Muhammad Iqbal's Motivational Poetry: A View from Ukraine

Olena Bordilovska*

Abstract

Among many other poets from the orient, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal is known primarily for a wide range of subjects in his poetic works. He is highly recognized for his motivational poems and short verses, which cover a wide range of worldviews and issues from the everyday life of common people. He always focuses on love, trust in God's favours, the victory of good over evil, and a positive approach to lifestyle. With specific focus on the motivational aspect of Muhammad Iqbal's poetry that contains instructions for a positive and active life, this research strives to underpin his poetic inspirations which illuminate the way forward for man's generations. In fact, this motivational inspiration radiates from every verse of his poetry. In this research motivational verses have been selected from various collections of his poetry. It is found that these are few of the most famous verses in India and Pakistan and contain the quintessence of his worldview on life. No matter how Indians and Pakistanis and even Iranians 'fight' for claiming this precious heritage (after all, most of Iqbal's poems are written in Urdu and Persian), as a matter of fact, one finds the epitome of the Muslim civilization in Iqbal's works. But the situation is rather different in Europe, where we discover a lack of knowledge about this invaluable literature and Iqbal's philosophy. In order to familiarize the Western and especially the Ukrainian reader with it, translations of his poems are required. The author tried her best to provide such a translation (at least, of the most popular 'motivational poetry') into the Ukrainian language with some important comments.

* Second Secretary and Cultural Attaché at the Embassy of Ukraine, Islamabad.

Article also aims to relativize Ukrainian history and culture with Muhammad Iqbal's life and works.

Keywords

Muhammad Iqbal, Struggle for Independence, Sufism, Ukraine, Ummah, Motivational Poetry.

Introduction

This year marks 86th anniversary of Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal – great poet and remarkable visionary, whose works have enlightenment not only for the South Asian Muslims but for the entire humanity. He is the one, who can teach all the world that the essential wisdom will always prevail. Love, confidence, trust, and tolerance – common in every faith system – are the natural truths of this world.

Every year, on November 9, Pakistan celebrates the birthday of Dr Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) – a philosopher, poet, lawyer-practitioner, and prominent political figure of British India – as a public holiday. This day is special for all his followers in South Asia: in Pakistan, India, Iran, and Afghanistan. But for Pakistanis it has a very special significance. This is because Iqbal is the main architect of the 'idea of Pakistan', although he did not live to see it bloom on the map of the world. Iqbal was a visionary personality with a brilliant mind, a revolutionary poet, scholar and political genius. Due to presenting his thoughts and vision of Pakistan before its creation, He can be considered the ideological founder of Pakistan. The address in the All India Muslim League session of 1930 was the base of the Two-Nation Theory, known as the ideology of Pakistan and through the political struggle, Pakistan was created. (Ahmed, 2017).

People of Pakistan are proud of Iqbal: not only for his political ingenuity but for the immense intellectual treasure his thought has for the entire Muslim world specifically and humanity in general.

Dr Muhammad Iqbal has earned the esteem as the founding father in the historiography of Pakistan (Shamshad & Usman, 2023). His vision on the state of the Muslims of South Asia had vast influence on Muslim League: a political party which aced its journey to the establishment of Pakistan. Degeneration of Muslims across the different domains of life

was Iqbal's main concern which ought to be cured with action (Khan, 2005). Through his inspirational works in Persian, Urdu, and English he aimed to reconstruct Muslim thought in the modern era and galvanise Muslim communities in the subcontinent and other parts of the Islamic lands occupied by the West (Hussain, 2019).

Iqbal's Biography and Scholarly Contributions

His biography is well known in the Muslim world and South Asia. Here we will mention the salient aspects of Iqbal's life for European readers. One of the initial experiences from Iqbal's life is his special attitude towards Kashmir: the land of his ancestors, the land of beauty and tolerance (as it was at his times and before). It is because the poet's family comes from Kashmiri Pandits, Brahmins of the Sapru clan, who converted to Islam. Later, after the invasion of the Sikhs in the middle of the 19th century, they moved to Punjab, where Iqbal was born in the city of Sialkot.

Iqbal's father, Sheikh Nur Muhammad, was a simple tailor, but gained fame as a very pious and kind person. Iqbal received his primary education in his hometown and began studying the Holy Qur'an and Arabic at the age of four. It is said, Iqbal was a genius and different from his age-fellow contemporaries. His early and later educational record is impressive. He got first position in grade one from Scotch Mission School. At that stage he started learning Arabic and Persian language. At the age of nine he started writing poetry in Urdu. He secured a medal and a scholarship in his matriculation. During his intermediate he started publishing his poetry with his pen name in different in literary journals, magazines and newspapers. (Ahmed, 2017). He continued his distinction in later classes and secured medals in English and Arabic. He again secured a gold medal in his Master of Philosophy.

So, he graduated from college in Sialkot, then studied at the famous Government College of Lahore - one of the oldest universities in undivided India (now is one of the most prestigious institutes of higher education in Pakistan). He did Bachelor in Arts in different subjects like Arabic, Philosophy and English. After his master, he was appointed as a professor in the subject of Philosophy by Thomas Arnold. (Watt, 2002).

He started to teach English at the Government College. He also served in Oriental College Lahore as Macleod Arabic Reade. As was customary at that time, he accepted an offer to go to Great Britain, where he continued his education at Trinity College of Cambridge University, studying law. At the same time, he became a loyal member of the Muslim League party (later, in 1930, he would deliver the famous 'Allahabad speech' on the creation of Pakistan) (Taillieu D et al., 2000).

He stayed in Europe from 1905 to 1908, in addition to London, he studied philosophy in Munich, got acquainted with the works of Goethe, Heine, and Nietzsche. He successfully defended his dissertation and granted a doctorate in Philosophy in 1908. After doctorate, he returned to Lahore and again got a job as a professor in a native university, and also started practicing law. In 1922, although he received the title of 'Sir' from King George for his services, he was much more interested in philosophy and poetry. He began to write poems very early in his age and was first inspired by the poetry of the great oriental masters of words Rumi and Hafiz. In Europe, he got acquainted with the work of I.F. Goethe (he could read his poems in the original), so literary critics consider the influence of the German genius to be traced in Iqbal's poetry. Moreover, he created an outstanding poem 'Jalal-o-Goethe' - it is a conversation of famous Sufi teacher Jalaluddin Rumi and Goethe in the paradise, where Goethe explains to Rumi the essence of his work about Dr Faust (Loan, 2012). Iqbal poetised the parallels between Goethe and Rumi in an extraordinary manner.

Truly said by H. Smith (Philip Dunn et al., 2000)[p.16]. The influence of the great Sufi, poet-mystic J. Rumi on Iqbal was tremendous, which can be traced in almost all of Iqbal's poems, where the search for God finds a place in the heart of a true believer, and where the love for God begins with love for one's neighbour.

"When love prevails, fair departs.

In the law of love – give all, sacrifice all.

Gain is irrelevant, so what is there to fear", Rumi said.

We can see a lot of criticism on West in Iqbal's works - for materialism, unreasonable supremacy, loss of spirituality and distance

from real faith. At the same time, he is certain on individuals' actualisation of their purposes through steadfastness, self-reliance, and firmness. Dr Iqbal urges believers not to be passive, not to ask God for help right away, but first to try to overcome challenges and sufferings on their own.

Develop the self so that before every decree

God will ascertain from you: 'What is your wish?'

Про допомогу ми Всевишнього благаєм і часто-густо зовсім забуваєм,

Що перш ніж в Бога щось молить зусиль докласти самі маєм!

And then only you can thank the Almighty for salvation and comprehensive strength at any trouble, hurricane, or flooding:

God bring you acquainted with some storm!

No billow in your sea break in foam,

Бог нам дозволив буревій цей пережити,

І без турбот крізь ті бурхливі хвилі переплити!

Iqbal was respected very much for his courage and honesty. He never hid behind someone's back. His voice was heard by everyone who needed help and support:

Why does this custom of silencing exist in your assembly?

My tongue is tantalized to talk in this assembly

Чому на цьому зібранні ніхто й слова не промовить?

Язик мій проситься у бій, він тишу швидко цю розгонить!

As a true Sufi, Dr Iqbal calls for kindness, compassion, activity and a positive attitude towards people, nature, and the whole universe. Otherwise, one cannot count on light and wealth in one's life. As he says:

By action life may become both paradise and hell;

This creature of dust in its nature is neither of light nor of fire.

Жаги не маєш до життя? Про благощі тоді не мрій.

Постався краще до буття , і світло шлях осяє твій!

A positive view of the universe was supposed to help move forward, while the development of the inner world provides with incomparable experiences, peace, and delight:

Whatever the eye is seeing cannot be described by the lips

I am lost in amazement as to what the world will become!

Що можеш бачити очима – вустами то не промовляєш,

Від насолоди захолониш, як на добріший світ чекаєш!

Again, like every Sufi, Muhammad Iqbal sees the essence of human being in love, and real love had to go through trials and pain - to overcome the suffering:

The oppression befalling in Love is not oppression

If there is no torment, there is no pleasure in Love

Туга й мука у любові – не страждання,

Без смутку й маяття несправжнім є кохання!

Iqbal warns the believers against simple worship, he tried to teach everyone to be authentic and independent, since everyone has his own way to God and himself.

Delve into your soul and there seek our life's buried tracks;

Will you not be mine? then be not mine, be your own right!

У своїм серці світло те шукаєш, яке життя твого наповнить суть.

На мене схожим бути ти не маєш, самим собою краще будь!

The meaning of every person's life, claims Iqbal, 'is to find oneself.' This is what his spiritual teachers sought, and this is what he urged his students to do. He called Islam the religion of love, and the Sufi path - the best manifestation of Islam. He does not consider a person to be a slave to the circumstances of life, but believed that everyone comes to this world for something and should use that gift of fate:

You are neither for the earth nor for the heaven:

The world is for you, and not you for the world.

Не ти є для світу, землі і небес,

А світ цей прекрасний - для тебе увесь!

Iqbal understands the beauty of the Universe through its constant progress and development, things are to be changed for better and should not remain in the same position for ever, as the nature is changing itself in search of perfection. Progress and not regress has been welcomed by Allama Iqbal.

"Iqbal asks us to remember that the universe we belong to is yet to be completed and perfected. It is neither a blocked nor a locked universe because according to Iqbal: 'Every moment, things are being ordered to "become" and they are becoming.' This means that in Iqbal's views the process of creation is still going on." (Munawwar, 1992)

Sitaron se aagey Jahan aur bhee hain ('Beyond those stars there are other worlds') is one of the most popular motivational poems of Muhammad Iqbal, the most favourite poetry of the author of this article, the translation of which is offered to the readers:

Other worlds exist beyond the stars—

More tests of love are still to come.

This vast space does not lack life—

Hundreds of other caravans are here.

Do not be content with the world of color and smell,

Other gardens there are, other nests, too.

What is the worry if one nest is lost?

There are other places to sigh and cry for!

You are an eagle, flight is your vocation:

You have other skies stretching out before you.

Do not let mere day and night ensnare you,

Other times and places belong to you.

Gone are the days when I was alone in company—

Many here are my confidants now.

За тими зірками, що сяють над нами,
Існують ще й інші прекрасні світи.

І наше кохання - воно не останнє,
ще маємо шанси ми це довести.

Тепер за тобой караванів йдуть сотні,
Надії твоєї шлях є незворотній.

Цей світ є великий, духмяний, барвистий,
І в ньому завжди усім вистачить місця.

Ти – сокіл, немає обмежень для тебе,
Багато роботи чекає на небі.

Щодня і щоночі тримайся наснаги,
І дім твій знайдеться, і час твій настане.

Я більш не самотній в своїй таємниці,
Минули часи – правда вийшла з темниці!.

Worldwide Recognition of Iqbal's Literary Work

Iqbal is one of the most important figures in the world of Urdu language and literature. His contribution to poetry and religious-philosophical thought of the entire Muslim world is so significant that in the literary tradition he is called Sha'ir-e-Mashriq: 'Poet of the East'. The life he lived inspired his contemporaries and continues to inspire his followers to have an active and very positive attitude towards the Universe and love for God and for others. The theme of calling for social and

spiritual changes in society, primarily among the Muslims of the subcontinent, occupied an important place in his poetry.

"He lived and worked in British India, which was a colony, but the freedom movement was already forming, and Iqbal became an integral part of this movement. Iqbal wrote his poems in Urdu and Farsi, and journalistic prose in English." (Vasilyeva, 2019).

Iqbal's works have been translated in major languages of the world including English, Arabic, French, German, Indonesian, Chinese, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Bosnian, Czech, Japanese, and Turkish (Popp, 2019). In Ukraine, the details of his life are not known enough, and his works have not been studied deeply, with the exception of a few translations of his most famous poems Aftab, Childe's Praying. To our regret, there is still no thorough analysis of rich legacy of Muhammad Iqbal in the Ukrainian language. Therefore, author's biggest intention and personal desire was to bring the main ideas of Great Shai'r-e-Mashriq (Poet of the East) to Ukrainian and other European public: not only for the poetry lovers, but for those who share the priorities of love, peace, and progress. Iqbal's message is really relevant today, when we have a lot of injustice in our Global Village and nations suffer from conflicts and aggression, especially in my own country. Ukraine is known for her rich tradition of cultural interconnections, with high value for tolerance and peaceful co-existence between different communities, in the form of the followers of various religions. The lack of love and compassion and no desire to understand others may push our enemies to unprecedented aggression which we might have not anticipated. Still, the hope for truth and justice is always with us – as it radiates from Iqbal's poetry.

Muhammad Iqbal is a Sufi poet, that is, a servant of the truth devoted to God and His people. His poetry is at the same time a great philosophy, which is anchored in the Sufi tradition. Guided with Qur'an and Prophet's life and traditions, Sufism is a voyage which spans the wide among the tripartite structure of outward conformity (Islam), inward faith (Iman), and virtuous excellence (Ihsaan). It was mostly Sufism, as a form of Islam, which penetrated the lands of South Asia, and its teachings aimed to cultivate and enrich inner spiritual life. Sufism certainly appealed to worshippers on an emotional level and thus won the hearts of thousands

in this part of Asia. Sufi masters attracted disciples and created a unique tradition of peace and tolerance, representing Islam at its best. As it was noticed by H. Smith, a researcher on Sufism, "Every upright Muslim expects to see God after death, but the Sufis want Allah now, moment by moment at the very centre of their lives" (Dunn et al., 2000). It is exactly what we can observe in the poetry of Allama Muhammad Iqbal – Allah Almighty is with him in every moment of his life. A special place in his poetic and philosophical works is given to the unity of the Muslim community (the Ummah), maintaining the purity in light of the of the Prophet's instructions and Shariah, and struggle for social justice. His work 'Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam' is considered as one of the most fundamental attempts to understand the Muslim spiritual heritage, considering the political and socio-economic challenges of the 20th century. Also, new knowledge and modern achievements of science have been taken into consideration seriously (Iqbal, 2002).

This research and translation of Iqbal's work aims to contribute to the breaking of stereotypes that have formed about Islam in the West. When Westerners discovered Islam in their troubled Middle Ages, it touched their souls, but afterwards misunderstandings and the absence of compassion broke this very first impression. The rise of West put others into a lower position, which led to abusive attitude towards Muslims throughout the world. The main reasons for this attitude in the West are the lack of knowledge about real Islam, arrogance, and illogical realisation of supremacy. It leads to the absence of intention to learn more from other civilisations and cultures. Many thinkers as well as common people underestimate the inherent potential of Islamic culture for development, adaptation, and improvement of the Mankind. That is why we believe that Dr Iqbal's books are at high need. Especially, if we remind ourselves, that many of his admirers were representatives of other religious communities, and it is understandable, as the main orientations of Iqbal's poetry belong to the category of universal values.

Commonalities between Work of Allama Iqbal and Taras Shevchenko

To a certain extent, the poetry of M. Iqbal can be compared with the poems of the great poet of Ukraine –Taras Shevchenko. In his famous

collection of poetries 'Kobzar,' we find a thirst for freedom, endless love for motherland, beauty of her land and native nature, compassion to people and – hope for a better future. Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) – "A poet who expressed so eloquently man's undying determination to fight for freedom and his unquenchable faith in ultimate victory", as the US President Dwight David Eisenhower mentioned while honouring his memory.

When he could had been more negative in his thoughts (because of his extremely difficult life), but he has almost the same attitude as Dr Iqbal: there is no joy and happiness in the rich men's life, the essential values are far from money and noble status. Here the only example of his views which could be estimated at the same way of Iqbal's teachings:

Don't Envy

("Не завидуй багатому")

Don't envy, friend, a wealthy man:

A rich man's life is spent

Without a friend or faithful love --

Those things he has to rent.

Don't envy, friend, a man of rank,

His power's based on force.

Don't envy, too, a famous man:

The man of note well knows

The crowd's acclaim is not for him,

But for that thorny fame

He wrought with labour and with tears

So they'd be entertained....(Shevchenko, n.d.)

This poem can be used as a hymn to incite awakening in a nation, and – a spiritual appeal to every human being at the time of challenges. As it was said,

"No great poet or thinker can ever be treated as a representative of some particular school, era, country or race. He looks ahead of his time and his influence transcends all racial and geographical boundaries. Yet no great poet or thinker can remain uninfluenced by his immediate surroundings. The socio-economic and political lot of his people is bound to be reflected in his views. He shares the hopes and fears of his society and partakes of the reactions of the milieu to different kinds of currents and cross- currents, impulses, drives, and also impediments" (Munawwar, 1992).

For Pakistan, Muhammad Iqbal is the same iconic figure as Taras Shevchenko is for Ukraine, he is the 'father of the nation' who believed in its independence and onwards glory. Shevchenko is admired by Ukrainian nation for his tremendous trust in Ukraine's future and love to the people of Ukraine. In the same way Iqbal earned love from Pakistanis, for his struggle for freedom, desire to combine traditions and modern attitude and finally – for being a true Muslim:

"Though Iqbal, our great poet and philosopher, had striven earnestly to reconcile pure Islamic thought with the modern Western scientific thinking, the allegations laid upon him by some for being an advocate of liberal and secular ideals are false. The fact that Iqbal's philosophical journey returned him to spiritual Islam proves that he was at heart nothing but a humbled Muslim in love with Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the God that Muhammad (PBUH) talked of" (Shahzad, 2022).

And even if his work received a slightly different interpretation in India, he is still a poet of freedom and love, a fighter for the independence of the country from colonizers and for the free stay of the human soul. Actually, Dr Iqbal is the author of famous 'Sare jagah se accha ye Hindustan hamara' – one of the most favourite patriotic songs, admired by Indians. It is very unfortunate, that now India is on the chauvinist way of Hindutva with all its scaring attributes: recently, the Delhi University's Academic Council decided to scrap the chapter on great South Asian poet Muhammad Iqbal, popularly known as Allama Iqbal, from the undergraduate political science syllabus, and what is really scary, the development was welcomed by a right-wing student body: the student outfit is quoted,

"Delhi University academic council decided to scrap fanatic theological scholar Mohammad Iqbal from DU's political science syllabus. Mohammad Iqbal is called 'philosophical father of Pakistan.' He was the key player in establishing Jinnah as leader in Muslim League. Mohammad Iqbal is as responsible for India's Partition as Mohammad Ali Jinnah is," (News Desk, 2023).

All these attempts to depict Dr Muhammad Iqbal as a traitor look miserable: apart from the political history of South Asia, he was involved in, Dr Iqbal was an outstanding person, a very talented, active, and positive in his views. Yes, he was a visionary, not only for Pakistan but for the entire world of orient, as he predicted a new era of political and social development for this part of the globe. His poetry decorated a literary heritage of South Asia, and his Sufi philosophy opened the way for thousands if not millions of real searchers of Truth. Also, he provided so many direct explanations and simple visions for many sophisticated things in the doctrine of Islam, as the understanding of ego and body-mind relationship of human.

"After establishing the fact that the mind and body are vitally necessary for each other and compliment and complete each other, Iqbal goes further in establishing that the mental space, at least of the human self, is much larger in scope and capacity compared to the physical space of the same. Iqbal explains that the space and time of the thought are different from those of the body. 'My thought of space is in fact not spatially related to space;' the body being at one space-time at any particular instance, the thought can act in different space-orders in that same instance. Therefore, the self is not space-bound in the same way as the body is, it dwells in many worlds of its liking, and it is free to move about them." (Shahzad, 2022).

This again proves that Dr Iqbal's vision is of crucial importance for true believers and for the people who are in search of themselves. In his teachings, there is no boundary for spiritual wisdom as there is no boundary for freedom and independence.

Conclusion

From his poetry and lectures we can evidently find out, that Dr Iqbal never saw the contradictions between Islam and democracy. It seems that on one side of his experience, Iqbal has tried to rationalize realities within the diction of the sciences and philosophy of his time and to adjust them to the teachings of Islam. But on the other side, in his poetic work, he takes the full liberty of expressing unquestioning and unbounded love for God. Also, he wrote many poems, focused on the love of the beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the essence of true love. We understand that Dr Iqbal in his motivational poetry explains how love is the basic driving force that empowers men and makes everyone free. This ultimate love has the ability to integrate man with the hidden secrets of the Universe, to save the one from temptations and challenges. And this is his position to see the man as the centre of attention for everything in this Universe.

For Westerners, Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal is primarily the poet of love and freedom (in every point of its essence), and then a prominent political figure. It is required to establish a good tradition of the translations and interpretations of his poetry with the aim to bring his great vision to the Universe – as he believed to be his integral part. Special attention should be paid to his brilliant poetic talent – as sometimes his poetry looks like illusion, something unreal, because of its unsurpassed sophistication and amazing beauty.

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