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Iqbal: An Analysis on his Life, Works and Mission

Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak*

Abstract

The Islamic world has witnessed the emergence of great number of Muslim scholars. The names of those who made positive contributions are mentioned till to these days. The poet-philosopher Allama Muhammad Iqbal is one of those great scholars who have left a legacy behind to be followed by other scholars particularly in the area of how to deal with the West. His own reconciliatory approach in dealing between the West and the Islamic world should be an interesting one. Within the confines of this paper, the researcher would like to explore and analyze the life, works and mission of Iqbal, focusing on his philosophical approach to Muslim ummah.

Keywords: Iqbal, Analysis, Life, Works, Mission

Abstrak

Dunia islam telah menyaksikan kebangkitan jumlah yang besar ulama muslim. Nama mereka yang membuat sumbangan positif disebutkan sehingga ke hari ini. Penyair-ahli falsafah Allama Muhammad Iqbal adalah salah satu dari ulama besar yang telah meninggalkan legasi untuk diikuti oleh ulama-ulama lain khususnya dalam bidang cara untuk berurusan dengan orang barat. Pendekatan sendiri pendamaian dalam menangani di antara barat dan dunia islam seharusnya menjadi salah satu yang menarik. Dalam lingkungan karya ini, penyelidik ingin meneroka dan menganalisis kehidupan, kerja-kerja dan misi Iqbal, memberi tumpuan kepada pendekatan falsafah beliau kepada umat muslim.

Kata kunci: Iqbal, Analisis, kehidupan, kerja-kerja, misi

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Introduction

Muhammad Iqbal was the most distinguished philosopher of the twentieth century in the Muslim world. His ideas, either in prose or poetry, have been appreciated by both the east and the west. His works have been translated into a number of world languages. His views are still serving as impetus for genuine Muslim scholars towards the renaissance of Muslim ummah. It seems quite pertinent to revisit his life and mission again and again.

Iqbal's Life, Works and Mission

Iqbal, who was well-known by the title Allama Muhammad Iqbal, was born on 22nd Feb.1873, in Sialkot, a place in northern India. His roots go back to the ancestors who originate 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 to the religion of Islam by the preaching of Shāh Hamdānī, 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.¹

Iqbal's parents were very pious. His father Nūr Muhammad was a tailor who practiced Sufism. As a religious man, Iqbal's father contributed a lot for the cause of the Muslim society in Kashmir which pathetically lost all political and social standings under the Hindu rule. As a young boy, Iqbal received his elementary education from his father, and was later sent to a Sufi scholar, Mīr Ḥasan. Iqbal learnt from him Islamic sciences, Arabic and Persian. When he had finished his primary level of education, Mīr Ḥasan recommended Iqbal to enroll in the Scottish Mission School. The contribution of Mīr Ḥasan in molding Iqbal's character cannot be denied. As an acknowledgement to the enlightening personality of his teacher, later in life when Iqbal became an established poet, he wrote these lines to express his indebtedness toward Mīr Ḥasan:

¹ Mohd Abbas. (1992). *Konsepsi pendidikan akhlaq menurut Muhammad Iqbal*. Aceh: Fakultas Tarbiyah Institut Agama Islam Negeri Jami'ah Ar-Raniry. p. 40

That light of the exalted family of ‘Alī,
 Whose threshold will always be sacred like the Ka’bah
 to me,
 Whose breath enabled the bud of my desire to blossom.
 Whose kind enlightenment developed my critical
 faculty.²

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, Dāgh Dehlawī (1831-1905). Dāgh was one of the last famous poets of the Mogul era of India. By the time Iqbal started to write his poetry, 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. Dāgh as a renowned poet, after going through many of Iqbal’s beautiful lines of poetry, acknowledged Iqbal’s extra ordinary talent and commented that his poems were of good standard and the need to correct them was unnecessary.³

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.⁴

At the time when he was studying in the Government College, Iqbal got very close to one of his teachers, an English, Sir Thomas Arnold. It was Mīr Ḥasan in Sialkot who had great

² Pravina Bhim Sain (1989). *Remembering our leaders*. Vol.7. New Delhi: Children’s Book Trust, pp. 34-35

³ See D.J. Matthews (1993). *Iqbal: A selection of Urdu verses text and translation*. New Delhi: Heritage Publishers

⁴ See Syed Abdul Wahid, (195_), *Introduction to Iqbal*, Karachi: Pakistan Publications

influence on Iqbal, teaching him the past intellectual heritage of the Muslims, in Lahore, it was Thomas Arnold, the cultured English man who introduced Iqbal to many of the positive aspects of the Western culture and civilization. It has also been said that it was through his acquaintance with Thomas Arnold that Iqbal learnt to be a critical scholar. As an appreciation to the contribution of this English teacher, Iqbal dedicated his doctoral dissertation to him.⁵

In the year 1899, Iqbal graduated from the Government College with an M. A. in Philosophy. In recognizing his mastery over English and Arabic and also taking into consideration of his future intellectual development, Thomas Arnold recommended Iqbal to pursue his studies at the Cambridge University in England. Thus, Iqbal became the first son of India who was given a place to study in Cambridge. 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 appreciated many views of 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 program 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, for a short while he also attended lectures at the School of Political Science.⁶

Throughout his stay in Europe, Iqbal used to meet Western scholars to discuss matters pertaining to education and philosophy. After discovering Iqbal's potentials, the 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

⁵ Ashraf Nurdin, (1985). *Pujangga Iqbal*. Singapore: Pustaka Nasional Pte. Ltd. pp.10-11

⁶ Djohan Effendi & Abdul Hadi W.M. (eds). (1986). *Iqbal: Pemikir social Islam dan sajak-sajaknya*. Jakarta: PT.

Pantja Simpati (Anggota IKAPI), pp. 28-29

the Western civilization. His thought-provoking lectures even caught the attention of the Western media.

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 continued in this 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, Lahore. 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 to resign from his teaching activities within two years after joining the Government College.⁷

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 for their rights. His ideas and principles in politics were based on the Islamic values which ran parallel to some of the ideas present in the humanistic philosophy. Through such ideas he called the Muslim *Ummah* for hard work, *jihād* (striving for excellence) and self-sacrifice in life. His relentless voice that echoed through his poems and philosophical discourse all over India was an admonition for the Muslims to seek freedom and to lead a dignified life. In 1922, Iqbal who wrote an elegy upon hearing the death of Queen Victoria was much appreciated by the then Governor of Punjab Sir Edward Macleagan, and the British government. As recognition for his contribution in politics and for his scholastic works, the British government conferred the knighthood upon him which carried the title 'Sir'.⁸

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, he suggested ways and means of how to solve the communal crisis faced by both Hindus and Muslims of India. In

⁷ Mohd Abbas. (1992). *Konsepsi pendidikan akhlaq menurut Muhammad Iqbal*. p. 43

⁸ See Sheikh Akbar Ali. (1988). *Iqbal his poetry and message*. New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications.

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.⁹

In finding a solution to solve the conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims, Iqbal was the first leader in the Indian politics 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 the 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.¹⁰

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, a place whereby the Muslims can adhere to the Muslim way of life and also as a land which will cater for the Islamic culture to bloom and flourish. All of Iqbal's hard-work and strenuous efforts in politics was 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

⁹ Ashraf Nurudin, Op.Cit. (1985)pp.19-20

¹⁰ Iqbal in Khalid B Sayeed. (1968). *Pakistan, the formative phase 1857-1948* (2nd edn.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.103

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.¹¹

As a reformist and educationist, Iqbal's ideas were not just relevant to India alone. His ideas also found validity in neighboring Afghanistan. In 1933, he was invited together with Sir Ross Masood and Sulaimān Nadvī by the Government of Afghanistan to re-evaluate the educational system in the country and suggest some changes to improve the educational system at the Kabul University.¹² During the many years of being a barrister, without neglect 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 was there from a young age. In poetry, his works were of exceptional qualities. Unlike many other poets of his time, Iqbal did not write down his poems just to lull the masses to ecstasy, but to produce a change and revolution in their mindset towards living a dignified life. In most of his works in poetry there was always an underlying philosophy. In realizing the predicament of the Muslim Ummah at that time, Iqbal utilized his

¹¹ Mohamed Ali Jinnah. & Waheed Ahmad. (1992). *The nation's voice, towards consolidation: Speeches and statements*. Lahore: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, p. 249

¹² Abdul Wahhab Azzam. (1985). *Filsafat dan puisi Iqbal*. (Ahmad Rofi'Usman, Trans.). Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka, p. 28

works in poetry to call the Muslims to come out from their state of backwardness and march forward in life as individuals who are creative, progressive and innovative. In poetry, though he used Urdu which was his own mother tongue as well, he somehow preferred the Persian language. He thought that the Persian language was more suitable in explaining things of spiritual in nature. His anthology of poems entitled *Asrār-i-Khudī* (1915) (The Secrets of the Self) occupies a pre-eminent place among all his works in poetry. It is in this poem that Iqbal lucidly explains his ego philosophy. Besides this, he also came up with another collection of poems known as '*Rumūz-i-Bekhudī* (1918) (Mysteries of Selflessness) and after that he wrote *Payām-i-Mashriq* (1923), *Zabūr-i-'Ajam* (1927), *Gulshan-i-Rāz Jadīd*, *Bandagī Nāmā*, *Jāvīd Nāmāh* (1932), *Bāl-i-Jibrīl*, *Zarb-i-Kalīm*, *Musāfir* (1936), *Armughān-i-Hijāz* (1938), *Bāng-i-Darā* (1924), etc.¹³ (Qadir,1991). Lini S. May (1974) in giving her comments on the significance of the *Asrār-i-Khudī* 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 (*khudī* 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 *Jawāb-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, shows that Dr Iqbal's mind had been set before he wrote the *Asrār* and that it remained unchanged between 1910 and 1915;

¹³ See C. A. Qadir.(1991). *Philosophy and science in the Islamic world*. London: Routledge.

- 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.¹⁴

Besides poetry, he also wrote and delivered lectures on philosophical issues. One remarkable work of Iqbal on philosophy 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 1928 and the last one in England. It was in these lectures that Iqbal lucidly expressed his philosophical thoughts which have a basis in the teachings of the Qur'an. Through these lectures too Iqbal ventured on to explain in philosophical terms on how the Qur'anic concepts pertaining to Islamic values should be translated into the cultural contexts of Muslim communal life.¹⁵

Iqbal the poet-philosopher, thinker and statesman started to suffer from kidney problem 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 condition, he never showed lack of enthusiasm in his works 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.¹⁶

¹⁴ Lini S. May (1974). *Iqbal: his life and times*. Lahore: SH. Muhammad Ashraf. pp. 93-94

¹⁵ See C. A. Qadir.(1991), op. cit.

¹⁶ See Syed Abdul Wahid. (1948) *Iqbal: His art and thought*, 2nd edition, Lahore: SH. Muhammad Ashraf.

Since the start of the year 1938, Iqbal's health began to deteriorate further 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 Shāhī Mosque of Lahore. Later when a mausoleum was erected in recognition of Iqbal's contribution 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 for the cause of Islam.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸

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!¹⁹

With the mighty stroke of the pen, Iqbal was successful in catching the attention of many scholars of the East and the West. As recognition to 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

¹⁷ See Hafeez Malik & Lynda, P. Malik (1971) *The life of the poet-philosopher*. In Malik, Hafeez (eds.). *Iqbal poet-philosopher of Pakistan*. New York: Columbia University Press.

¹⁸ Iqbal in Abdulla Anwar Beg (1961). *The poet of the east: Life and work of Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal*, Lahore:

Khawar Pub. Cooperative Society, p. 50

¹⁹ Iqbal in Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi . (1979). *Glory of Iqbal* (Trans. Mohammad Asif Kidwai). Lucknow: Islamic Research and Publications. p. (i)

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.²⁰

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.²¹

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.²²

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 their own countries.

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

²⁰ Tagore in Mohammad Aslam Jawed. (1996). *The unknown Iqbal*, Lahore: Kitab Pub. House, p. 56

²¹ Schimmel in Ahmad Rofi Usmani. (1991). Anniemaria schimmel, orientalis pengagum Jalaluddin Ar-Rumi,

In *Adzan*, No. 20, May 1991, p. 97.

²² Sarojin Naidu in Sheikh Akbar Ali. (1988). *Iqbal his poetry and message*. New Delhi: Deep & Deep

Publications, p. viii

achieved by his friend Mohammed Ali Jinnah who became inspired by reading Iqbal's poetry and political ideas. The new and independent country which came into existence in the year 1947 by the name of 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.²³

Ever since the establishment of Pakistan till 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 potentials, his philosophy and ideas have been researched and benefited by people all over the world, Muslims as well as non-Muslims.

Iqbal's Concern as Philosopher

The scenario during the time Iqbal appeared on the intellectual stage of the world was that the Muslim world was lagging behind the West in the areas of education, science and technology. Some of the contributing factors to this pathetic scenario were the widespread influence of the doctrine of *Wahādah al-Wujūd* in the Muslim countries, particularly in India, prevalence of conservatism in the mental attitude of the masses which led them to fatalism, and colonization of the East, especially the Muslim countries by the West.

However in the West, Iqbal saw the emergence of a great number of scientists coming up with fresh and fascinating ideas unearthing the secrets of nature by using science and technology as their instruments. To Iqbal, though the West dazzled the whole

²³ *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (1972). Vol. 3 & 4, New York: Mac Millan Publishing Co. Inc. p. 211

world with its creations and discoveries, it was not able to solve the more perplexing issues with regard to the human existence. Scholars and scientists were not able to provide comprehensive answers to such questions like what is the true nature of man, what is the real meaning of his life and what should be his ideal position when compared to other creations of God. In addition to this, Iqbal also witnessed how the people of the West were driven in life by the greed for material wealth and the obsession for power for their survival. Iqbal felt that colonization and later the First World War led the humanness of the West to naught.

Iqbal, who grew up witnessing all pathetic conditions of the Muslim Ummah and of the West, was provoked to respond in his own way to bring a change and reformation in the minds of the Muslims towards living a dynamic life in a modern and ever-changing world. In order to achieve this, he conceptualized a new philosophy that calls for the realization of the hidden inner potentials that lie within the human psyche. Iqbal with his innovative philosophy also explained to the world that the human ego has a relationship with the Creator, the community/society, with nature/universe and the material world at large. Through his poetry and philosophical writings, Iqbal explained that in order for the ego to develop in the most enriching manner which eventually manifests in the form of a personality, an individual has to maintain and play his or her part without severing his or her relationship with God, the community and nature.

Iqbal's ideas on philosophy as well as in his theory of personality were unique that they were a blend of Islamic values and the dynamism of the West. Many of the hardliners among the Islamists of his time missed the point when they criticized his philosophy for having an admixture of some elements which are Islamic and others which are truly Western. To Iqbal, the part he has taken from the West is not a thing which is contradictory to the principles stated in the Qur'an. Iqbal, who had a discerning eye and a critical mind, carefully chose from the West what is agreeable to his Islamic background, and rejected and criticized the flaws found in the Western philosophy. In further defending his position, Iqbal stated that the elements he has taken from the West were in fact the lost heritage of the Muslims found in the philosophy and life of the Muslim scholars of the Golden Age of Islam. Moreover, he also stated that borrowing and sharing of ideas between people of

different civilizations were always there in the history of mankind. Iqbal who encouraged the Muslims to learn from others also cautioned the Ummah through his poetry that they do not to follow or imitate others blindly.

The criticism made by some scholars that Iqbal borrowed ideas from Nietzsche in developing his concept on *al-Insān al-Kāmil* is not well founded. Before analyzing this allegation made against Iqbal, it is interesting to note some of the obvious differences one can find between the two philosophers. Nietzsche, who was an atheist like many of the Western scholars of his time, openly declared through his writings his famous slogan 'God is dead'. In addition to that, he deemed religious teachings as mere talk of vanities which poison the human mind and something that saps the human vitality in life. In Iqbal's case, he was a religious philosopher who aspired to see the kingdom of God to prevail over all other isms and philosophies of life. In having such a noble aspiration, he spoke of God's revelation as the greatest gift to mankind.²⁴

Though Iqbal admired Nietzsche's dynamism and the forceful manner in which he criticized the West, nevertheless his ideas on *al-Insān al-Kāmil* seem to have a stark contrast with the *Übermensch*/Superman of Nietzsche. Though the two concepts might have some superficial similarities, in analyzing the contents of the two, one would discover that they are poles apart. The *Übermensch* of Nietzsche obtains power and authority in a ruthless and inhumane way. His heart is deprived of love and sympathy for the rest of mankind. While Iqbal's *al-Insān al-Kāmil* is the ideal man who is imbued with many godly attributes. The *al-Insān al-Kāmil* (Perfect Man) achieves his aims in life with love, and shows mercy and kindness to others.

Iqbal's ideas on *al-Insān al-Kāmil* could not be seen as an influence coming from Nietzsche but rather an influence that dates back to the early Muslim scholars like Ibn Sīnā (980-1037), Ibn Ṭufayl (1105-1185), Ibn 'Arabī (1165-1240) and others. Though

²⁴ Mohd Abbas (2011), *Contribution of Iqbal's dynamic personality theory to Islamic psychology: A contrastive analysis with Freud and selected mainstream western psychology*. Selangor: International Islamic University
Malaysia, pp.300-302

Iqbal had been inspired after reading their ideas, his conception is somehow different compared to his predecessors. Iqbal's portrayal of the image of *al-Insān al-Kāmil* emphasizes much on man's position as the vicegerent of God, and also one who has a dynamic personality and shows vitality towards life. Iqbal in describing his concept on the 'Perfect Man' in his philosophy and poetry uses terms like *Mard-i-Mu'min*, *Mard-i-Haq*, *Faqīr* and *Qalandar*. Further descriptions of Iqbal's ideas on *al-Insān al-Kāmil* in his poetry explain that the 'Perfect Man' is not chained to his destiny. On the contrary, he lives a courageous life bringing out the immense potentials that are latent within him.²⁵

In assessing the problems and needs of his time, Iqbal presented a dynamic concept on the development of the human personality. Central to his theory on personality is his philosophy of the ego. As highlighted by many scholars on Iqbal, better known as 'Iqbaliens', his philosophy of the ego is not a new thing altogether. The existence of the human ego has been a matter discussed by many Western and Eastern philosophers. Modern Western philosophers have written on the subject of the ego by using different terms and terminologies. Descartes (1596-1650), the father of modern Western philosophy has written on the subject of man's inner dimension a few centuries earlier than Iqbal. After that came Spinoza (1632-1677) with his own notion on this immaterial component of man as the 'Conatus Preservandi'; while Schiller (1759-1805) preferred to call it the 'Karl Moor'; Fichte (1762-1814) used the term 'Ich' to describe it; Schopenhauer (1788-1860) named it the 'Genus' (will to live); Carlyle (1795-1881) described it the 'Hero'; Nietzsche (1844-1900), the controversial philosopher, addressed it as the 'Will to power'; and Bergson (1859-1941), the French philosopher, called it the 'Élan Vital' (the creative energy).²⁶

Iqbal as a Muslim philosopher called his version of the ego philosophy as '*Khudī*'. In comparing his concept on the ego with those presented by Western scholars one would discover that his is

²⁵Jamilah Khatoon. (1987). Iqbal's perfect man. In Sheikh, M. Saeed (ed.) *Studies in Iqbal's thought and art* (pp.125-132), Lahore: Bazm-i-Iqbal

²⁶ See H. H. Bilgrami (1966). *Glimpses of Iqbal's mind and thought*, Lahore: SH. Muhammad Ashraf.

a religious concept laden with all the ideals spoken of man in the Qur'an. Through his concept, Iqbal explained to the world on the life of the ego, its place of origin, its hidden potentials, its challenges in the external world and its final journey through this mundane life.

Iqbal's theory of personality which is philosophical and religious in its approach, explains that the life of the ego begins with God. In order to achieve a strong personality, the ego has to struggle against the forces of nature. As such, an individual is not supposed to run away from the challenges he has to face in the real world. Iqbal explained that isolation and seclusion from the challenges of the world can dwindle the strength of one's ego. This act in turn will prevent the individual from attaining a strong personality. In Iqbal's view, nature or environment should not be seen as something that hinders the growth of the personality. To him, man's imperfection and an obstructing environment should be viewed as conditions that are necessary for the growth and development of man's personality by actualizing his latent powers and potentialities.

In addition to the above, Iqbal's theory of personality also explains that man who is God's best creation, needs to assimilate into his own personality many of God's attributes mentioned in the *Asmā' al-Husnā* (the Beautiful Names of Allah). Through this process of assimilation, man can transform himself into a complete individual. What one sees as an end result of this assimilation of the godly attributes in man is one that has strengthened and solidified his personality. In Iqbal's view such an individual has prepared his ego for immortality. According to him, the assimilation of God's attributes by an individual prepares his ego for a state of immortality after death. In his theory, Iqbal further stressed that the immortality of an individual's ego is not a God-given right to him. As such, in order to achieve the state of immortality of the ego, one has to work hard during the earthly life, performing all actions which are considered as ego sustaining acts, and at the same time one has to refrain from all ego dissolving acts. Another interesting fact stated by Iqbal in his theory of personality is that man by assimilating God's Divine attributes gets closer to God spiritually. The closer he is to God, the stronger is his personality. On the contrary, the further one moves away from God the weaker becomes his personality.

Supplementary to man's relationship with God in building up a good character and personality, he has to build a good relationship with the society. In the act of maintaining a good relationship with the society, one has to participate actively in all communal activities. Through his involvement in the society, man also assimilates all the positive cultural values and the past heritage of the society. In stating the importance of the relationship between the individual and the society, Iqbal highlighted that it is a two-way relationship whereby both the individual and the society will benefit from each other. The individual exists and feels a sense of belonging because of the society, and the society survives because of the contributions of the individuals living in the society.

Iqbal's theory of personality gives one the understanding that personality is the outcome of the association of the human self with God, environment and society. His theory also explains that personality is just not the mere outward behavior of an individual. Like other Muslim scholars of the past, Iqbal believed that human personality as well as behavior is actually produced in the human psyche. Personality manifests itself in the form of the mental state of an individual which is eventually displayed in the form of behavior.

Conclusion

Iqbal was the most dynamic scholar-philosopher of the twentieth century. He gave many valuable ideas on how the Muslims can co-exist with the rest of humanity. His criticisms were not only directed to the West but also to the Muslim Ummah. Iqbal vehemently emphasized that Muslims should hold fast to teachings of the Qur'an in order to progress in life. He made it clear to the Ummah that the message of the Qur'an is not only rituals but scientific as well. In the effort to restore their lost dynamism Muslims should not only be diligent in carrying out the rituals but should be equally good in utilizing science for the betterment of the Ummah. According to him, the dynamism we see during modern times in the West is the lost heritage of the Muslims of the past. As such, he urged Muslims to learn all that are good in terms of knowledge, science and technology from the West and leave out the ugly part of the Western civilization.