

Allama Iqbal's Educational Philosophy and its Contemporary Relevance

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ABSTRACT

The paper will focus on the various basic tenets of Islamic education. We shall analyze the traditional Islamic education with contemporary secular education. The paper will focus on the relevance of (Madrassa) system of education in contemporary Islamic Ummah. The special focus shall be given to the educational perspective of Allama Iqbal. The paper will also focus and extract the increasing conflict between the liberal and conservative Muslims as far as the modern day scientific education is concerned. The paper shall focus on the increasing Islamic fundamentalism, how we could use education as the weapon against religious fanaticism, and the importance of spiritual education will also be extorted. The paper will also focus on Iqbal's combination of education in materialism and of spiritualism, to Iqbal, the fundamental purpose of education is not to turn out employable graduates, but to produce the type of character that would ensure society's survival and continuity. The paper will extract, Iqbal's urge to Muslims to make both a deep critical study of their own cultural and intellectual traditions and serious study of modern western thought with a view to finding creative ways of reviving the Islamic legacy and making it relevant and viable in modern contexts.. It is important to note that all great educators have been great philosophers. Plato's scheme of cultural education depended upon his idealism. Rousseau's anti-social philosophy gave rise to his natural education. Pragmatist philosophy has been responsible for the project method in education. It is true that Iqbal was not an educationist in the strict sense of the word; but one cannot deny his contribution to our educational ideology. He did not present any specific educational technique or methodology; but he directed our attention to those basic and fundamental principles of education which underlie all the sound educational practices. When we work out the practical implications of his educational ideas they do throw lurid light on the modern problems of education and point out to their healthy solution.

Education

Education, which signifies the development of personality, is a purposive process; it is a process which is consciously directed towards some end. Mill defines it as, "culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be successors in order to qualify them for at least keeping up and if possible for raising the

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level of improvement which has been maintained". Similarly, K. G. Saiyadain remarks that "Education in its full and correct signification must be visualized as the sum total of cultural forces which play on the life of individual and community. If this is clearly understood, it follows that an emergence of an outstanding creative thinker, who has distinctive message to give or new values to present before the world, is a phenomenon of the greatest interest for the educationists, and the more his ideas catch the imagination, the understanding and enthusiasm of his contemporaries, the greater must be his influence as the educative force".

Viewed in his perspective, one cannot escape the fact that Iqbal comes under the category of the educationists, though he is not an educationist in the limited sense. Every educational system is concerned with the critical evaluation and transmission of the cultural heritage, knowledge and ideas of social groups, to its young members, and is thus much wider in its outlook than the narrow system of education that goes on within the confines of schools and colleges. This limited process of teaching and learning does not take into account the social and the personal influences which shape and modify the destiny of the individual and of the community. Iqbal lays special emphasis on these cultural factors and his philosophy of life is of infinite value for education. Like other educationists, he stresses the fundamental point that the educator must necessarily inquire into the nature and function of the self in relation to the environment in which it is placed.

Self, according to him, is not a mere illusion, as some of the pseudo-mystics and pantheists would have us believe. It has, on the other hand, an abiding significance of its own. The doctrine of self-negation, according to Iqbal, is positively dangerous in its socio-political implications. Thus, Education is concerned with the problems of individual and society. It is the process of enabling the individual to take his rightful place in the society. It must, therefore, be interested in those studies which concern the individual on the one hand and the society on the other.

Iqbal apart from being visionary had perception about every institution of the society whether it is an economy, polity and education as well. He does not give any particular definition of education but his general philosophy indicates his aim of education. Iqbal's best source of inspiration has been the Qur'an where he picked guidelines to attain the real meaning of life. Under the guidance of Qur'an Iqbal's held the view that self-realization should be the purpose of our life and education. For this valuable purpose religious and moral education is essential. He writes in a letter to K.G Saieedain,

"By Ilm I mean that knowledge which is based on sense. This knowledge yields physical powers which should be subservient to deen (i.e. the religion of Islam). If it is not subservient to deen then it is demonic, pure and simple..... It is incumbent on Muslim's to Islamize knowledge. "Abu Lahab should be metamorphosed into haiyder. If Abu Lehab becomes Haiyder-e-Karrar, or in other words if it (i.e. knowledge and the power it wields)

becomes subservient to deen, then it would be an unmixed blessing into mankind".¹⁰

From this observation of Iqbal it becomes clear that he wanted to give education an ideologically orientation and regarded that knowledge and education satanic which is neutral towards religion, in his famous presidential address of 1930 he said;

"if today you focus your vision on Islam and seek inspiration from the ever- vitalizing ideas embodied in it, you will only be only resembling your scattered forces, regaining your lost integrity, and thereby saving yourself from total destruction".³

Iqbal's Education Philosophy encompassing the study of the holy Qur'an as the fountain head of all knowledge, the activities and precepts of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) the sunnah, the spiritual and the transmission of accumulated knowledge of assistant man in leading and guiding him towards his eventually give of self realization.

In view of Iqbal, the objective of education and learning is to seek the pleasure and bounties of Allah and not for the purpose of gaining the frailties of the world which we found throughout Iqbal's prose and poetry. In his presidential address on 25th session of the All India Muslim League at Allahabad in 1930, he declared;

I have given the best part of my life to careful study of Islam its laws and polity, its culture, its history and its literature. This constant contact with the spirit of Islam, as itself in time, has I think, given me a kind of insight into the significance into world fact²

Education is the process of enlightenment of the soul with divine wisdom for the attainment of the self perfection and self realization only when impart religious education. Man has divine spark for which he raised above all creatures which inspires him (Man) for self realization. Iqbal tried to drag man from worldly chaos and confusions by putting emphasis on the development of self. Development of self realization is the corner stone of his educational philosophy. Therefore he emphasis to discover self and for this purpose he urged man have to undergo a long fight internal as well as external forces to elevate above his human weaknesses as he says;

Your Nature is Care Taker of Your Possibilities

Iqbal's Educational philosophy tried to energies the spirit of man through an unending struggle and his philosophy treated as medicine to awakening the students towards potentials and able to become a co-worker with God. Iqbal beautifully gives expression to this idea, when he said,

*You (God) created the night, I the Lamp
 You created the clay, I the vase.
 I create the forests, mountains and deserts
 It is I who make glass out of stone
 It is I who extract elixir out of poison.*

Iqbal maintains that man has God like Attributes like truth, beauty and goodness which are the product of man's experimentation and grappling with the stern realities of life. Iqbal much emphasis on struggle is the only medium to bring out such valuable features among student. A weak person in Iqbal's philosophy will become easily suppressed by powerful and it is the highest crime in philosophy of Iqbal which appears in his highly writings.

He says, "It is the eternal decree of the judge sitting in judgment on destinies that whosoever, commits the crime of being weak, punishment for his is unexpected death".³

Iqbal is strongly opposed to all these weaknesses in human character. In fact these weaknesses are the root cause of failure of the individual to inculcate positive elements for the development of individuality. Construct the good character of man was much emphasized in Iqbal's educational philosophy. Good character is one of the main elements for constituent of self-realizations which is the result of training and education. For good character it is essential that man should possess three qualities to carry out the purpose of life which maintained by Iqbal i.e. is courage, tolerance and Faqr (humanity). To cultivate such lofty qualities in the pupil is the real function of education as the belief of Iqbal. For the development of good character Iqbal raise voice against the fear or weak personality by realizing the development of individuality courage is essential nourishment for its development. Life is continuous battle and without courage and constant efforts self-realization is impossible. We learn the Lesson of courage from the daily work of ant. How an ant carry a grain of rice much bigger than itself without any fear. With this load how ant climbs up a wall, if grain fell down an ant came down and lifts the grain again without losing his courage and try until it succeeded in taking the grain up the wall. Courage is the greatest attribute possessed by man which increases the strength for continuous struggle. No one can achieve greater results in life without courage. Noble Qur'an teaches us And "that there is nothing for man accept what he tired he efforts shall be seen and rewarded to fullest extent (Surah Annajm 53; 39; 41) Allama Iqbal firmly believed that today young generation is tomorrow leaders, governors, and teachers and so on of the future. So younger generation needs to understand that being weak spirited is not become a part of their personality. If one shows fear except the fear of God then life loses all purposes. Iqbal maintains fear becomes the cause of individual weakness and the source of all kinds of corruption in the individual character. He believes that the courage is essential for the proper development of individuality. Iqbal maintain that couraged man is one who is able to overcome and combating all obstacles and no submission to forces of evil or to desire to give in except to

conviction. Iqbal addresses upon the younger generation to live courageously so that they will become the best architecture of their own destiny. He constantly refers to the Quranic verses verily. God wills not change the condition of people till the change what is in themselves. (Surah 13). Second quality of a good character is a tolerance. It is very essential element for the development of dignity of the human beings. Iqbal also considered it is an important ingredient of self-realization and the progress of society. He laid great emphasis to create the right environment for progress by realizing unity in diversity as he says.

*Not Afgans, Turks or son of Tartary
But of one garden trunk and a trunk are we
Show the criterion of Scent and hue
We are all the nursing of one spring time to.*

The above verses clearly teach us that Dr Mohammah Iqbal had firm believe in universal brotherhood. The whole world is meant for man and he is not confined to a particular place. His poetry promotes us the beauty of oneness and unity. Despite different context we live i.e. we have different religion, languages, and region and so on but we are still belong to one garden. These differences do not make Iqbal's tolerant man weak by realizing clearly that all mankind is one. Our beloved prophet (PBUH) says, "All people are children of Adam" Iqbal says, It is sin to utter harsh words, the believers and non believers are the alike creation of God,

What is Admiyat? Respect for man discrimination is prohibited in Iqbal's philosophy and he emphasis that everyone has a right to live honourable whether he is believer or nonbeliever. Live together peacefully by giving respect for other is the fundamental pillar for humanity.⁴

Iqbal felt that there is a great need to develop tolerance among pupil because Iqbal's tolerant man enjoys his life with the whole world despite the restrictions of boundaries as he says,

*The God-intoxicated Faqir is neither of the East nor of the west
I belong to neither Delhi nor Isfahan nor samerkan*

Farq is the third most important quality of good character in Iqbal's philosophy. Allama Iqbal advocated the need for developing Farq among students. He felt that man confronted with a lot of problems due to develop materialistic outlook and people think in terms of loss and profit which is referred to as statistical thinking. Such thinking is main cause that the spirit in man turns into stone and loses their humanity. Therefore Iqbal felt the need to prepare an ideal student i.e. (Mard-e-Momin). Iqbal's Mard-e-momin is one who detach himself from the material things and always busy in search to learn higher values so he could accomplish his vision thwarting every attack of evil. Iqbal wants to reconstruct the world in the name of Lord and put to stress to develop farq among students and leading a life of voluntary and self denial.

Development of Human Outlook

Iqbal's educational philosophy put stress on the development of human outlook among the students. According to him if education is not permitted by human outlook, there will be no salvation for mankind. Today man faces with the problem of moral degradation through the miss used the intelligence. Human's have become the most violent being in this world, they have succeeded to some extent, but in so doing have paid a terrible price. They have sacrificed piece of mind for material comfort and power. Iqbal's concept of Mard-e-mumin indicates going beyond worldly pleasures. The cause of inner happiness does not depend merely upon the satisfaction of physical appetites and passion. Even if we have all the worldly pleasures, we still cannot be happy. Real satisfaction of life cannot be defined solely in terms of wealth, power. Therefore Iqbal's Educational philosophy, spiritual is basic condition to maintain humanity among pupil otherwise humanity itself is in danger of being wiped out. Development of humanistic outlook among pupil clearly explains in the conference of Cambridge which was held in 1931 where Iqbal expressed his views to students and other audience.

I would like to offer a few pieces of advice to the young men who are at present study at Cambridge. I advise you to guard against atheism and materialism. The biggest blunder made by Europe was the separation of church and state. This deprived of culture moral soul and diverted atheistic materialism; The Western people become human machines which possess motion without sincerity, life without emotions, and heart without feelings. Everyone is running.⁵

Iqbal give importance to religious institution where people learn and develop human outlook. Religion means the integration and unity which holds the mankind as a whole. Iqbal maintains the separation of church and state means that man will not able lead a superior life. The qualities like kindness, charity, social service, and goodness these qualities are known to be the true mark of a good human being. Iqbal elevates man's role and his position in very dignified manner. His educational philosophy wishes an ideal student which is not the central of the world but he also able to God's assistance in the creation, refinement and perfection of universe which is still imperfect.

O God, may my life be like a candle,

I may love the candle of learning.

Let it be my duty to help those who are in need.

To love the companionate and those who are weak.

Iqbal had firm belief that man can never aspire to higher dimensions unless he learn the nature of spirituality. In fact the western philosophers like Plato in his book Republic points out that, "true education whatever that may be, will have the greatest tendency to civilize and humanize them in their relation to one another and to those who are under their protection". This humanist definition of education propounded by Plato is still the most widely excepted education in

the west. In the middle age Comenius his education philosophy emphasis in the development of qualities relating to religion, knowledge and morality among students and there by established his claim to be called a human being.

Iqbal was constrained towards establishing an ideal society. He has used new ideas to explain the classical institutions of Islam, which he thought were instrumental in the revival of the Muslim societies. He feels if those very institutions were revitalized in the light of his ideas, the Muslim societies could regain their lost status. The important thing is that he is not setting aside those classical institutions, but recommending measures through which all these institutions attain new meanings. He is, therefore, for the rediscovery of the dynamic spirit of Islam inherent in its original message and wants this process of rediscovery to continue so that it can measure up to ever emerging challenges. His optimism in his conviction that the solution to the problems of the Muslims be in reverting back to the dynamics spirit of the classical Islam is simply unprecedented when he states:

Although, the world has presented the age old idols with new attractions, a thousand times, I have not abandoned Islam because it has been founded on eternally solid foundations.

Endnotes

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