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## Patriotism in Iqbal's Poetry

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### Abstract

Allama Iqbal's poetry evolved from nationalism and patriotism during the early 20th century. A poet, philosopher, prose-writer, linguist, jurist, statesman, critic, patriot sums up the genius of Urdu poet Iqbal. He was proud of the past of India and strived to galvanize people for the liberation struggle. The ideas of patriotism, freedom, equality, equity and justice that formed the core of India's freedom struggle were inspired by the progressive movements in Indian literature especially poetry. This study examines the patriotic themes in Allama Iqbal's poetry, its effect on the Indian freedom movement for national awakening and struggle and its relevance in contemporary times. Analysis of three poems *Naya Shiwala*, *Tarana-e-Hind* and *Himalaya* is cited and illustrated in Roman transliteration and their translation into English

**Keywords:** Patriotism, Indian freedom struggle, Urdu poetry, Allama Iqbal, Poet of the East.

### 1. Introduction

Among the great Urdu poets like Azad, Hali, Saroor and Chakbast who sang patriotic compositions Allama Iqbal holds an eminent position. His poetry contained universality. He was a fiery poet of patriotism with a nationalist frenzy. He devoted himself to writing his classical poems on patriotism in the light of Islam. He was a pioneering poet of Urdu and was the founder of a new school of Urdu poetry. Iqbal wrote poetry with a high ideal. He was humanist by nature. He gave lessons of peace, love and brotherhood to all mankind.

Abundant hymns to the nation and elegies on the deaths of national leaders are the best expressions of his patriotic fervour. He wrote on the death of Mahatma Gandhi also. Liberation struggle had united Indians of those times. Iqbal's poetry was published a lot of times in his life in several collections. He reminded his countrymen of their past glories which brought about a revolution in the history of mankind. It needs to be recalled again and again in these days of fading national fervour. It beckons us to unite as mankind. His anthology of poetry is a testament of nationalism and patriotism for not only the Indian sub-continent but also for the whole community of the world. Nationalism was one of the themes of Iqbal's poetry. It equally drew motivation from human emotions and feelings.

Sir Muhammad Iqbal commonly called Allama Iqbal had Kashmiri Brahmin ancestors who had converted to Islam. He was born in Sialkot on 22 February 1877 and died on 21 April 1938. His mother tongue was Punjabi and not Urdu or Persian in which he composed his poems.

### 2. Literature review

Iqbal was undoubtedly a great patriot. Iqbal's work particularly poetry contain themes of patriotism and nationalism, which thrived during India's Struggle for freedom. Writers throughout the world have written about him. According to Muhammad and Ahmad (2015):

Allama Iqbal is among those Islamic thinkers who thoroughly enunciated Islamic social life. He is a humanist by nature. He wished to see the whole humanity free from political, social, cultural, lingual and religious restrictions. He gives a lesson of peace, love and brotherhood to all mankind. He is a poet as well as a great philosopher... Nowadays peace is the greatest issue of the world and by adopting Allama Iqbal's concept of nation, a great unity and harmony can be promoted. (p. 89)

“In the Muslim world nationalism has ... generally denoted the drive to get rid of alien control and dominance. It is nationalism in this sense that has been the most powerful driving force in the contemporary world of Islam” (Ansari, 1961, section III par. 3)

“Iqbal admitted that love for one’s birthplace was a noble sentiment and believed men should make sacrifices for its cause when the need arose.” (Umar, 2006, p. 48) In a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru Iqbal wrote: “Nationalism is the sense of love of one’s country and even readiness to die for its honour is a part of the Muslim faith.” ... Iqbal inculcated communal harmony stressing that religion did not preach hatred.” (Vahid, 1964, p. 287)

*Saare Jahan Se Achcha* was loved as a national anthem by all the people in India. (Smith, 1947)

### Data Collection

The collection of data was an important part of the research. It depended both on the primary and secondary data to conclude. Primary data is collected by the researcher. Secondary data is basically gathered from the works of other writers, their opinion, their perspective. Primary data was gathered through surveys and telephonic interviews. The questionnaire was designed on google form and was sent to the participants for the survey. The same questionnaire was used for the telephonic interview as well. As for the secondary data, relying on the works of the other writers both from the print and web source.

### 3. Research Methods and Analysis

This exploratory research was systematically conducted by analysing three of Iqbal’s poems. Traditions of patriotic and nationalistic sentiments, their impact on freedom struggle and its impact during contemporary times in Iqbal’s poetry was explored. The objective was to prove that Allama Iqbal was a patriot. The questionnaire was prepared and a survey, interview (through telephonic calls) also was conducted to know the perspective of the people and form a general idea. Since the research and the survey was conducted during Covidian times (Covid 19- lockdown) we faced some problem in getting printed materials on the topic as well as in collecting data. Whatever books were available at home came to our rescue but we depended on the web source. But the positive part was that since google form was used to collect primary data, the opinion of people around the world (Indians) was gathered.

### 4. Traditions of patriotism in Iqbal’s poetry

Literature has always played an important role in social and economic reforms. In the Indian sub-continent, the tradition of patriotism originated when the Britishers occupied India. Poetry played an important role. Similar sentiments were seen in Urdu poets also.

*Shahr ashob* a less-examined genre in Urdu poetry to mourn the destruction of a city was in the forefront to revive the patriotic emotion. According to Persianate and Comparative Literature historian Sunil Sharma (2004) *shahr ashob* or ‘city disturber’ started with Masud Sa'd Salman (1121 AD). Nazir Akbarabadi, Mir Taqi Mir and Mohd Rafi Sauda and several other wrote *shahr-ashob*. Such poets were moved by their experiences within the socio-political chaos. Urdu *shahr ashob* began at the start of the eighteenth century after the reorganization of Mughal power. Dr Naim Ahmad (1968) said, “genre of poetry in Persian and Turkish used for intellectual enjoyment became in Urdu a vehicle for the description of political, economic, and social disturbances”. (par. 2)

Since the Britishers grabbed power from the Muslim rulers, patriotic feelings first began to appear in Urdu poetry. They gathered strength from the Quran and Prophet's sayings to fight against them. Iqbal is a good example. Abul Kalam Azad (1968), said: “I am a Muslim and I do for believe what my Sharia says. The ultimate victory is of the action, which is based on truth and reality, and it deserves to be preserved.” (p. 144-145) He added, “Is rebellion the name of freedom, which has not been achieved yet? If it is so then I plead guilty but let me remind that it is also called patriotism when it becomes victorious. ...” (p. 144-145).

Iqbal was an ardent Indian. He developed his patriotic and nationalistic poetry around this concept. He is sometimes blamed to have become anti-national later but it would be an injustice to call him such. Iqbal’s revolutionary instinct awakened the people to fight for independence. Iqbal was the pioneer Urdu poet to propagate patriotism in Urdu poetry in its pure social context. Iqbal’s poetry was motivated by the socioeconomic factors of his age but it retains its significance and aesthetic appeal to this day. His poetry is mainly composed of three elements—patriotic spirit, Islamic creed and philosophy of life. Allama Iqbal chose poetry as a medium for the reflection of “prevailing milieu, his people's hopes and fears, their ambitions and aspirations, their travails and dilemmas”. (Mujahid, 1990) His poetic works (in Persian) are *Asrar-e-Khudi*, (The Secrets of the Self, 1915) and *Rumuz-e-Bekhudi* (The Secrets of Selflessness, 1918). Other books of poetry include *Message from the East* and *Persian Psalms*. Amongst these, his best-known Urdu works are *The Call of the Marching Bell*, *Gabriel’s Wing*, *The Rod of Moses* and a part of *Gift from Hijaz*. Apart from

Urdu and Persian poetry, Iqbal also produced innumerable lectures and letters both in Urdu and English which impacts culturally, socially, religiously, and politically South Asia and other Urdu-speaking regions. George V honoured Iqbal with the Knight Bachelor in 1922. He is also referred to as the poet of the East.

His first Urdu anthology *Bang-e-Dara* (Call of the Marching Bell) published in 1924 include a lot of poems that show Iqbal's love for his motherland like *Himalaya*, *Tarana-e-Hindi*, *Naya Shivala*, *Kinar-e-Ravi*, *Hamara Desh*, *Rama*, *Nanak*, *Swami Ram Tirath* etc. The iconic nationalist poem *Tarana-e-Hindi* (1904), is rife with geographical references showing his pride for his country. He used to admire and eulogize India by describing its incredible rivers, wonderful mountains, ravishing beauty, glorious past and enviable cultural heritage and instilling in the minds and hearts of his readers, the desire to admire the country.

“Sare Jahan se achcha Hindustan hamara  
Ham bulbulen hai is ki ye gulsitan hamara  
(Our Hindustan is the best in this world; we are the nightingales of our garden-India)

Ghurbat mein hon agar ham rahta hai dil watan mein  
Samjho wahin hame bhi dil ho jahan hamara  
(Even if we are abroad our heart lies in our nation; consider us being there where our heart resides)

Mazhab nahi sikhata aapas mein bair rakhna  
Hindi hain ham, watan hai Hindustan hamara  
(Religion does not teach discord among own fellows; we are Indians and Hindustan is our homeland)

Kuch baat hai ke hasti mit-ti nahi hamari  
Sadion raha hai dushman daur-e-zaman hamara  
(There is something, which does not destroy our existence; or the time has been our enemy for centuries)”  
(Yahya, 2013, p. 75)

Iqbal shared the same opinion as Sir Syed who had been a staunch supporter of Indian nationalism, always personified India as a beautiful bride and Muslims and Hindus as her lustrous eyes. He stressed unity, harmony, brotherhood and national integrity therefore is relevant in present times as well when there is so much conflict in the name of religion. Every dust particle of his country was divine to him. He propagated love was the only way to salvation. *Naya Shivala* (1905), is the best example of patriotic poetry.

“Khak-e-watan ka mujh ko har zarah devta hai  
(But every particle of our nations land is a God for me)

Aa ghairaton ke parde ek bar phir mita dein  
(Come on! Let us once again lift the veil of unfamiliarity)  
Bichhron ko phir mila dein naksh-e-doe mita dein  
(Let us bring the separated together and discard the notion of otherness)

Shakti bhi shanti bhi bhakton ke geet mein hai  
(There is peace as well as power in the songs of the devotees)  
Dharti ke basiyon ki mukti preet mein hai  
(The salvation of the humans lies in love)” (Yahya, 2013, p. 76)

*Himalaya* (1905) is the first poem in *Bang-i-Dara*, a collection of his poems. To Iqbal, the Himalayas are one of the innumerable masterpieces of the creative power of God. He was moved by the beauty and its grandeur. He considered the Himalayas a greater sight than the mountain Sinai where Moses got a glimpse of God. This poem bears testimony to the fact that Iqbal cherished the feeling of love and reverence for his motherland. He was full of praise for even the smallest thing of his country. He always tried to free the Indian masses to form their sense of inferiority.

“Aey Himalaya aey fasil kishwar-e-hindustan  
Chumta hai teri peshani ko jhuk kar aasman  
(O! Himalaya O! The wall of India, the sky pays tribute bending to kiss your forehead) a great

Ek jalwah tha kalim-e-tur-e-sina ke liye  
Tu tajalli hai sarapa chashm-e-bina ke liye

(The mountain of Tur-e-Sinai was just a reflection for Moses; but you the Himalaya are a manifestation for every healthy eye)

The poem Hindustani Bacchon ka Qaomi Geet (before 1904) reflects the attachment of Iqbal with his country while embracing its ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity.

Janat ki zindagi hai jis ke feza mein jina  
Mera watan wahi hai mera watan wahi hai

(Living life in the environment of this land is like living life in the heaven; that is my country that is my country) (Yahya, 2013, p. 75-76)

Iqbals *The prayer of a child* is a patriotic poem, which is still sung by kids in primary schools. In this poem Iqbal has attempted to create patriotic spirit and mould children's thinking towards nation building:

Ho mere dam se yunhi mere watan ki zinat  
Jis tarah phul se hoti hai chaman ki zinat

(May I be the reason for the shining of my nation; like the flower makes the garden beautiful?)” (Yahya, 2013, p. 73)

Azad, Hali, Saroor and Chakbast and several other poets wrote poems full of patriotic sentiments and national awakening. But Iqbals services in this regard are most prominent. Prof. Jamil Ahmad Anjum (2007) says about Iqbal: “Nobody can deny that Iqbal brought revolution in Urdu poetry by his modern thought and style of expression”. (p. 18) Iqbal propagated national consciousness, national integrity, humanism, brotherhood and unity. His poems stressed on Hindu-Muslim unity, the two major religions of India. He reminded his countrymen of the glorious past of the nation to instigate their patriotic tendencies. Iqbal does not only possess lofty ideals and thoughts but his poetry had poetic imaginations. Similes, metaphors, new idioms and phrases are innumerable examples in his poetry which is priceless literary and poetic legacy.

## 5. Findings

A survey was conducted to know people's opinions on Allama Iqbal and his patriotic sentiments among 74 people of different age groups and educational backgrounds. Among the participants, 90.9% were acquainted with him. They were familiar with his poetic works and were able to recognise and identify his famous patriotic poems and a significant number of them even quoted his popular couplets. The majority of the participants acknowledged him as a patriot. Many of them even appreciated the idea that we take a more active approach in teaching and learning his work. The survey underlined the vast reach of Urdu poets and their poetry especially Allama Iqbal, Mirza Ghalib, Faiz Ahmed Faiz among others.

## 6. Conclusion

Iqbal is undoubtedly a great patriot. His verses are in themselves testimony to it. It played a significant role in awakening the patriotic sentiments during the freedom struggle of India when it was most needed. Iqbal chose to make his poetry panacea for human ills. He was convinced of the power of poetry and its revolutionary effect on human thought. Poetry according to him was the conqueror of hearts. His poems reverberate his love and reverence for his motherland. It had universality. He is still being talked about throughout the world proves his timelessness. His works have been translated into many languages and his couplets are quoted often. His poems need to be taught to the young generation to inculcate a feeling of patriotism, love and brotherhood among entire mankind.

Iqbal died in 1938. He was deeply mourned by Hindus as well as Muslims in India, and in other lands as well. “On Iqbal's death, Rabindranath Tagore remarked: ‘The death of Iqbal creates a void in 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 had such universal value.’” (Kayani, 2015, par. 9)

## 7. Appendices

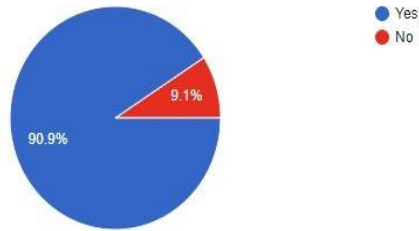
Survey to find patriotism in Allama Iqbal's poetry. My objective is to prove that Iqbal was patriotic

### 7.1 Questionnaire:

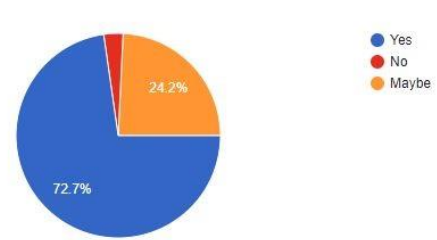
1. What is your age?
    - a. 15- 25
    - b. 26-35
    - c. 36-45
    - d. 46 and above
  
  2. What is your gender?
    - a. Male
    - b. Female
  
  3. Do you know Allama Iqbal?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
  
  4. Have you heard/read any of his poetry?
    - a. *Tarana-e-Hindi* (The Indian Song)
    - b. *Naya Shiwala* (The New Altar)
    - c. *Himalaya*
    - d. *Hindustani Bachon ka qaumi geet* (The national song of Indian children)
    - e. Other
  
  5. Which of his popular couplets have you heard?
    - a. Khudi ko kar buland itna ke har taqder se pehle ...
    - b. Mazhab nahin sikhata aapas mein bair rakhna, Hindi hain hum, watan hai hindostaan humara.
    - c. Saare Jahan Se Acha Hindustan Humara
    - d. *khāk-e-vatan kā mujh ko har zarra devtā hai*
    - e. *dhartī ke bāsiyoñ kī muktī priit meñ hai*
    - f. Other
  
  6. Do you consider him a patriot?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
    - c. Maybe
  
  7. Do you think his writings were instrumental in India's freedom movement?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
    - c. Maybe
  
  8. Do you think should be included in regular curriculum and taught to children from young age to inculcate patriotic ideas?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
    - c. Maybe
-

## 7.2 Findings

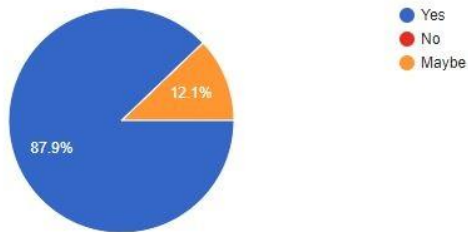
Do you know Allama Iqbal ?



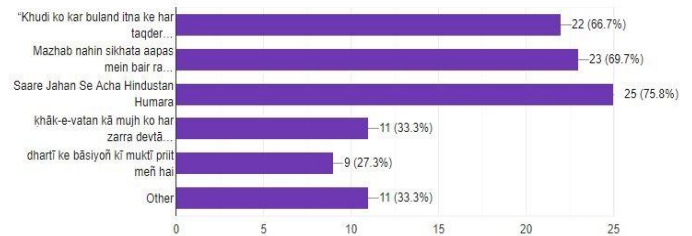
Do you think his writings were instrumental in India's freedom movement ?



Do you consider him a patriot ?



Which of his popular couplets have you heard ?



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