody may or may not come,
 The zephyr may blow again from Hejaz or not!
 The days of this Faqir have come to an end,
 Another seer may come or not (Iqbal in Beg, 1961:50).
 Even as I depart from this world,
 Everyone will say 'I knew him',
 But the truth is, alas! that none knew
 Who the stranger was, or what he said, or whence he came!
 (Iqbal in Nadwi, 1979: i).

With the mighty stroke of the pen, Iqbal the great poet of India was successful in catching the attention of many scholars of the East and West. As a recognition of the enormous contributions of Iqbal to the Muslims in particular, and to humanity at large, many scholars and political leaders paid tribute to him upon hearing the news of his death. Tagore, the great poet of India when told about the sad news of Iqbal's death, lamented in these words:

The death of Sir Mohammed Iqbal creates a void in our literature that, like a mortal wound, will take a very long time to heal. India, whose place in the world is too narrow, can ill-afford to miss a poet whose poetry has such universal value (Tagore in Jawed, 1996: 56).

Annemarie Schimmel who is an expert in the studies on Iqbal said the following words as a tribute to Iqbal's intellectual ability:

Of all the Muslim thinkers of the modern world, Iqbal is the greatest of all of them... I acknowledge Iqbal as one of the Muslim reformers who has managed to formulate a trend of thinking which is original and complementary. It is a trend that consolidates the Islamic civilization with the good part that comes from the Western culture (Schimmel in Usmani, 1991: 97)

Besides Schimmel, poetess Sarojini Naidu who is well-known as the "Nightingale of India" praised Iqbal for his intellectual contribution in these words:

Though the earth may enshrine the precious dust of Sir Mohammad Iqbal's body, his imperishable genius will shine through the ages in undimmed splendour. My profound homage to his memory (Sarojini Naidu in Ali, 1988: vii).

In remembrance of Iqbal's great service to humanity, many of his works have been translated by prominent scholars into many languages of the world: French, German, Arabic, Persian, Russian, Italian, Malay, etc. This has been done in the hope that Iqbal's works will be appreciated and benefited by people in many countries.

Finally, Iqbal's dream of a separate homeland for the Muslims in the Indian subcontinent became a reality. Unfortunately, it came into existence many years after the demise of Iqbal. The separate

homeland, which was envisioned by Iqbal for the Muslims, was achieved by his friend Mohammed Ali Jinnah who became inspired by reading Iqbal's poems and political ideas. The new and independent country, which came into existence in the year 1947 under the name of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, is indeed a brainchild of Iqbal. This is how the birth of Pakistan has been described in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1972):

Pakistan, Iqbal's dream, came into being in 1947, nine years after his death. As a tribute to his memory, the government of Pakistan established in 1951 a statutory body known as Iqbal's Academy, in order to promote the study and understanding of the works of Iqbal (211).

Ever since the establishment of Pakistan until today Iqbal has become an icon to his own people and to the Muslim world at large. Iqbal who has been seen as a seer, reformer, poet, philosopher, mystic, barrister, statesman and educationist, was exalted to the position of a spiritual father by the people upon his death. Ever since the world came to witness his intellectual potential, his philosophy and ideas have been researched and benefited by people all over the world, Muslims as well as non-Muslims.

Iqbal's Philosophy

Allama Iqbal was not only a great Muslim thinker and a statesman of distinguished quality; he was also a great poet and a mystic-philosopher. As a Muslim scholar during the Western era of colonization of the East, Iqbal's intellectual ability and performance were not just meant for finding solutions to the pressing issues of any one particular group. As a poet-philosopher and a humanist, he was interested in a wide spectrum of issues that were very important for the survival of the human race as a whole. In describing how passionate Iqbal was in analyzing the problems and prescribing remedies to the human issues, Mustansir Mir wrote:

Iqbal was deeply interested in the issues that have exercised the best minds of the human race—the issues of the meaning of life, change and constancy, freedom and determinism, survival and progress, the relation between the body and the soul, the conflict between reason and emotion, evil and suffering, the position and role of human beings in the universe—and in his poetry he deals with these and other issues. He had also read widely in history, philosophy, literature, mysticism, and politics, and, again, his catholic interests are reflected in his poetry (Mir, 2009).

As one who was well grounded in religion and well researched in the state of mind of the people of the East and West, he was a brave scholar who spoke his mind through his speeches, poetry and philosophical writings. In assessing the boldness of Iqbal in calling for a change in the East and West, R.A. Nicholson (1983) who translated his *Asrari-Khudi* into English very aptly wrote in his introduction to Iqbal's work (1983): "Iqbal is a man of his age and a man in advance of his age; he is also a man in disagreement with his age" (xxxix). Nicholson's words well explain Iqbal's nature and philosophy in life. He describes Iqbal as one who was critical of what he read in the bygone history and of what he observed in the unfolding of events during his lifetime. The words too precisely befit Iqbal's personality as a Muslim scholar who aspired to see change and progress within the Muslim society of his time. Iqbal's nature, which was averse to what was the norm of his day had been admitted by him when he boldly stated his ambition in life and his critical nature in his poetry:

What can I do? My nature is averse to rest;
 My heart is impatient like the breeze in the poppy field:
 When the eye beholds an object of beauty
 The heart yearns for something more beautiful still;
 From the spark to the star, from the star to the sun
 Is my quest;
 I have no desire for a goal,
 For me, rest spells death!
 With an impatient eye and a hopeful heart
 I seek for the end of that which is endless! (Iqbal and Saiyidain, 1995: 11).

As a Muslim philosopher of the modern age, Iqbal's ideas or rather his philosophical ways of thinking on matters related to politics, social and religious reforms and progress in life are all in line or rather anchored in the true teachings of the two primary sources of Islam, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah. Like the message of the Qur'an, Iqbal's philosophy too has the appeal of a universal message to the whole of mankind. As such, in the process of formulating his own pattern of philosophy, he has eclectically combined the gist of philosophical ideas taken from prominent philosophers of the West and the East (refer to Figure: 1 below).

In describing the ingenuity of Iqbal as a scholar who has read well in many areas of knowledge, Munnawar (1985) said the following:

Iqbal had keenly studied philosophy of both the East and the West. He was well versed in literature, history and law. A student of science he perhaps never was, yet he kept a keen eye on the latest scientific discoveries and theories. Being thus equipped intellectually he was in a position to pick up good points from different systems of polity, philosophy, economics and what not, and weave them into a new pattern (18).

Figure: 1

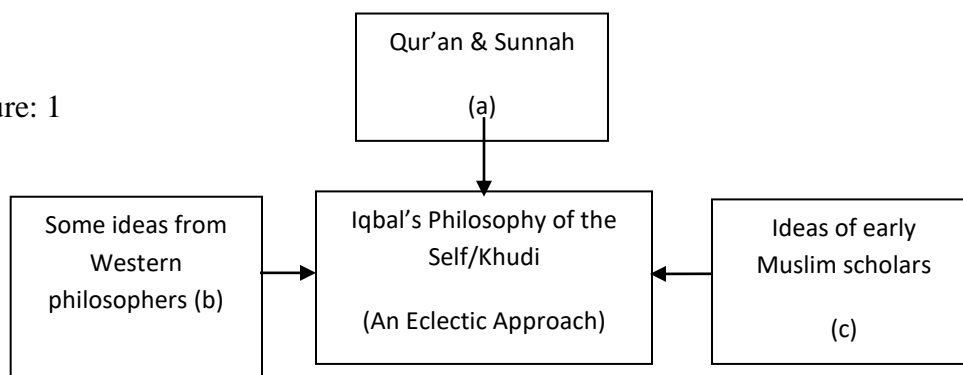


Figure: 1 (Iqbal's Philosophy)

Notes:

- a) The dynamic teachings of the Qur'an on man and the good example shown by the Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H.).

- b) Ideas of Western philosophers, which are not contrary to Islamic principles. Iqbal has agreed with some of the ideas of Goethe, Bergson, Nietzsche, Mc Taggart and some existential philosophers.
- c) Mainly mystical ideas of Ar-Rumi. He also liked the reformation works done by al-Afghani and other Muslim reformers.

Through the marriage of ideas borrowed from the scholars of the East and the West, he created his own philosophy, otherwise known as the philosophy of the Self or the Ego philosophy. In his philosophy, Iqbal very much emphasized the existence of the life of the ego and its development in relation to human personality development. Though a Muslim scholar, Iqbal was also well read in the Eastern and Western philosophies. Among the Western philosophers, Iqbal had immersed deeply into the ideas of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), William James (1842-1910), Mc Taggart (1866-1925), Goethe (1749-1832), and others. According to many experts in Iqbal, though many philosophers and Sufis had influenced Iqbal in his philosophical thoughts, the three great philosophers who had significantly influenced him in developing his ego philosophy were Rumi, Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Henri Bergson (1859-1941). In formulating his philosophy of the ego through the eclectic method, as a Muslim scholar, Iqbal did not find any problem merging ideas taken from the good part of the Western philosophy with that of the Islamic heritage of the past. As a broad-minded Muslim scholar, he strongly believed that sharing of intellectual heritage between the West and the Muslims was not something new in the history of human civilization. To him, it had happened before and can happen again and again. In defending this viewpoint, he wrote:

There was a time when European thought received inspiration from the world of Islam. The most remarkable phenomenon of modern history, however, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the West. There is nothing wrong in this movement, for European culture, on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam. Our only fear is that the dazzling exterior of European culture may arrest our movement and we may fail to reach the true inwardness of that culture (Iqbal, 1996: 6).

From the above quote, one can deduce the understanding of Iqbal about the West, its dynamism and intellectual advancement in the areas of science and technology, and its social life that has been cut loose from religious acquaintances. He cautioned the Muslims not to fall trapped into this part of the Western civilization. In one of his poems, Iqbal gave the following advice to the Muslims:

The East in imitating the West is deprived of its true self.
It should attempt, instead, a critical appraisal!
The power of the West springs not from her music
Nor from the dance of her unveiled daughters!
Her strength comes not from irreligion
Nor her progress from the adoption of the Latin script
The power of the West lies in her Arts and Sciences
At their fire, has it kindled its lamps (Iqbal in Saiyidain, 1977: 20).

Among the scholars of the East, Iqbal liked personalities like Imam Syafie (767-820), Imam Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (767-820), and Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (1838-1897). Besides that, as a man interested in mysticism, he also read deeply into the ideas of many mystic scholars, namely Hallaj (858-922), Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) and Rumi. Among all the mystics of the East, Iqbal liked Jalaluddin Rumi most profoundly. Out of love for this Sufi scholar, Iqbal immersed in the reading of Rumi's *Mathnawi* which contains 25,700 lines of poems. After knowing Rumi through his writings, Iqbal took this great sage as his spiritual guide in mysticism even though this great teacher lived 700 years earlier than him. His relationship with his teacher was a spiritual one rather than a physical and temporal one (Mohd Abbas, 1992, Vahid, 1976).

Iqbal claiming himself to be a follower of Rumi, praised his spiritual guide who inspired him in finding solutions to many spiritual matters. In one of his poems, he described his veneration of his teacher in these words:

Inspired by the genius of the Master of Rum.
 I rehearse the sealed book of secret lore.
 I am but as the spark that gleams for a moment.
 His burning candle consumed me, the moth;
 His wine overwhelmed my goblet.
 The master of Rum transmuted my earth to gold
 And set my ashes aflame.
 The grain of sand set forth from the desert,
 That it might win the radiance of the sun.
 I am a wave and I will come to rest in his sea,
 That I may make the glistening pearl mine own.
 I who am drunken with the wine of his song.
 Draw life from the breath of his words, (Iqbal, 1983: 9-10)

Iqbal in developing his ego philosophy assimilated some of the dynamic teachings of Rumi. According to Vahid (1976), in analyzing Rumi's influence on Iqbal, some parallelism can be drawn between these two mystic-poets. The following will be some of the similarities highlighted by Vahid:

- a) Their admiration for a life of ceaseless endeavour.
- b) Mysticism
- c) Faith in love
- d) Conception of God
- e) Free will
- f) Creative Evolution.
- g) Production of Perfect or Ideal Man (Vahid, 1976: 95).

Reading Rumi's *Mathnavi* in a way inspired Iqbal in producing poetical works like *Asrar-i-Khudi*, *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* and *Javid Namah*. He had also claimed that it was Rumi who appeared in his dream and asked him to write the *Asrar-i-Khudi*. In the art of poetry, both Rumi and Iqbal had many similarities. Some of the similarities that can be traced are the following:

- a) They are both fond of introducing fables and apologues.
- b) Both quote extracts from the verses of the Qur'an.
- c) Both achieve dramatic effect by the use of dialogues.
- d) Both show admiration for the two Persian poets, Sanai and Attar (Vahid, 1976: 94).

According to Vahid (1976), Iqbal as a modern Muslim philosopher discovered in the *mathnavi* of Rumi a great deal of information and issues already mentioned in it long before the scholars and philosophers in the West started their quest to look for answers pertaining to questions on human nature, man's existence and his survival on earth. Vahid (1976)'s exact words on this matter are:

In Rumi, Iqbal found Kant's Practical Reason, Fichte's Ethical Monism, Schleiermacher's Religious point of view, Schopenhauer's urge for existence, Nietzsche's Will-to-Power, Bergson's Intuition and William James's Pure Experience. In fact, in Rumi, Iqbal found all that he had learnt to admire in various Western thinkers as well as all he had learnt from the Qur'an, and so he naturally turned to him as the Master (117-118).

Iqbal in comparing his time, mission and challenges in life with that experienced by Rumi, acknowledged that both of them had some similarities. Both these poet-philosophers were calling the Muslims of their respective time to cast off all fatalistic philosophy in life. At the same time, they called the masses to be bold and daring in facing the challenges in life. These poets also called for the realization of the power of the human ego and to use it for the dynamic growth of man himself. Iqbal in the following lines of his poetry stated that both Rumi and himself had a common duty of calling people to God's way:

Like Rumi in the Harem, I called the people to piety;
From him I learnt the secrets of life.
In olden days when trouble arose he was there'
To meet trouble in present times I am here (Iqbal in Qaiser, 1986: xviii).

One of the many orientalist whom Iqbal admired the most was Goethe (1796-1869). In fact, it was admitted by Iqbal himself that in writing the *Payam-i-Mashriq* he was inspired by Goethe's famous collection of poems, '*West-Oestlicher Divan*' (1818) (The West's Admiration on the East). To Iqbal, Goethe was fair in his criticism of the West of its dominance of the Orient. Goethe's appeal to the Orient through his *Divan* was to take a lead in showing the true meaning of spirituality, the real essence of love, faith and conviction to the Occident (Ali, 1988).

After a century, the call that was made by Goethe for the East to inspire the West was finally answered by Iqbal, who not only read the *Divan* but also *Faust* and other works of Goethe. Iqbal responded to the many issues raised by Goethe, who had a high appreciation and admiration for the people of the East, by writing the *Payam-i-Mashriq*. It has been said that, although both Iqbal and Goethe lived at different times, they had many similarities. Some of the most obvious similarities that have been highlighted by Abdul Hadi W. M. in his introduction to Iqbal's (1985) *Payam-i-Mashriq* in the Indonesian version are:

- 1) As poets, they paid great attention to the many issues related to human life.

- 2) Both were barristers at law, statesmen, humanists, religious and moralists at the same time.
- 3) Though both poets dealt with the topic on religiosity in their poetry, they suggested practical solution in solving the problems of humanity than just presenting abstract ideas through their poetry.
- 4) Both poets were critical on the development of human civilization during their time as people were more inclined to follow rational, utilitarian and materialist philosophies.
- 5) They were interested in the events of the past which were part of history, and the unfolding of events during their times.
- 6) Both liked mysticism and were great admirers of Jalaluddin Rumi.
- 7) They were deemed as the ‘spiritual father’ of their countries (Iqbal in Pakistan and Goethe in Germany)
- 8) They viewed man as a dynamic personality.
- 9) They were ardent critics of Western colonization of the East.
- 10) Both appeared as poets at a time when their countries were going through difficult times (Germany was attacked recklessly by Napoleon and India was faced with its unsettled issues in the areas of its national education, economy, culture, arts, law, etc) (v-x).

Besides Goethe, Iqbal was one of those Muslim scholars who had a good understanding of the works of the German philosopher, Nietzsche (1844-1900). Even though Nietzsche rattled Europe with his atheistic slogan of ‘God is Dead’, there were certain aspects of his philosophy and his personality that were admired by Iqbal. Nietzsche’s critical appraisal of the West and his thought-provoking writings on the Western trend of life were much appreciated by Iqbal. He once wrote the following remarks on Nietzsche:

Nietzsche saw the decadence of the human type around him, disclosed the subtle forces that had been working for it, and finally attempted to adumbrate the type of life adequate to the task of our planet. ‘Not how man is preserved, but how man is surpassed’. (Iqbal, 1992: 153).

As a keen reader of Nietzsche’s philosophy, Iqbal has referred to this philosopher of the West, in many of his philosophical writings and poems. In realizing this fondness of Iqbal in referring to Nietzsche in his writings, quite a number of Muslim scholars have highlighted the fact that there exists some sort of parallelism between Nietzsche and Iqbal in certain aspects of their philosophical thoughts. One such obvious similarity can be seen in their concept of an ideal personality. In describing this concept of the arrival of an ideal personality as a saviour of mankind, Nietzsche uses the concept of ‘*Übermensch*’, while Iqbal making the Prophet of Islam a role model, describes his concept of an ideal personality by using the term ‘*Insān al-Kāmil*’.

Besides Nietzsche, Iqbal also has some similarities with the French philosopher, Henri Bergson (1859-1941). Both of them agree on the principle that philosophical matters could not be solved with the power of reasoning, but with the power of intuition. Bergson’s philosophy on ‘*Élan Vital*’ (creative energy) has some similarities with Iqbal’s concept of the ‘*Creative Effort*’. Upon analysis, one would discover that the two concepts are not the same. Bergson’s ‘*Élan Vital*’ is a blind force and a non-observable one which takes us recklessly anywhere without any aim. In

contrast, Iqbal's 'Creative Effort' has uniformity with human thought and intelligence. It also has a definite object and it is orientated towards a goal (Mohd Abbas, 1992).

Any research on Iqbal's philosophy will reveal the undeniable fact that his philosophy is a fusion of ideas taken from the philosophers of the East and the West. In his 'Stray Reflection' (1992), Iqbal himself acknowledged and appreciated the fact that he had gained knowledge from the poets and philosophers of the East and the West. The following is one among the many quotes found in that book whereby Iqbal admitted the contribution of others to the structure of his thoughts:

I confess I owe a great deal to Hegel, Goethe, Mirza Ghalib, Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil and Wordsworth. The first two led me into the 'inside' of things; the third and fourth taught me how to remain oriental in spirit and expression after having assimilated foreign ideals of poetry, and the last saved me from atheism in my student days (Iqbal, 1992: 61).

Other than Nietzsche and Henri Bergson there were many other Western philosophers whom Iqbal admired, namely Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), William James (1842-1910) and Mc Taggart (1866-1925), but their influence on his philosophical foundation was not so intense. The reason why Iqbal liked these Western philosophers was none other than for their research-oriented thinking, boldness, dynamism and creative intelligence. Getting to know them, either through their writings or in person, had created an impact on Iqbal's scholarly life. Even though Iqbal admired and emulated the good qualities seen in some of the Western philosophers, without fail he highlighted to them the faults and loopholes found in their system of philosophy and education, which are devoid of religious and spiritual essence. Below here are a few lines of his poem that criticize the West:

The European man of wisdom does not possess a wakeful heart, although he possesses a wakeful eye (Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1969: 510)
Believe me, Europe to-day is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical advancement (Iqbal, 1953: xii).

Iqbal in his opinion on the Western culture felt that it deprives the European man of his vision and soul for spiritual life. As such, Iqbal further ventured on to think that this modern European culture has lost its piety in the race for modernization. As a result, this loss of piety has caused his soul, purity of conscience, high thinking and refined taste to disappear from his life. In another place in his poetry, Iqbal made the following statement:

The East perceived God and failed to perceive the world
The West lost itself in the World and fled from God!
To open the eyes on God is worship!
To see oneself unveiled is life (Iqbal and Saiyidain, 1995: 19).

K.G. Saiyidain (1977) whom Iqbal acknowledged as a scholar who had precisely captured his thoughts and his philosophy of education in his book: Iqbal's Educational Philosophy wrote the following comments with regard to Iqbal's attitude towards the West:

He readily welcomes their spirit of research, their sciences, their strenuous striving to gain control of their environment. But he would certainly repudiate the merely superficial and sensational aspects of their civilization because they tend to weaken our self-respect, run contrary to some of our basic cultural values and give us an entirely false sense of being modern and progressive (23).

Besides his criticism of the West, Iqbal felt disturbed to witness the development that was taking place in the Muslim world. It saddened him to see the mushrooming of a kind of Sufism which preached to the masses to indulge zealously in all spiritual practices, and at the same time, either neglect or pay little interest in calling people to perform their worldly duties actively as mentioned in the Qur'an. It was clear to Iqbal that such a message was contrary to what the Muslims have been told to do in carrying out their duty as Allah's vicegerent. Iqbal's call for dynamic participation in worldly life is very relevant to the following Qur'anic message:

But seek, with the wealth which Allah has bestowed on you, the reward and happiness of the Hereafter. Do not forget your share (of the needs and provision) from this world, and be good (to others) as Allah has been good to you (by giving you more than what you needed), and do not seek mischief in the land. Allah does not like the mischief-makers (Al-Qur'ān, Al-Qasas: 77; Basmeih, 2007).

In analyzing the reason why people during the time of Iqbal thought that the material world is a hindrance to the spiritual growth of an individual, one would discover that many analysts are of the opinion that it has its reason in the historical development that took place in the Muslim world. Facts from the annals of history reveal that the political situation during Iqbal's time was not in favour of the Muslims. The era of European colonization in the Muslim world robbed Muslims of their power to rule their own countries. This situation, which started with the fall of the Mogul and Ottoman empires, was later experienced by many Muslim countries. Devastated by the feeling of defeat, the morale of the Muslims was at the lowest abyss. This made them withdraw from active participation in politics and social life. This pathetic situation also made them lag behind in the areas of economy and education. As a means of escapism from active participation in social and political life, the Muslim masses started to seek solace and comfort for their hearts by going into Sufism. By capitalizing on the state of helplessness of the Muslim masses, some Sufi scholars called the people to the spiritual path and for the purification of their hearts and minds. What was contained in their teaching was the subtle message to abandon this worldly life and instead search for a blissful and honoured life in the next world. Iqbal, who believed in the philosophy of action, realized the situation of the Muslims, who were unable to face the challenges of the modern world. He highlighted this in his writing:

The present-day Muslim prefers to roam about aimlessly in the valley of Hellenic-Persian Mysticism, which teaches us to shut our eyes to the hard reality around, and to fix our gaze on what is described as 'illumination'- blue, red and yellow reality springing from the cells of an over-worked brain. To me this self-mystification, this nihilism, i.e., seeking reality where it does not exist, is a physiological symptom, giving me a clue to the decadence of the Muslim world. The intellectual history of the ancient world reveals this most significant fact that the decadents in all ages tried to seek shelter behind self-mysticism and nihilism. Having lost the vitality to grapple with the temporal, these prophets of decay apply

themselves to the quest of a supposed eternal, and gradually complete the spiritual impoverishment and physical degeneration of their society by evolving a seemingly charming ideal of life which reduces the healthy and powerful to death! (Iqbal, 1992: 149).

In assessing what was happening to the Muslims, Iqbal through his poems stressed that the teachings of medieval mysticism in the East were wrongfully calling the Muslims to live a life of renunciation of this world in order to gain merit in the next world. Iqbal who could not find any justification for such teachings in the Qur'an or the life of the Prophet of Islam called for vitality and dynamism through his poems and philosophical writings. In particular, he called for the banishment of the teachings of the *Wahdah al-Wujūd* that preaches that the ideal status of an individual in his highest level of spirituality is to get his ego to gain union with the Ultimate Ego (God).

In studying Iqbal, one would discover that at one point in his life before he left for Europe for his postgraduate studies, he was a great admirer of Ibn Al-Arabi (1165- 1240) and his teachings of the *Wahdah al-Wujūd*. Iqbal in his doctoral dissertation, 'The Development of Metaphysics in Persia (1908)' praised Ibn Al-Arabi. Later in his intellectual life, he found out that Al-Arabi's philosophy and theosophy were not suitable for the philosophy of ego that he was developing. Iqbal later realized that Al-Arabi had been influenced by the Neo-Platonic teachings, which were theosophical in nature that showed less vitality towards life. Moreover, Iqbal too felt that the *Wahdah al-Wujūd* concept was not in line with the basic teachings of Islam. This change in Iqbal's attitude from an admirer to a critic towards the type of Sufism brought by Ibn Al-Arabi can be seen clearly from the following description given in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1972):

Iqbal was for a long time an admirer of the Spanish Sufi Philosopher Ibn-'Arabi (1165-1240), the most consistent advocate of pantheism among Muslim thinkers. Very soon, however, he realized that this philosophy was foreign to the simple and invigorating message of Islam, as embodied in the Qur'an and as represented in the dynamic life of Muhammad and his followers (212).

Iqbal in assessing the widespread use of the *Wahdah al-Wujūd* concept present in the Sufi teachings in the Muslim lands was convinced that it was the effort done by Ibn Arabi. Iqbal also believed that it was the burning passion of Al-Arabi that made him amalgamate the principles of Neo-Platonism with Islamic mysticism. Later, this amalgamated Islamic mysticism became something that was difficult for the masses to distinguish, as which part came from the Islamic heritage and what came from Greek philosophy. On commenting on the great influence Ibn Arabi had on other Sufis and poets of his time and of later generations, Iqbal said:

With this view point Shaikh Muhi-ud-Din Ibn-Al-Arabi of Undolesia (Spain) interpreted the Holy Qur'an, which influenced the mind and heart of the Muslims very deeply. Due to profound knowledge and virtues of the great Shaikh and due to his gigantic personality, the doctrine of 'Wahdatu-ul-Wujud', had been made an essential part of the Islamic thought. FakhruddinIraqi (d. 686/1287) and Awhad-ud-Din Kirmani (d.697/1298) were very much influenced by his teachings, and

gradually all the poets of the East came under the same influence (Iqbal in Nuruddin, 1978: 21).

In Iqbal's view, the type of *Tasawwuf* practiced during his days was not in line with the simple form of *Tasawwuf* practiced by the Prophet and his companions. Feeling disheartened by the type of Sufism practiced by the later generation of Muslims, Iqbal explained in his writing how and in what ways the Sufis have gone overboard in their spiritual practices contradicting what has been explained in the Qur'an. In realizing the problems that arise within the Islamic mysticism of his time, he assertively made the following comments on *Tasawwuf*:

[It] is always a sign of decline of a nation. Greek mysticism, Persian mysticism, Indian mysticism- all are signs of decline of these nations; the same is true of Islamic mysticism. The Sufis of the earliest days of Islam were ascetics. Austerity and a God-fearing piety were their real concerns. In the *Tasawwuf* of later times metaphysics and theorizing mixed. *Tasawwuf* then ceased to be mere asceticism and mingled with philosophy. *Hama Ust* [All is He], the slogan of the pantheist, is not a religious but a philosophical theme. Islam has nothing to do with *wahdat* and *kathrat*. The essence of Islam is *Tawhid* and the opposite of the latter is not *kathrat* but *shirk*. Any philosophy or religious teaching that prevents the blossoming and maturing of the human personality is worthless. *Tasawwuf* has inflicted much damage to the scientific spirit. People run after amulets instead of consulting a physician. To shut one's ears and eyes to the material world and to emphasize only the inward perception is a sign of stagnation and degeneration. It is the search after easy ways instead of making the effort for the conquest of nature by dynamic struggle. I think the forbidden tree means *Tasawwuf*. Pure Islamic *Tasawwuf* is that in which the divine injunctions become imperatives ensuing from one's own wishes (Iqbal in Rahbar, 1971: 53-54).

Iqbal's criticism of the type of *Tasawwuf* practised by some quarters of the Islamic Sufi movement was mainly because he sensed that there were some similarities found in the teachings of *Tasawwuf* with that found in the Hellenistic, Vedanta and Buddhist philosophies of life. Very particularly, the Sufi teaching on '*Fanā' Fillah*' (self-annihilation in God) in order to attain spiritual union with God seems to have some similarities with the Nirvana concept preached in Hinduism and Buddhism. According to Iqbal, the Sufi concept that preaches that at the highest level of spirituality, the soul of a Muslim reunites with Allah is a concept, which is foreign to Islam. Contrary to the Sufi concept, Iqbal believed in a concept, which makes a distinction between Allah as the creator and man as His creation. Though the human soul originates from Him, the demarcation line between the Creator and the creation (God and Man relationship) should be maintained under all circumstances. In addition to that, Iqbal also strongly believed that man in his highest level of spirituality could not be absorbed into Allah. On the contrary, he believed that it is only possible for man to assimilate Allah's Divine attributes into his characters. This idea of Iqbal has its basis on what has been stated by the Prophet, when he said, '*Takhallaqū-bi-akhlāq Allāh*' (Imbue yourselves with the attributes of Allah). In giving a commentary on this Hadith, El-Muhammady (2002) stated:

It is not that man imbibes the qualities of God within him, for that would be unthinkable spiritually and theologically, but that man struggles to build his

character based on lessons which he gets from contemplating on the meanings of the Names of God. This is in accordance with the famous remarks from spiritual masters: “The Lord remains the Lord even though He descends (in self-manifestation) and the servant remains a servant however high he ascends (167).

In analyzing further, the famous concept of the *Wahdah al-Wujūd* that states, man in his relationship with God is like a *Qatrah* (drop) while God is the *Bahr* (Ocean). According to the proponents of *Wahdah al-Wujūd*, the highest achievement of man in his spirituality is to get himself drown in the Ocean of God and become one with Him, as he is just a trivial drop of water. As an antithesis to this teaching, Iqbal came up with a new concept, which is contrary to the old ideas of the Sufis. In his new concept, though he still preferred the analogy of God being the Ocean, and man being a drop slipping into it, he emphasized that it is not in the moral or spiritual teachings of Islam for man to go into a state of non-existence. Instead of man effacing his personality by slipping into the Ocean of God, man has to transform himself into a ‘Shining Pearl’ by having a more profound personality. In other words, Iqbal does not want man’s individuality to lose its existence but rather through the mercy and kindness of God, man should become dynamic by having some of His Divine attributes actualized in him. As a result of this, man becomes stronger in his personality.

Besides his criticism of Sufism and its doctrine on the *Wahdah al-Wujūd* that has assimilated foreign elements into Sufi practices, Iqbal also found other reasons for the shortcomings of the Muslim Ummah of his time. Much of his observation on the state of stagnation of the Ummah was seen extensively described in his poetry and also in his philosophical writings. According to him, one of the factors that contributed to the cause of non-productivity, intellectual lethargy and backwardness of the Ummah was due to the conservatism prevalent in the intellectual circle. This condition, which did not take into consideration the modern and latest developments in the fields of science and education made the Muslims lag behind the West in terms of intellectual achievement. Moreover, due to these reasons, the Muslims who were not prepared to face the challenges of the modern world failed to strategize and avert the occupation of their lands by the West. This condition of the Muslims caused them dearly as they became the subjects of the West. This pathetic condition made the Muslims lose their freedom of speech and action. Iqbal also believed that this state of being ruled by others also robbed the Muslims of their dignity and self-esteem. Iqbal (1996) once voiced his displeasure on conservatism, which he thought could be damaging to the growth of knowledge and human personality:

Conservatism is as bad in religion as in any other department of human activity. It destroys the ego’s creative freedom and closes up the paths of fresh spiritual enterprise. This is the main reason why our medieval mystic technique can no longer produce original discoveries of ancient Truth (145).

Inspired by the reformation works done by Al-Afghani (1838-1897), Iqbal called for the reformation of the Muslim mind. His clarion call to the Ummah was to read the Holy Qur’an with all intensity and to produce action. According to him, the holy book of the Muslims is one that calls for action/deed rather than a book of mere ideas. With such an understanding of how the Qur’an should be approached, he criticized the old idea of plain reading for merits in the hereafter. Very particularly Iqbal attacked the type of mysticism followed by the Muslims of his time. He was convinced that mysticism that called for spiritual upliftment at the expense of the

abandonment of active participation in worldly things is against the true spirit of the Quranic teachings. Iqbal further emphasized that religious seclusion that keeps one away from paying attention to the needs of the Ummah, and correcting the evils, injustices and imperfections that happen within the society is an attitude that contradicts the philosophy of life of a *Khalifah* mentioned in the Qur'an. In realizing the intellectual lethargy prevalent in the Muslim world, Iqbal called for the dynamic participation of the Muslims both in the mundane and spiritual life. With this aim in mind, he cautioned the Muslims not to fall prey to the mystical and philosophical teachings that make them act passively in life. In line with such an idea, Iqbal criticized Socrates, Plato and their Greek philosophy, which paid much more attention to the ideal than to the real-life situation (Iqbal,1996).

According to Iqbal (1996), Socrates' way of understanding man is not in line with the Qur'anic way because he called for the study of man by just reflecting on human behaviour. Iqbal stressed that from the Quranic perspective man should be understood by relating his creation to the other celestial and terrestrial creations of Allah. Man, through the observation of all wonders in the creation of Allah, like the starry heavens, changes in the direction of the wind, the formation of the clouds, orbiting of the planets, the alternation of the day and night and the world of insects, will find his proper place in the hierarchy of Allah's creations. Iqbal disagreed with Plato, the great Greek philosopher when the latter despised the use of sense perception in the pursuit of knowledge. Plato by overly emphasizing the ideal disregarded the importance of the real. By stating this world is just an illusion, Plato only paid attention to the ideal world. In Iqbal's view, disregarding the role of the sense perception is a view in direct contradiction with the message of the Qur'an. Iqbal further emphasized that 'hearing and sight' are Allah's valuable gifts to mankind. Iqbal also criticized those Muslim scholars of the past who tried to interpret the Qur'anic teachings from the perspective of Greek philosophy. In *Asrari-i-Khudi*, Iqbal cautioned the Muslims not to be deceived by Plato's ideas. Below are a few lines from a long poem on the danger of following Plato's ideas:

Plato, the prime ascetic and sage.
 Was one of that ancient flock of sheep.
 His Pegasus went astray in the darkness of idealism
 And dropped its shoe amidst the rocks of actuality.
 He was so fascinated by the invisible
 That he made hand, eye, and ear of no account.
 "To die," said he, "is the secret of Life:
 The candle is glorified by being put out."
 He dominates our thinking,
 His cup sends us to sleep and takes the sensible world away from us.
 He is a sheep in man's clothing,
 The soul of the Sufi bows to his authority.
 He soared with his intellect to the highest heaven
 And called the world of phenomena a myth (Iqbal, 1983: 56-57)

Iqbal's advice was very timely as much of Plato's ideas of abandoning the world in search of the next world had crept into the many schools of Sufism. To Iqbal, man in search of glory in the hereafter should not neglect this life. In Iqbal's thought, neglecting the life of this world for the

next is a concept which is against the role of a *Khalifah* as mentioned in the Qur'an. His idea of calling the Muslim Ummah to live a dynamic life which should be full of challenges is very much relevant to what has been stated in the following words of the Qur'an:

But seek, with the wealth which Allah has bestowed on you, the reward and happiness of the Hereafter. Do not forget your share (of the needs and provision) from this world, and be good (to others) as Allah has been good to you (by giving you more than what you needed), and do not seek mischief in the land. Allah does not like the mischief-makers (Al-Qur'an, Al-Qasas: 77; Basmeih, 2007).

Besides hurling criticisms on Socrates and Plato, Iqbal also raised his skepticism against the teachings of the Eastern Sufis like Al-Hallaj Mansur and Lisan Al-Ghaib Hafiz As-Shirazi. Though Iqbal did not state that they have gone out of the fold of Islam, nevertheless he reminded the Muslims not to fall and be entangled in the melancholic poetry and teachings of these Sufis. In analyzing their teachings, Iqbal detected that they had a tinge of pantheistic preaching which called for the abandonment of this worldly life. Iqbal further cautioned that this concept of self-negation that creates passivity towards active participation in worldly life could cause Muslims to lose their position as the *Khalifah* of Allah. In realizing the dangers of the teachings of these Sufis, Iqbal wrote strong criticisms in the first edition of the *Asrar-i-Khudi*. This brought a storm of protest from those who supported the ideas of As-Shirazi and the like. Some of the strongest protests came from the most conservative-minded poets and scholars like Akbar Ilahabadi (1846-1921), Khwaja Hasan Nizami (1879-1955), Peerzada Muzaffar-ud-Din Ahmad and Maulana Feeruz-ud-Din Ahmad Tughrayee. The last two even produced anthologies to belittle Iqbal's call for reformation. Iqbal in his attempt to avoid any confrontation with the Sufi group, who were in favour of the teaching of self-negation, omitted his criticism of the Sufis in subsequent editions of his book. (Azzam, 1985; Nuruddin, 1978).

These are the few lines of Iqbal's criticism of Hafiz, which brought a storm of protest from those who favoured the old approach of Sufism than what Iqbal was calling for:

His proposition is nothing but chit chat.
 His hand is short and the date on the date tree.
 Is a sheep and has learnt how to sing.
 Has learnt coquetry and whims and elegance.
 His fascinations are poison and that's all.
 Gives the weakness the name of strength
 His musical instrument leads the nations astray.
 His congregation is not worthy of the pious ones,
 His cup is not suitable for the ingenious ones.
 Go independent of the congregation of Hafiz,
 Beware of sheep and beware (Iqbal in Rizvi, 1992: 464).

Further reading into Iqbal's ideas, will reveal the fact that generally the Muslim Ummah of his time was caught in the web of pseudo-mysticism and failed to follow the true spirit of Islam found in the dynamic teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Iqbal who realized the problems of the Ummah, wanted to bring about an Islamic Renaissance by calling the masses to relieve themselves from the meshes of superstition, mental lethargy, immobility and ignorance. His effort as a poet-

philosopher and a religious reformer was aimed at awakening the Ummah from its deep slumber to a state of consciousness in executing its mundane duties in a more productive and dynamic manner. In addition to this, he also opposed the Muslims for their state of withdrawal, renunciation and easily feeling defeated in facing the challenges of life. Iqbal vehemently opposed those who took religion to be a sort of escapism and plainly resign to the fatalistic concept of life. As opposed to all these serious problems of his time, Iqbal called for a true understanding of the religion that calls for all individuals; male and female to take the forward march in life towards the conquest of the material world (Kazmi, 1995).

A very important point that should be given due attention is that Iqbal as a reformer first developed his ego philosophy and used his poetry besides his philosophical writings to explain it in detail. However, Iqbal who was well known for this poetry, when addressed with the title, ‘*Shaere-Mashriq*’ (The Poet of the East), did not consider himself to be a poet in the real sense. It was humble of Iqbal to say that he did not consider himself a poet and only employed poetry as a vehicle to carry his message to the people. Iqbal’s very words on this are:

I have never considered myself a poet. Therefore, I am not a rival of anyone, and I do not consider anybody my rival. I have no interest in poetic artistry. But, yes I have a special goal in mind for whose expression I use the medium of poetry considering the condition and the customs of this country (Geocities1, 2009)

It was the brilliance of Iqbal, to capitalize on the use of poetry as a medium to express his ideas towards social reform because it was part of the culture of the people living in the subcontinent at that time to pass their leisure reading and listening to poetry in the media and in public gatherings. Iqbal’s works in the area of social and religious reforms are very much similar to what has been done by Imam Muhammad Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792), Al-Afghani (1838-1897), Syekh Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and other great Muslim reformers in Islam. Propelled by the zeal to witness progress within the Islamic Ummah, Iqbal called for the banishment of all superstitious beliefs that were misleading the masses in the Islamic world, particularly in the subcontinent. By calling for the banishment of superstitious beliefs, he also called the Muslims to embark on the bandwagon of science, which promises progress. To Iqbal, Muslims living in the modern world must learn to adapt themselves by utilizing science but at the same time, they should not sever their relationship with the past Islamic heritage. In other words, Iqbal called the Muslims to interpret the Qur’an and Sunnah in the light of the scientific age in which they were living. He also believed that the failure on the part of Muslims to do so will be a state of stagnation and they would be left behind when compared to the others in the world, particularly the West. His exact words calling the Muslims to adapt to the ever-changing world were, “The task before the modern Muslim is, therefore, immense. He has to rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past” (Iqbal, 1996: 78).

Iqbal’s philosophy also clearly portrays his attitude, which is very much in favour of science. To him, in order for man to progress spiritually, he must look into the Qur’an as the ‘revealed book’ from God and the universe as the ‘open book’ of God. To him, science is not opposed to the religious teachings in Islam. Furthermore, he believed that scientific facts and findings could complement religion in strengthening one’s faith. Iqbal highlighted this point in the Reconstruction (1996) when he said, “In our observation of nature, we are virtually seeking a kind of intimacy with

the Absolute Ego; and this is only another form of worship” (45). “The scientific observer of nature is a kind of mystic seeker in the act of prayer” (73).

In his poems, Iqbal called upon the Ummah to utilize science to improve their lives by extracting the bounties that God has provided for them in the material world. In his opinion, man must use science and technology to bring out the hidden potentials from the belly of the earth to be utilized for his spiritual development:

Science is an instrument for the preservation of Life.
Science is a means of invigorating the Self.
Science and art are servants of Life (Iqbal, 1983:26).

Iqbal in further calling the Muslims to embrace a positive attitude towards the learning and usage of science and scientific research methods highlighted the point that the message brought by the Prophet is very much in harmony with the scientific revolution that was taking place during the early twentieth century. Iqbal in defending science also stated his view that on the whole, the message of the Qur’an is anti-classical. By stating this he felt the message of the Qur’an is a call for a dynamic life which utilizes scientific research and exploration:

The Prophet of Islam seems to stand between the ancient and the modern world. In so far as the source of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the ancient world; in so far as the spirit of his revelation is concerned he belongs to the modern world. In him life discovers other sources of knowledge suitable to its new direction. The birth of Islam, as I hope to be able presently to prove to your satisfaction, is the birth of inductive intellect. In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its abolition (Iqbal, 1996: 100-101).

In concluding the discussion on Iqbal’s philosophy, it can be said that although he was a humanist in thinking about the conditions of the world, while formulating his philosophy he had given serious thought to the needs of the Muslim Ummah of his time. As such, in his philosophy, he had given special attention to vital elements such as dynamism, progressiveness, constructivism and creativity. These elements were carefully interwoven in his poetry and philosophical works with the sole intention of bringing the Muslim Ummah out of their backwardness, superstitious beliefs, conservatism and passivity in life towards a state of preparedness in facing the challenges of the modern world. His call towards knowledge, advancement in scientific research and progress in the material and spiritual life was a call directed to the Islamic Ummah that stretches from Morocco to Indonesia. In a way, the elements present in his philosophy were aimed at restoring the lost dignity and glory of the Muslims.

Conclusion

This research has highlighted the fact that Iqbal was one of the best minds that the Muslim world has ever produced. He was a brilliant scholar in formulating his own philosophical thoughts by integrating Islamic ideas taken from the Qur’an, Sunnah, ancient Muslim scholars and sages with what has been provided by Western philosophy and science. Many of his criticisms raised against people in the East and West still have their relevance for us to look into them and find an amicable solution. Particularly, his criticisms of the Muslim Ummah still have their validity. The Muslim Ummah has not moved very far from its problems of the past. At the moment, the

Muslim Ummah is more divided than ever before. Muslim leaders who are obsessed with power and dominance have led their nations into war with other Muslim countries, especially in the Middle East. As a result of this situation, the Ummah in some parts of the world witness and suffer from violence, terror attacks and bomb blasts at an exponential rate. These acts of violence and bloodbath have devastated the lives of civilians. Many Muslims have left their countries in seeking asylum in the West. Reading Iqbal's ideas should return the Ummah to the right track in creating a good life and practising the philosophy of co-existence with others. The researcher believes that when humanity follows the ideas proposed by Iqbal, the world would experience and enjoy the much-needed peace and harmony.

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