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# A Review of Iqbal's vision of a New Muslim Man: The Individual and his Role in the Society

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## **Abstract**

Dr Muhammad Iqbal, a renowned Pakistani poet, philosopher, and politician. Iqbal's concept of individualism, known as "Khudi," argues the importance of self-affirmation, personal growth, and individual freedom that leads to be a new Muslim man. This study is qualitative data taken from 1988-2024 available in academic journals. Iqbal's concept of individualism is rooted in his critique of Western individualism, which he sees as being based on different flaws and narrow concept of human nature. On the contrary, Iqbal's concept of Khudi emphasizes the importance of spiritual progress, moral development, self-realization and social responsibilities. This article argues that Iqbal's concept of individualism offers a unique and critical perspective at the same time and intends to make a significant connection between the individual and society, although he prefers the individuality states to society. Moreover provide a teaching and learning in Islamic thoughts with critical pedagogy.

**Keywords:** Individual, philosopher, khudi, self-affirmation, New Muslim man, spirituality.



## Introduction

Allama Mohamed Iqbal was a great Muslim philosopher, poet and thinker, his most of work is consist of Individualism known as "Khudi" encloses the assumption of self-realization, self-awareness, and the progress of an individual's unique identity and potential. For Iqbal, the process of Khudi involves transcending societal limitations, embracing individuality, and attempt for self-actualization then the person who attains such qualities he can be a new Muslim man to rule. It encourages individuals to overcome all the external fears, doubts and influences that may boxed their personal growth and confidence. By attaining Khudi, individuals can tap into their inner strength, creativity, and potential capacities to realize their true qualities and make a positive impact on the world. Aslam et al., (2023). Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), one of the 20th century's most influential Muslim thinkers, theorized a radically new understanding of Islamic selfhood. For Iqbal, the self (khudi) was marked by an individuality that made it distinct and inherently equipped to overcome colonial incursions. Igbal put this down to Ibn 'Arabi's (1165–1240) "Neo-Platonist doctrine of sheep" of wahdat-al-wujud. This article examines the ways in which Iqbal's ideas of the self-derive from a specifically modern, Western notion of the self. (Hasan Azad 2014)

This 'self 'in essence is 'you' and 'me 'as choosers of the path we abide to follow. According to Iqbal human beings have the capacities to take it to the highest levels of awareness as well as lowest to the bottom of ignorance. 'Khudi' demanded three main components towards its development that is self-awareness, self-management and initiating actions for the intended outcome. 'Khudi' infused these motives in the same sequence to achieve satisfaction with stamina of conviction. Deeper meanings of existence believes in affirmation with the nature of selflessness. The advance phase to understand the 'self', one finds that nothing exists as apparent 'self 'rather part of the whole. (Ahmed et al., 2023).

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, envisioned a transformative role for individuals in shaping society. His philosophical and poetic works emphasize the significance of individual self-awareness, uniqueness, and moral responsibility (Iqbal, 1924). Iqbal's concept of *Khudi* (Selfhood) is central to his vision, recognizing the individual's inner self as the driving force behind human progress (Nasr, 2015, p. 145). In Iqbal's view, individuals are not apathetic receiver of societal values but active agents of change having logical thinking. He upholds for individuals to take their decision and actions by their own, promoting autonomy and self-reformation

(Rahman, 2014). This emphasis that individual agency is rooted in Islamic principles where individuals are considered accountable for their

actions (Khan, 2022). The vision of individual-society dynamics is characterized by a critique relationship. Individuals must utilize their unique potentials to contribute meaningfully to the society, while society must provide an enabling environment for individual's growth (Malik, 2021, p. 56). This interdependence is reflected in Iqbal's poetry, where he urges individuals to strive for self-perfection and social responsibility (Hussain, 2021). Dr. Iqbal's ideas have far-reaching implications for social justice, democracy, and human development. By empowering individuals to become active participants in shaping their destiny, Iqbal's vision offers a transformative pathway for social progress (Schimmel, 1973).

Nowadays most people even don't have their self-control, which resulted as in sadness, stress, even murder, suicide and other social evils. The purpose of this article is to provide the qualities described by Iqbal in his concept of *Khudi* which makes a strong conceptual and intellectual person who must have the knowledge about Islam as well modern education to rule better. In such a Muhammad Iqbal's theory of New Muslim Man will provide the prescribed roles and duties to the Man who have to rule. By descriptive analysis method, this paper concludes that: First, Muhammad Iqbal's theory of *khudi* as a strengthening of spirituality. Second, *khudi* is defined as soul, individual. Third, the factors to strengthen *khudi* include: love, faqar, toleration, courage, and action. Fourth, the three main stages to strengthen the spirituality of *khudi* the obedience to Allah's law, self-control, and Caliphate. Fifth, *Insan-e-Kamil* is a form of realization of the value of spirituality in khudi as an understanding of human nature as a servant of Allah to become the Caliph of Allah on the earth. (Arriosi, et al., 2023).

### Literature Review

The vision of individualism in the context of Islam has ever been remained an interesting topic among scholars, particularly in the thoughts of Muhammad Iqbal, a dignified Pakistani poet, philosopher, and politician. Iqbal's concept of individualism, known as "Khudi," emphasizes the importance of self-realization, personal growth, and self-affirmation. According to Iqbal, the development of a strong and confident individual is essential for the creation of a healthy and vibrant society (Iqbal, 1934). He believed that the individual is the fundamental unit of society and that their development is essential for the improvement of society as a whole (Iqbal, 1924).

The individualism is rooted in his critique of Western individualism, which he sees as being founded on a narrow concepts of individualism where Individuals are self-centered and materialistic. (Iqbal, 1930). He argues that Western individualism is based on the individual's freedom from external attractions, but neglects the individual's inner character and spiritual growth (Iqbal, 1924). On contrary, Iqbal's concept of *Khudi* priorities the importance of spiritual progress, moral uplift, and social responsibility in the society (Iqbal,

1934). He claims that the individual must have a powerful sense of self-awareness, self-discipline, and self-reliance in order to achieve true nature of selflessness (Iqbal, 1930). Iqbal's vision on individualism regards a new Muslim man is more influential among scholars and thinkers in the Muslim world. For example, the Pakistani scholar and philosopher, Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, has built on Iqbal's ideas to develop a comprehensive theory of individualism and human rights in Islam (Ghamidi, 2002).

The study revolves around the concept of new Muslim man by achieving the set rules in the concept of Iqbal's *Khudi*. First part consist of the fulfilment of characteristics that took the Individual towards a broader intellectual known as the new Muslim man. Second part of this context describe the roles and duties of new Muslim man in the society through which he can attain the actual purpose of *Khudi*.

### Individual - A New Muslim Man

In the twentieth century, no Muslim thinker has delved into the depths of this issue that weather - the human individual can again rise to the original noble up-gradation for which he was created - more perceptively than the great philosopher Muhammad Iqbal 1877-1938 (Iqbal 1998). Allama Iqbal's concept of the Individual as a new Muslim man is a main theme of his poetic work. He embodies the core values and norms of Islam where Individual can form a society where justice and equality are the basic intensions that are full filed by Individuals who handles their greed and lust by knowing the actual purpose of his arrival. Individuality is composed of wishes, desires and passions and these qualities referred the Individual as self-centered and self-determined, he should be out of materialistic distractions. The society sets rules and roles for Individual that is the way to achieve the goals he set, Iqbal pointed out that Individual works more effectively when united and he is nothing alone but depending on society, so he described the main qualities for Individual to be a new Muslim man having the quality of selflessness as under:-

## Spiritual awareness/ self-affirmation

The new Muslim man should be aware of his spiritual nature deeply and must committed to cultivate an athletic spiritual life. A real Muslim man has to diminish all the materialistic distractions and ignorance. Iqbal believes that spiritual awareness starts from self-realization to understand inner nature. First he have a deep connection with inner self, consciousness of divine that underlies all the existence. Spiritual awareness is a dynamic process which is ongoing for personal growth and change. Beware of Islamic heritage, history, culture and traditions. (Nasar et Al., 2013).

## An inspiration for society

Individual should be out of all worldly lavished things, all the materials which attract them to be selfish and greedy. He should be and

inspiration for society by abolishing all the desires unlike the western concepts that eradicate the inner character of Individuals and family systems. New Muslim man should be an example to the community from his loyalty with society and have the purpose to reform his society with the steps taken by him. (Iqbal 1924).

## **Supremacy of Rationality**

According to Iqbal the new Muslim man should be intellectual and to understand the problems facing by the society and moreover have the ability to resolve them. Must be knowledge seeker, and abide by the responsibilities of justice and equality, Iqbal suggested reasoning and thinking rather than following blindly to the traditions or any authority. A man with full of desires to explore, learn and discover new thoughts. Iqbal hoped that he should

beware of synthesize reason and faith regards Islamic values into new modern concepts. (Iqbal 1934).

## Up gradation of morality

Moral awareness is the foundation of morality, Individual should hold moralities encompassing the moral values, committed to social justice, equality and fairness with human rights. Beware of his actions, thoughts and behavior that how he impact himself and others. He have the ability to differentiate the wrong and right, good and evil, truth and falsehood. New Muslim man must try to explore himself whether he is living a virtuous life or not. (Iqbal 1934).

Iqbal argued that new Muslim man is to reform his society by his good will and actions, be an innovative to use his potentials and talents for revival of the society with modern changes. He emphasized the importance of self-reflection and introspection in cultivating morality. The new Muslim man must regularly reflect on his actions, thoughts, and feelings, and examine his conscience to ensure that he is living a virtuous life.

#### Committed to Islamic values:

Iqbal convicted that the new Muslim man must be committed to Islamic values, such as justice, compassion, honesty, and fairness. These values must guide his thoughts, words, and actions, and he must strive to embody them in his daily life.

# Empathy and compassion:

He emphasized the importance of empathy and compassion in morality. The new Muslim man must be able to put himself in others' shoes, understand their struggles and challenges, and show compassion and kindness towards them. (Iqbal 1934,p. 148).

## Personal responsibility:

Iqbal believed that the new Muslim man must take personal responsibility for his actions. He must be accountable for his mistakes, apologize when necessary, and make amends when possible.

## Moral courage:

Iqbal emphasized the importance of moral courage in standing up for what is right, even in the face of adversity. The new Muslim man must be willing to challenge unjust systems, speak out against oppression, and defend the vulnerable. (Iqbal 1934).

Balance between Individualism and Collectivism:

Iqbal believed that the new Muslim man is to strike a balance between individualism and collectivism. He must cultivate his individual identity and autonomy while also recognizing his responsibilities towards his community and society.

## Spiritual Growth and Development:

Iqbal emphasized the importance of spiritual growth and development in morality. The new Muslim man must cultivate a deep sense of spirituality, which involves recognizing his place in the universe, his relationship with God, and his responsibilities towards himself and others. (Iqbal, 1917).

#### Half cleric and half educated

Iqbal's vision of the new Muslim man as "half cleric and half educated" is integration of intellectual and spirituality. This unique blend of qualities enable the new Muslim man to

Operate as well rounded and critically thinking a socially responsible Individual. As a cleric he have the full knowledge of Islamic values and theology, he will be well versed in Quran and *Sunnah* having a strong sense of faith. On contrary half educated means he must have the knowledge and understanding of all modern sciences, issues and the solution of those issues in analyzing way. This is the amalgamation of intellectual and spiritual qualities. That's unique perspective of his thoughts be a new Muslim man. (Iqbal, 1934)

# Pertaining into "Khudi"

The major aspect of Iqbal's philosophy is "Khudi" and this is closely tied with his vision of the new Muslim man. According to Iqbal the Individual who have the qualities of Khudi as self-affirmation, self-awareness, spiritual growth and moralities this is the term khudi. It is the transformation of "me" into "khudi" to overcome the limitations and restrictions for achieving the potentials of Individual. Khudi guides the individual to differentiate in the

right and wrong then he can play a pivotal role for society (Iqbal, 1924). Iqbal's concept of *Khudi* is deeply rooted with the core principles of Islamic philosophy and spirituality. The main goal of Individual's existence is attaining the perfection and this can only be achieved through self-affirmation and self-control having a strong will of *Khudi*. As long as Individual becomes more aware to *khudi* he will be enabled to achieve his destiny. The growth of *Khudi* is closely attached to self-realization, which is the process of discovering his pure nature and potentials. According to Iqbal\_*Khudi* is a dynamic concept not statistic because it evolves around different stages that the Individual have to undergo at various phases of his life through a starting point of abolishing the ego, selfishness and lack of awareness. As the *Khudi* grows time to time the Individual becomes more selfless, pure and more refined. *Khudi* is a sense of inner feelings which defines the character of individuals.

From a perspective of ego, schooling starts. His thoughts of ego / *Khudi* can be discussed as

- F Sovereignty of Allah Almighty
- F Tauheed is the base for unification of thoughts and action
- F Responsibilitties of Individual.
- F Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) as a role model.
- F Human being is the best creation of Allah.
- F Free will for making choices and constant effort for disclosing the inner

Capabilities (Shabir, 2017).

## Mard- e-Momin

The ultimate representation of a perfect individual who is strong both morally and physically. He has undergone the self-realization process and has the ability to change his destiny by purifying the soul and body. (Nusrat & Khan, 2020). The process of *Khudi* encourages individuals to overcome all fears, ambiguities, and external influences that may hinder their potential growth. By embracing *Khudi*, individuals can tap into their inner strength, creativity, and intellectual capabilities to realize their true potential and make a positive influence on the world. (Sadiq et Al, 2023)

- \*Belief of two-world, inner and outer.
- \* Inner world is most important in comparison to outer world in relation to *khudi*.
- \* Relationship with both the world is the characteristics for the men of *khudi*
- \* The hunter is *Momin* or the men consuming *khudi*, and the prey is the world.

Iqbal believes that culture should not be a barrier to human realization.

\* Islam is not scared of the world of matter, except if it is grounded in morality,

Material cannot be necessary.

\*If a person decides to dominate the universe for that reason, he should first

Understand the world.

\* Technology and intelligence are like horror beyond the love of Allah, but with

The love of Allah, it is like a spiritual element.

\*The explanation is that Allah's love offers links to the vast universe. Man cannot

Find a way despite religious inspiration. Our fate is written in the Quran (Shabir,

2017).

## Role of new Muslim man and his impacts on the society

According to Muhammad Iqbal, the new Muslim man plays a pivotal role, serving as a catalyst for positive changes and transformation for his society. Iqbal envisioned the new Muslim man as a dynamic and progressive individual who attains the core values of Islam and is committed to the reformation of the society. The dominant idea that Iqbal emphasizes is that knowing oneself is in fact an immediate perception of God. He focuses his attention on the individual "I", thus shifting the emphasis from divine to human. (Qasim et Al., 2015)

One of the basic roles of the new Muslim man, as envisioned by Iqbal, is to serve as a "leader" and a guide. He should possess a deep understanding of Islamic principles and values, as well as a broad range of knowledge of modern sciences and humanities. With this unique mixture of spiritual and intellectual characteristics, the new Muslim man is fully prepared to provide guidance and have a leadership quality to his community, helping to navigate the complexities and issues of modern life.

Iqbal also emphasized the importance of the new Muslim man being a "change agent", working to bring out positive transformation in the society. This includes to challenge unjust systems and structures which are violating the basic rights of Individuals, promoting social justice and equality, and advocating for the rights of the marginalized and oppressed. The new Muslim man should be a voice for the voiceless, using his potential knowledge, skills, and influence to create a more just and equitable society.

Furthermore, Iqbal envisioned the new Muslim man as a "bridge-builder", having a greater understanding and cooperation among different communities and cultures so that he should be able to navigate the complexities of modern pluralistic societies, promoting dialogue, tolerance, and mutual respect. By maintaining the bridges between different

communities, the new Muslim man can assist to create a more harmonious and cooperative society.

In addition, Iqbal emphasized the importance of the new Muslim man being a "role model" embracing the values of compassion, empathy, and kindness. He should be a source of inspiration and guidance for others, demonstrating the importance of living a manner full life. Being a positive role model, the new Muslim man can help to create a more compassionate and caring society through his good activities and roles played.

Iqbal's new Muslim man having the most precious service to his society as a "servant of humanity", working to promote the common good and advance the welfares of all people. He should be motivated and molded by a sense of social responsibility and a commitment to serving others. By promising himself to be the server of humanity, the new Muslim man can help to create a more just, compassionate, and equitable environment. The new Muslim man, as envisioned by Iqbal, embodying the values of Islam and promoting the common good, the new Muslim man can help to create a justice full society where nobody will have grievances to them.

The new Muslim man have a profound influence on the society when he attains all the qualities discussed above, he helps to promote the Justice, equality, compassion in the society where all the fundamental rights of Individuals are protected and respected. They enlightened to self-realization and self-control to diminish their worldly lust and greed, the will follow the guidelines of Islam that how to stay in a social circle and how to behave the others. The concept of new Muslim man as prescribed in word "Khudi" profoundly influenced the society and modern Islamic culture having a range of movements and initiatives in subcontinent to promote Islamic values and beliefs. The concept has inspired a range of revivalist movements in south Asia (sub- continent)that purposed was to improve the Islamization in the region. He opposed the way as chosen by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to get the education fully western style. He evaluated that such education modeled the youngers totally liberals that wasn't the way to attain pure spirituality even diminishing one's spiritual growth and potentials, that's why he proposed the vision of half cleric and half educated to achieve certain criteria for a new Muslim man.

Dr Muhammad Iqbal presented the concept that assisted the Muslims to reshape the Muslim identity and it influenced the people as a range of steps taken by them for promoting the self-realization and expressions also. His vision of Individual as a new Muslim man brought a huge level of reforms in the society as justice, equality and enthusiasm in Muslim societies.

Allama Mohamed Iqbal's thoughts of *Khudi* has played a pivotal character to maintain a gap between the two major competing ideas of Muslims in subcontinent one of them was an extremist – pan-islamists they were spiritually adhered to Islam and considered themselves as a part of

universal Muslim *ummah*, they were the pro-Islamic the creation of *Deoband* school of thought. On the contrast there was a community having liberal thoughts who embraced western education and political concepts – the growth of Aligarh movement led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Till 1905 Iqbal was passionate about *watniyat* and Indian autonomy but after some incidents he worked as a bridge between the two competing sets of ideas.

#### Conclusion

By cultivating these qualities, the new Muslim man can become a moral and virtuous individual who contributes to the society positively. Iqbal argues that khudi is characterized the ideal human being as someone conscious of his immortality, who recognizes that he possesses some of God's characteristics and is proactive rather than quietly reacting to the circumstances. Iqbal urged Muslims to correct the fundamental error that led to the derailment of Muslim social thought. Iqbal's doctrine was influenced by the Quran's doctrine of proclamation and emphasized action. These hindrances must be met before realizing Iqbal's ideal human being known as a new Muslim man. Iqbal's concept of the new Muslim man represents a vision of a dynamic and progressive individual who embodies the values of Islam and is committed to the betterment of society. The new Muslim man, as envisioned by Iqbal, is a leader, a change agent, and a bridge-builder who is equipped to navigate the complexities of modern life and to promote positive change and transformation in society. By promoting a culture of learning, intellectual inquiry, and critical thinking, the new Muslim man can assist to maintain a more just, compassionate, and equitable society, where the rights and dignity of all individuals are respected and protected.



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