

## **Iqbal's Human Learning Theory: The Qur'anic Model**

**Amina Murad**

Institute of Business Management, Karachi, Pakistan

**and \*Muhammad Abid Ali, PhD**

Bahria University, Islamabad Campus, Pakistan

Any social system of a people is developed around the theories that the nation has evolved or generated in that particular context. The theories themselves are deeply rooted in the ideology of that group of people and the very root is their belief or assumptions of what a human is, what are his life objectives and the main objectives of the existence of that nation or people. As such any social theory developed in the secular west is around their own assumptions and not around Islamic principles. When we talk of systems from Islamic perspective the theories have to be based on principles as enunciated by the Qur'an. Iqbal has based his theory of the dynamics of Khudi on the ayaat of the Qur'an and as such, it can be claimed that his theories are from the Qur'anic perspective. This study explores and analyses Iqbal's educational philosophy related to human nature, individuality and human self-development as extracted from his Persian anthology, *Asrar-i-Khudi* and studies the implications of a young child's self-realization (*khudi*) during early childhood learning. Hermeneutics was employed and the verses were exegetically deciphered. The qualitative thematic deduction is applied using Colaizzi's method to draw Iqbal's ideas of human nature, individuality, and human self-development. Using the dynamic of Khudi as narrated in *Asrar e Khudi* a human learning theory has been generated which can be claimed as Qur'anic theory of learning as Iqbal has based his theory of Khudi on the verses of Qur'an.

*Keywords:* Early childhood education, educational philosophy, Iqbal's philosophy, *khudi*, self-realization, individuality, learning theory, human learning

This study intends to draw the theory of learning from Iqbal's elucidation of the growth of khudi (self, individuality) as revealed by the Creator in the Holy Qur'an. The study presents arguments to draw an understanding of the difference between Qur'anic facts and the learning theories developed in the West which are based on assumptions as widely acknowledged by the Western philosophers, psychologists, and educationists. It then focuses on the functions of self and finally recommends that the development of self (*khudi*) must be the prime aim of education, and preferred over all other aims and activities (Mir & Salierno, 2006; Saiyidain, 1971; Tufail, 1966).

### **Implications of Dynamic of Khudi on Human Learning**

Beliefs or assumptions lie at the foundations of any human-generated theory. When we develop Islamic theories, they are developed based on Quranic principles or edicts, whereas non-Islamic Western intellectuals develop their theories on their own assumptions (Rafiuddin, 1983).

The Holy Qur'an warns humanity against assumptions, rendered incapable of replacing the reality.

وَمَا يَتَّبِعْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

---

\* Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed Dr. Muhammad Abid Ali, Bahria University, Islamabad Campus, Pakistan. Email: [MuhammadAbid.buic@bahria.edu.pk](mailto:MuhammadAbid.buic@bahria.edu.pk)

*And most of them do not follow anything except assumptions; indeed assumption does not serve the least purpose (in place) of the truth; indeed Allah knows their deeds (Yunus:36).*

Furthermore, blind following of any man-made theories may lead humanity to err and go astray.

وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلَوْا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ

*(O Muhammad!) If you obey the majority of those who live on earth, they will lead you away from Allah's path. They only follow idle fancies, indulging in conjecture (Al-An'am:116).*

Such assumptions also reflect the philosophy of life of the theorists who develop them, as the Qur'an probes into their ideology:

وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ

*And they say: What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but time can destroy us. But of that they have no knowledge: they merely conjecture (Al-Jathiyah:24).*

Iqbal has derived all his theories of human development from the Qur'an as avowed by him in his Persian anthology, *The Mysteries of Selflessness* (1953). He has claimed that if he stated anything against the Qur'an, Allah SWT may humiliate him on the Day of Judgment by not allowing him to kiss the feet of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), and may Allah save the Muslim Ummah from harm caused by the teachings of Iqbal:

*Disgrace me on the Day of Reckoning,*

*Too abject to embrace thy holy feet.*

*But if I ever treated on my chain*

*The pearl of the Koran's sweet mysteries (p. 95)*

The implications drawn from Iqbal's philosophy of individuality are from the perspective of the natural learning disposition of human beings.

Iqbal (1975) ascertains that every individual has been inherently ingrained with the faculty for the growth of self (khudi) and has been uniquely positioned in the universe with an innately dominant ability to create and capacity to shape one's own fate. As such, the self (khudi) is extremely challenging in nature, and being passive is alien to it. A highly developed individual is the result of applying this predisposition. Referring to the Qur'an, Iqbal (1930) stresses that a human accepted the challenge offered by the Creator to be His vicegerent at his peril. Other creations of immense magnitude refused, whereas he readily accepted .

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

*We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of doing so, but the man carried it. Surely he is wrong-doing, ignorant (Al-Ahzab:72).*

Iqbal (1930) further elucidates the creative design of a human being who has to play the challenging role of Creator's representative on earth.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

*Just recall the time when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to appoint a vicegerent on the Earth."(Al-Baqarah:30).*

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا.

*"Then Allah taught Adam the names of all things." (Al-Baqarah: 31)*

It can be concluded that the human being has been designed for this high status with a highly challenging disposition to subjugate nature and overcome challenges in the environment to establish the Creator's world order. It can be further concluded that the potential required for this extremely colossal task is ingrained in every human being, which demands active learning (Iqbal, 1975). Thus, the human, as a challenge seeking entity, creates ideals and actively pursues them. These ideals give human life a purpose and a yearning to carry out meaningful activities as Iqbal (1975) explicates.

*Life is preserved by purpose*

*Because of the goal its caravan-bell tinkles. (p. 23)*

Rafiuddin (1983) defines this educative process as the expression and satisfaction of the urge for educational growth which begins with the formation of the ideal. Iqbal (1975), asserts that higher ideals pose greater challenges. Similarly, the passion and desire to achieve the ideal are also according to the magnitude of the ideal. Passion serves as the fuel and drives khudi to put in greater effort by taking multiple actions to achieve them. The heart is then the seat of all desires which makes creativity more as an act of love than an act of the intellect. Iqbal (1975) contends it is the role of love for ideals that helps the khudi to overcome all challenges and gain victory. The ultimate source of this love as Iqbal (1975) avows, is God Himself.

*The hardest rocks are shivered by Love's glance:*

*Love of God, at last, becomes wholly God (p. 29).*

Conclusively, the natural human design for the growth of self (khudi), as defined by Iqbal (1975), follows a cycle starting with the ideal formation as challenges, love/passion for the ideal leading to motivation/desire to pursue ideals, and practically acting to achieve the ideal. This cycle is the cause of learning at each stage throughout, which is called experiential learning or the process of educational and psychological growth of a human being.

Iqbal (1975) explicates that the continuous process of the growth of khudi which is ingrained in every individual right from birth by the Creator. This can be observed in every young child who loves to acquire challenges, gets engrossed in surmounting a challenge with great passion until s/he overcomes it and feels elated upon success (Holt, 2017). All through this process, from the origin of a challenge to its conquest, the child remains extremely involved and continues to try different methods and ways with a high degree of obstinacy and determination. During this phase of intense involvement and activity, learning takes place naturally through planning and experience; making it a period of the growth of self, learning, and knowledge. It is also observed that a child during his early years is not only occupied with one challenge at a time but adopts multiple challenges (Holt, 2017). This demonstrates how a child is naturally designed to exponentially grow in knowledge and learning (Rafiuddin, 1983). This process is adversely affected by trying to engage the child in a challenge that is thrust upon her/him without giving the right to select according to one's interest and will (Gatto, 2005; Rafiuddin, 1983; Robinson, 2009).

Iqbal (1975) concludes that this continuous activity of the self (khudi) is a manifestation of its creative design and natural learning ability. This ingrained process of learning and development remains active unless tempered by external intervention and molded. Criticizing the unnatural western education system with acid-like properties, Iqbal (1990) regrets how the East has adopted it without realizing its damaging effects on the self.

تعلیم کے تیزاب میں ڈال اسکی خودی کو  
 ہو جائے ملائم تو جدھر چاہے اسے پھیر (p. 668)

Concluding, Iqbal (1975) upholds that education should focus on nurturing an individual into a highly developed khudi as “life itself is individual: its highest form, so far, is the ego (khudi), in which the individual becomes a self-contained exclusive center” (p. 19). Defining a complete and unique individual, Iqbal (1975) proclaims that every individual possesses a high sense of responsibility and ready to take the stand all alone on the Day of Judgment.

### **Views of Historical and Contemporary Educationists on Child Learning**

Ambrose, et al. (2010) define learning as “a process that leads to change, which occurs as a result of experience and increases the potential for improved performance and future learning” (p. 3). They further elaborate on the three critical components of learning; it is a process, not a product; it involves a change in knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, or attitudes that evolve over time and leaves a permanent effect on the learners thinking and actions; and that learning is not done on the learner, it is something the learners themselves do by interpreting and responding to their conscious and unconscious experiences, past and present.

Dewey (1902) considers the child’s life is undivided with great adaptive faculty to pass from one topic to another without any conscious sense of transition. His uppermost thought becomes his universe which is fluid, and its contents dissolve and re-form with astounding swiftness. However, Dewey, (1902) notes that the school divides his whole world into different subjects as he is considered an immature being. The idea induced in the child is that the school gives him maturity by the highly structured curriculum to make more sense of the world. Creativity, according to Robinson (2009) is about working imaginatively with different ideas with concentration. It is making use of a person’s knowledge, skills and control while understanding what works best and why and shaping them into best forms. Faulty theories about intelligence and creativity wasted a large number of learners with creative potential. Declaring learning as a natural process, Bento and Dias (2017) suggest that the education of young children must support their individuality by providing them opportunities to experience by developing a learning environment from the child’s perspective.

In their research on Iqbal’s inferences from the Qur’an, Ali and Hussein (2017) determine that the ideas and methodology presented by Iqbal about human self and its development are strongly supported by the modern critics of contemporary education such as Gatto (2005), Holt (1982), Robinson (2009) and Rafiuddi (1983).

Observing and interacting with young children over a period of time, Holt (2017) has established that young children love to maintain their individuality by challenging the environment through active participation in spite of making numerous errors. The young child continues to keep her/himself engaged in activity until s/he is successful. As soon as s/he achieves his target, s/he looks for another activity to challenge her/his wits (p. 25). Curious and active by nature, in search of constant activity, Holt (2017) postulates that by nature young children have

more inclination and capacity to learn than adults, whereas their inclination decreases as they get older. Every child has a unique style of learning suitable for her/his condition. By understanding the ways, conditions, and spirit in which young children do their best learning, Holt suggests that schools can be transformed into a place where their natural thinking and learning process is nurtured to support their curiosity. According to Rafiuddin (1983), like biological growth, khudi is pre-programmed for learning for psychological growth; that learning is both natural and intentional. A weak self (khudi) is the manifestation of a lack of intentional learning which results in the loss of individuality. Rafiuddin (2009) also asserts that it is the love of ideals that prepares the self for a complete and productive life and unleash its hidden potentialities and helps in self-actualization.

In his comparative study on Iqbal and Dewey's educational philosophies, Tufail (1966) deduces that Iqbal is a proponent of freedom for children, and advocates developing every child as a free, ingenious and creative personality. Accordingly, Iqbal favors such an environment where children can freely explore and experiment with the resources. Tufail (1966) further comments:

There is no need for mastery of subject matter, but for efficiency in, and capacity for creating ideals and realizing them in actual situations. He (Iqbal) would not allow the fitting of the child to subject-matter, because in that case the activities of pupil determined in advance will neglect their interests, result in indoctrination, limit the operation of the intelligent choice and paralyze originality and creativity (p. 110)

According to Ali (2011), one of the main functions of khudi is the development of ideals. Ideal formation and pursuing to realize them rejuvenate khudi. For young children, ideals create the activity of life as without being desirous of an ideal, the creative power of the young heart is lost and the child becomes inactive. Robinson (2009) establishes that every individual child is born with the immense power of imagination, intelligence, feeling, intuition, spirituality, and physical and sensory awareness. The limitation in understanding the phenomenal potential for growth has led to a preoccupation with specific academic skills and subjects coupled with standardized testing, which do not allow the element present in every child to unleash his inner flow of energy to perform to his optimal level. Robinson (2009) determines that creativity is suppressed in education. Its critics fear of children's reckless behavior due to the freedom they would enjoy. Instead of seizing the opportunity, the critics oppose to let young children involve playing with ideas with fun and imagination and work in a highly focused way. This enables them to craft their own ideas into reality, think and make critical judgments of what works best and why. Robinson further notes that like every discipline, creativity is also enhanced by holding on skill, knowledge, and control.

### **Method**

This study is qualitative and exploratory in nature as it aims to investigate and extract Iqbal's ideas of human nature, individuality, and development of the human-self and implications of a developed khudi in early childhood learning. The researcher employed hermeneutics to interpret the verses of Iqbal's anthology of sixteen poems and exegetically decipher their allegorical connotations. According to Palmer (1969), hermeneutics is concerned with activities of interpretation as well as the philosophy of understanding. Content analysis using seven steps Colaizzi's method was exercised to extract the concepts under study. Ward (2012) concludes that a researcher uses content analysis methods when he is interested more in the aboutness of the content than the content itself. The researcher derived categories, clusters, themes, and sub-

themes and incorporated them into the theoretical core of research objectives and questions. The final analysis was shared with an expert on Iqbal's educational philosophy for the credibility of data and verification of rigor.

The analysis was substantiated with other works of Iqbal as well as studies conducted on his educational philosophy. Literature review of child learning psychology and early childhood, both historical as well as contemporary, was done to substantiate the findings as derived from the content analysis of *Asrar-i-Khudi*.

### Findings and Discussion

Iqbal (1975) considers the development of self (*khudi*) as a very strong urge, naturally embedded in each individual that leads him to develop activities, resulting in new learning and growth. The intensity of this urge for self-development determines the magnitude of learning and growth; greater the urge, greater is the learning. The self (*khudi*) asserts Iqbal (1975), is pre-programmed to struggle, challenge, clash and invade other egos for the satisfaction of its natural need, making learning an enjoyable process.

*By the Self the seed of opposition is sown in the world:*

*It imagines itself to be other than itself.*

*It makes from itself the forms of others*

*In order to multiply the pleasure of strife. (p. 106)*

Considering man being the heart and soul of the universe and a co-partner with God in the creative process, Iqbal (1930) insists that every self (*khudi*) must consciously participate in the creation of a new universe, as it is still incomplete and needs enhancement. Referring to the Holy Quran, that God is the best of all the Creators, "*Thus Most Blessed is Allah, the Best of all those that create*" (Al-Mu'Minun:14), Iqbal postulates that God designed human being according to the creative formula, which requires every individual to use his creative will for constructing new worlds overcoming all challenges. Since a human being in his genesis is a '*creative activity*' (Iqbal, 1930, p. 10), he is bound to ascent from one state to another. This obviously determines the entire character of his education. Iqbal aims to develop this awareness to reduce the confusion created by the prevalent school and madrassah systems which have deprived children of creativity. Iqbal in *Bal-i-Jibril* (1990, p. 394) elevates the human spirit by reminding of his creative ascension for which all extraterrestrial bodies are anxiously awaiting:

عروج آدم خاکی کے منتظر ہیں تمام

یہ کہکشاں یہ ستارے یہ نیلگوں افلاک

Quoting various verses from Qur'an on the creation of the universe for man, Iqbal (1930) ponders, "*reflective observation of Nature is to awaken in man the consciousness of that of which Nature is regarded as a symbol*" (p. 12). Appreciating this '*empirical attitude*' (p. 12) of the Qur'an, Iqbal notes that it wants to develop a feeling of love and awe of the ultimate Reality of the Creator in its followers, which made the Muslims, the '*founders of modern science*' (p. 12). Iqbal (1930, p. 11) determines the natural world as the Signs of Creator that leads to spiritual as well as physical advancements:

And it is He who placed for you the stars that you may be guided by them through the darkneses of the land and sea. We have detailed the Signs for people who know. And it is He who produced you from one soul and [gave you] a place of dwelling and of storage.

*“We have detailed the Signs for people who understand. And it is He who sends down rain from the sky, and We produce thereby the growth of all things. We produce from it greenery from which We produce grains arranged in layers. And from the palm trees – of its emerging fruit are clusters hanging low. And [We produce] gardens of grapevines and olives and pomegranates, similar yet varied. Look at [each of] its fruit when it yields and [at] it is ripening. Indeed in that are signs for a people who believe.” (Al-Ana’am 6:97-99)*

Concluding that the essence of man is a creative activity, he must continue to change from one stage to another, Iqbal (1930, p. 11) also ascertains that only this creative self is entitled to the universe which comes into existence due to his creative activity (1990, p. 395):

وہی جہاں ہے ترا جسکو تو کرے پیدا  
یہ سنگ و خشت نہیں جو تری نگاہ میں ہے

Without stimulating this creative aspect, Iqbal (1975) compares such a self with alcohol that takes the shape of the container. A weak khudi ultimately disintegrates. Failing to address the natural urge to challenge the environment for its psychological growth, it loses its individuality and is taken over by a stronger entity:

*Wine is formless because its self is weak;  
It receives a form in favor of the cup.  
Although the cup of wine assumes a form,  
It is indebted to us for its motion. (p. 20)*

In his poem, “طفل شیرخوار” (the milk-fed baby), Iqbal (1990, p. 97) appreciates that every movement of the newborn’s hand and the eye is a manifestation of the spark of desire to explore the secrets of nature. His life is free from the confines of discrimination and thus set to illuminate the flame of desire for various ideals and reveal the mysteries of nature:

تیرا آئینہ تھا آزاد غبار آرزو  
آنکھ کھلتے ہی چمک اٹھا شرار آرزو  
ہاتھ کی جنبش میں طرز دید میں پوشیدہ ہے  
تیری صورت آرزو بھی تیری نوزائیدہ ہے  
زندگانی ہے تری آزاد قید امتیاز  
تیری آنکھوں پر ہویدا ہے مگر قدرت کا راز

Iqbal (1930) believes that the life of khudi lies in its directive function and will- attitudes, and depends upon desires and actions. The more it experiences desires and actions, the more it rises in the scale of life, thus developing the human personality. Furthermore, the continuation of life demands a sense of purpose, for which it is continuously in search of ideals. Iqbal (1975) has motivated the individual to understand the dynamics of life calls for strengthening the khudi by forming desires and continuous action.

*The Self rises, kindles, falls, glows, breathes,  
Burns shines, walks, and flies.  
The spaciousness of Time is its arena,*

*Heaven is a billow of the dust on the road* (p. 19)

In his poem, Saqi Nama in Bal-i-Jibril, Iqbal (1990, p. 45) unravels the secret of life which lies in forming higher ideals, challenging enough to develop their love and desire in self (khudi). As a result, the self is willing to develop a taste for the great effort, activate its potentials and sets itself in action to achieve the ideals.

سمجھتا ہے تو راز ہے زندگی  
فقط ذوق پرواز ہے زندگی

Criticizing the current schooling and madrassah systems, Iqbal (1990), in his poem, “بندی” alleges they deprive pupils to form high ideals; as a result, their individuality (khudi) remains undeveloped (p. 591).

اقبال! یہاں نام نہ لے علم خودی کا  
موزوں نہیں مکتب کے لیے ایسے مقالات  
بہتر ہے کہ بیچارے مولوں کی نظر سے  
پوشیدہ رہیں باز کے احوال و مقامات

Iqbal (1975) terms desire as the origin of ideals, which brings life to the heart and enriches life with its perpetual restlessness. This restlessness is due to great passion and desire to achieve the ideal which leads to new actions, which then results in learning, growth, and changes in the self and environment. Iqbal (1975, p. 24) warns that without the desire, the self becomes a dead entity.

*Desire is a noose for hunting ideals,*

*A binder of the book of deeds.*

*The negation of desire is death to the living,*

*Even as the absence of heat extinguishes the flame.*

Iqbal (1975) has referred khudi as a light that has been gifted to every heart and comprises the physical and spiritual of every man.

*The luminous point whose name is the self*

*Is the life-spark beneath our dust.*

*By Love, it is made more lasting,*

*More living, more burning, more glowing* (p. 28).

Urging on the importance of training and development of individuality, Iqbal (1990) in Zarb-i-Kaleem, stresses on the education of khudi, as only a highly developed khudi is able to maintain the ever-burning flames of desire.

خودی کی پرورش و تربیت پہ ہے موقوف  
کہ مشت خاک میں پیدا ہو آتش ہمہ سوز (p. 588)

Iqbal (1975) establishes that the self (khudi) follows the moral standards set by the ideal and is able to adopt them due to the love for the ideal. Qur'an (Al-Hajj:46) refers to the heart or qalb as the seat of learning. According to Murad (2011), qalb is the center of all feelings, emotions, intentions, motivation, drives, aspirations, remembrance and attention. Iqbal (1930) has



laid great emphasis on the role of qalb in strengthening the khudi. When the faculty of qalb is educated in its intuitive powers, it guides the self to understand the reality of things that are beyond the domain of physical sense perceptions.

*In as much as the life of the universe comes from the power of the self,*

*Life is in proportion to this power.*

*When a drop of water gets the self's lesson by heart,*

*It makes its worthless existence a pearl* (Iqbal, The secrets of the self, 1975, p. 20).

The love of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم is supreme for Muslims and those who took him as an ideal developed their khudi and ruled the world.

*In the Moslem's heart is the home of Muhammad,*

*All our glory is from the name of Muhammad.* (Iqbal, 1975, p. 30)

According to Iqbal (1975), the life of Prophet Muhammad SAW is a true example of assimilative action for Muslims to emulate. A strong ego is achieved by nurturing love, whereas love is the power of assimilative action which rejects inactivity in all its forms.

In order to develop a love for high ideals, Iqbal uses interesting analogies as well. In the poem, "The honey bee", he compares the honey bee with children, honey with knowledge and books with flowers and motivates young children to work hard like a honey bee, love books and pursue knowledge. Iqbal in Waheeduddin (1964, pp. 398-99) states:

یہ علم بھی ایک شہد ہے اور شہد بھی ایسا  
دنیا میں نہیں کوئی شہد اس سے مصفا  
پھولوں کی طرح اپنی کتابوں کو سمجھنا  
چسکا ہو اگر تمکو بھی کچھ علم کے رس کا

Iqbal (1990, p. 368) complains of the school in-charges who keep little falcons busy in mundane affairs, who then are unable to form higher ideals.

شکایت ہے مجھے یارب خداوندان مکتب سے  
سبق شاہیں بچوں کو دے رہے ہیں خاکبازی کا

The process of achieving ideals by the self (*khudi*), as Iqbal (1975) elucidates, is that the invasive self-controls and alters the environment through continuous and ongoing struggle and ultimately controls it by realizing all its potentialities through meaningful activities. According to Ali (2011), this dynamic khudi then becomes a high achiever. Iqbal's concept of an activated ego (*khudi*) as Anwar (2003) describes is that the world stimulates the ego and provides opportunities to form ideals. The khudi then challenges, investigates, pro-creates, creates and ultimately conquers the ideals. During the process, it grows and learns without any limits. Iqbal (1975) ascribes the development in all learning fields, works of art and science, architecture and culture as the manifestation of this creative energy unleashed by khudi.

According to Schimmel (1996), Iqbal believes a human being a dynamic entity. Every irrespective of size wants to express itself, and take itself to a higher level of ego-hood (p. 27). In Bal-i-Jibril, elucidating the power of an awakened self (*khudi*), Iqbal (1990, p. 588) compares it with a sword having a lightning speed, penetrating and splitting the might of every atom.

جس بندہ حق میں کی خودی ہوگئی بیدار  
 شمشیر کی مانند ہے برندہ و براق  
 اس کی نگہ شوخ پہ ہوتی ہے نمودار  
 ہر ذرے میں پوشیدہ ہے جو قوت اشراق

In the poem, چاند اور تارے, a conversation between the moon and stars, Iqbal (1990, p. 146) has stressed that life manifests itself in perpetual motion; a static and inactive life signifies death.

ہے تاب ہے اس جہاں کی ہر شے  
 کہتے ہیں جسے سکوں نہیں ہے  
 اس راہ میں مقام ہے محل ہے  
 پوشیدہ قرار میں اجل ہے

Iqbal (1975) is convinced that without experiential learning activities, the self is unable to grow and survive. Explicating that stability of life depends upon the stability of the self (*khudi*), Iqbal (1975) determines that stability is the outcome of the continuous growth of the self that brings forth its hidden potentialities. Without action and growth, the self remains unaware of its latent abilities. A highly developed personality is, therefore, the manifestation of a strong *khudi* in perpetual action.

*A hundred words are hidden in its essence:*

*Self-affirmation brings not-self to light (p. 16).*

Thus the affirmation of self is only possible in the perpetual search for ideals and their realization through a continuous experiential learning process to achieve excellence. Human-self is programmed for the growth of *khudi* and as such, it is prone to action for continuous development through experiential learning.

*Its flames burned a hundred Abrahams*

*That the lamp of one Muhammad might be lighted.*

*Subject, object, means and causes-*

*All these are forms that it assumes for the purpose of the action (Iqbal, 1975, p. 18).*

Conclusively, learning is much more than mere attainment of a body of concepts; it is the manifestation of self-development.

*The object of science and art is not knowledge,*

*The object of the garden is not the bud and the flower*

*Science is an instrument for the preservation of Life.*

*Science is a means of invigorating the Self.*

*Science and art are servants of Life. (Iqbal, 1975, p. 26)*

During early childhood, Iqbal (1990), in his poem عہد طفلی, maintains that it is natural for the child to be curious in search of the reality of the entities in his environment, as he has not yet accepted external influences. Iqbal cherishes the curiosity of the little infant who gazes at the moon for hours, wondering as it silently trespasses among the clouds; he inquires of the mountains

and deserts that lie within the moon and renders his eyes for observation and lips for conversation. The challenging and curious infant has a heart full of desires to conquer the secrets of the universe (Iqbal, 1990, p. 55).

تکتے رہنا بائے وہ پہروں تلک سوئے قمر  
وہ پھٹے بادل میں بے آواز پیا اسکا سفر  
پوچھنا رہ رہ کے اس کے کوہ و صحرا کی خبر  
اور وہ حیرت دروغ مصلحت آمیز پر  
آنکھ وقف دید تھی، لب مائل گفتار تھا  
دل نہ تھا میرا، سراپا ذوق استفسار تھا

Thus the main role of education according to Iqbal (1975) is to lift human ego to the height where it becomes a “*self-contained exclusive center*” (p. 19) , a highly developed individual, ready to take full responsibility for his whole conduct in this life on the Day of Judgment. Such a khudi is dynamically engaged in self-development. This idea has been endorsed by the Qur'an:

And by the soul and He Who perfected it, then inspired it to understand what is wrong and (what is) right for it. Indeed he succeeds who purifies it, and indeed he fails who corrupts it (91:7-10)

Appreciating the importance of individuality, Ali and Hussein (2017) also bring to focus its national aspect. Without highly developed individuals, nations will remain unaware of the need to fortify their sense of entity, nor will an individual be prepared to face his Creator for self-accountability.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the researcher's attempt to draw Qur'anic learning theory from what Iqbal has stated and from the common observation of the nature of young children, the following points can be highlighted:

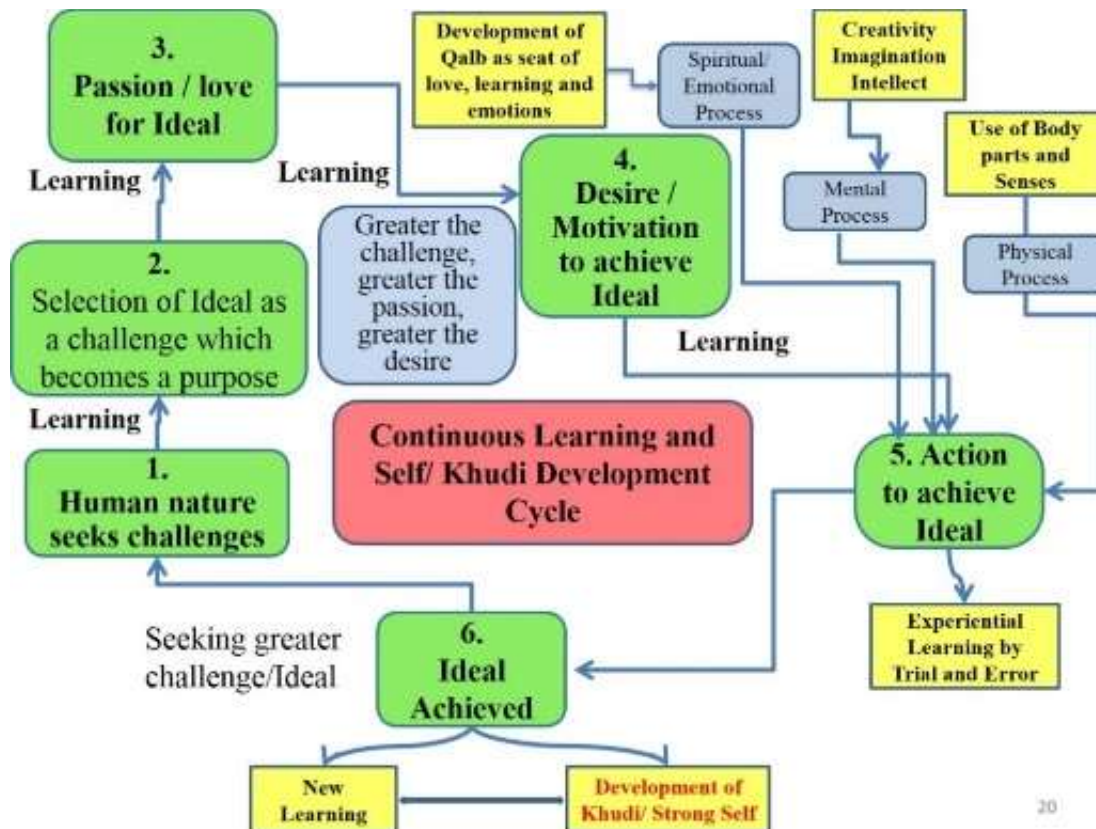
1. The implications drawn from his philosophy of individuality are from the perspective of the natural learning disposition of human beings (Iqbal, 1975).
2. Iqbal has derived all his theories of human development from the Qur'an (Iqbal, 1975).
3. Every individual self has been uniquely designed and positioned in the universe as vicegerent of the Creator endowed with an inherently dominant ability to create and the capacity to shape one's own fate (Iqbal, 1975).
4. *Khudi* is dynamically engaged in self-development. This idea is endorsed by the Qur'an. The continuous process of the growth of '*khudi*' is inherently ingrained in every individual right from birth by the Creator. The process of learning and growth of self begins as the challenging nature of the human self actively desires and searches to form ideals and, the love and desire for ideals developed in the human heart stimulate the self in a series of meaningful activities to achieve these ideals (Iqbal, 1975).
5. Without experiential learning activities, the self is unable to grow and survive. All faculties of senses, intellect, and creativity are the tools to be used for the preservation of life through learning and growth (Iqbal, 1975).
6. Science, art, and culture are the means of invigorating the Self (Iqbal, 1975).

7. During the early childhood period, the young child is naturally curious in search of the reality of the entities in her/ his environment. The child's heart is a bundle of desire for challenge and curiosity, as so far he has not yet accepted any external influences (Iqbal, 1990).

This process of learning and development of individuality is naturally activated in every child unless tampered with an external intervention.

**Figure 1**

*Continuous Learning and Self Development Cycle*



Concluding from the above, the natural human designing for the growth of self follows a cycle. It starts with ideal formation as challenges, love/passion for the ideal leading to motivation/desire to pursue ideals, and practically acting to achieve the ideal. This is ingrained in every young child, as can be observed, it is thus a natural process for the growth of 'Self' or 'Khudi'. Every young child is actively yearning for challenges and pursuing them. Each child is naturally designed to learn and move forward at each step of this cycle, as without learning, there is no movement forward and no self-growth. Therefore, it can be concluded that the main activity of any young child is his/her self-development and s/he is automatically in the mode of learning since birth or even before. This extremely active process can be facilitated to continue or hindered by introducing artificial external intervention as is occurring in the contemporary educational framework.

### Future Recommendations

In the light of above mentioned findings future researches can utilize the following recommendations:

1. In all works of Iqbal, with a focus on his philosophy of khudi to refine the continuous learning cycle and develop subsequent training methods and tools applicable in early childhood education.
2. On child psychology with a new approach to studying natural and Islamic ideas of human nature, individuality, and human self-development to extract aims and objectives for early childhood education.
3. On factors related to Iqbal's learning theory as applicable during early childhood, such as the creative nature of the young child, ideal formation, motivation, development of qalb (heart), learning by observation of natural phenomena as Signs of Creator.
4. On the development of a functional and cost-effective model for early childhood education by policymakers at the implementation level that incorporates Iqbal's ideas as presented in the study.
5. And training on parental and facilitators' awareness of the education of the functions of khudi.

### References

- Ali, M. A. (2011). *An analysis of conceptions and practices of Pakistani educators in private Islamic schools in light of Iqbal's educational philosophy*. Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia.
- Ali, M. A., & Hussein, S. (2017). Iqbal's inferences from the Qur'an: Objectives of developing the individual self. *Journal of Education & Educational Development*, 4(2), 321-345.
- Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Anwar, K. (2015). Kebebasan Manusia Berdasarkan Filsafat Khûdî (Ego/Diri) Muhammad Iqbal. *Al Qodiri: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial dan Keagamaan*, 9(2), 51-66.
- Bento, G., & Dias, G. (2017). The importance of outdoor play for young children's healthy development. *Porto Biomedical Journal*, 2(5), 157-160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pbj.2017.03.003>
- Dewey, J. (1902). *The child and the curriculum (No. 5)*. Chicago: The University of Chicago.
- Gatto, J. T. (2005). *Dumbing us down: The hidden curriculum of compulsory schooling (special collector's edition)*. Gabriola Island, Canada: New Society Publishers.
- Holt, J. (2017). *How children learn*. New York: Da Capo Press.
- Holt, J. C. (1982). *How children fail*. New York: Merloyd Lawrence.
- Iqbal, M. (1930). *The reconstruction of religious thoughts in Islam*. DoDo Press.
- Iqbal, M. (1975). *The secrets of the self*. (R. A. Nicholson, Trans.) Lahore: Ashraf press.
- Iqbal, M. (1953). *The mysteries of selflessness: A philosophical poem*. (A. J. Arberry, Trans.) London: John Murray Publishers Ltd.
- Iqbal, M. (1990). *Kuliyat-i-Iqbal*. (S. Bukhari, Ed.) Lahore: Istaqlal Press.
- Mir, M., & Salierno, V. (2006). *Iqbal*. London: IB Tauris.
- Murad, K. (2011, November 14). *The heart and the Qur'an*. Retrieved November 15, 2018, from <https://www.islamicity.org>: <https://www.islamicity.org/4552/the-heart-and-the-quran/>
- Palmer, R. E. (1969). *Hermeneutics: Interpretation theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*. Evanston. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Rafiuddin, M. (1983). *First principles of education*. Lahore: Iqbal Academy.

- Rafiuddin, M. (2009). *Islam ka nazria-e-taleem*. Lahore: Institute of Islamic culture.
- Robinson, K. (2009). *The Element: How finding your passion changes everything*. New York: Penguin Publishing Group.
- Saiyidain, K. G. (1971). *Language, Life and Education*. South Gujarat University.
- Schimmel, A. M. (1996). *The secrets of creative love: The work of Muhammad Iqbal*. London: Al Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation.
- Tufail, M. M. (1966). *Iqbal's philosophy and education*. Lahore: The Bazm-i-Iqbal.
- Waheeduddin, F. S. (1964). *Rozgar-i-Faqeer*. Lahore: Islami Publishing Company.
- Ward, J. (2012). *Managing data: Content analysis methodology*. Chapel Hill: Unpublished Manuscript, University of North Carolina.

## IQBAL'S HUMAN LEARNING THEORY