

# PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S *ASRAR—I KHUDI*: AN ONTOLOGICAL, EPISTEMOLOGICAL, AND AXIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS



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## Abstract

This study explores the philosophical foundations of Islamic education as articulated in Muhammad Iqbal's seminal work *Asrar-i Khudi*, focusing on ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions. The research aims to reconstruct Iqbal's ideal concept of Islamic education and examine how his philosophical poetry provides a normative framework for spiritual and intellectual development. Adopting a qualitative, text-based hermeneutic approach, this study analyzes seven poems in *Asrar-i Khudi* that explicitly address educational values and concepts. The findings reveal that ontologically, Iqbal envisions education as a process of realizing the self (*khudi*) in harmony with divine reality; epistemologically, he emphasizes critical reasoning, dynamic *ijtihad*, and knowledge integration; and axiologically, he advocates ethical responsibility and moral autonomy as essential educational goals. These results suggest that Iqbal's educational philosophy offers a transformative paradigm that bridges metaphysical depth with practical human development. This study contributes to the discourse on Islamic educational thought by providing a conceptual model grounded in classical philosophy yet responsive to contemporary challenges in Muslim societies.

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi landasan filosofis pendidikan Islam sebagaimana dirumuskan dalam karya monumental Muhammad Iqbal *Asrar-i Khudi*, dengan fokus pada dimensi ontologis, epistemologis, dan aksiologis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merekonstruksi konsep ideal pendidikan Islam menurut Iqbal serta menelaah bagaimana puisi filosofisnya membentuk kerangka normatif bagi pengembangan spiritual dan intelektual. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan hermeneutik berbasis teks dan kualitatif, studi ini menganalisis tujuh puisi dalam *Asrar-i Khudi* yang secara eksplisit membahas nilai dan konsep pendidikan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa secara ontologis, Iqbal memandang pendidikan sebagai proses merealisasikan diri (*khudi*) dalam harmoni dengan realitas ilahi; secara epistemologis, ia menekankan penalaran kritis, *ijtihad* dinamis, dan integrasi pengetahuan; dan secara aksiologis, ia menekankan tanggung jawab etis dan otonomi moral sebagai tujuan utama pendidikan. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa filsafat pendidikan Iqbal menawarkan paradigma transformatif yang menghubungkan kedalaman metafisik dengan pengembangan manusia yang praktis. Studi ini berkontribusi pada diskursus pemikiran pendidikan Islam dengan memberikan model konseptual yang berakar pada filsafat klasik namun responsif terhadap tantangan kontemporer dalam masyarakat Muslim.

## INTRODUCTION

Discussing Islamic education often gives rise to negative impressions, such as backwardness, regression, or lack of clear direction. This perception often arises when Islamic education is faced with the challenges of modernisation and globalisation which are dominated by scientific advances from the West, and when compared with the golden age of Islam in the past. In historical records, Islamic civilisation was the center of world



knowledge from the 8th to the 15th centuries. However, after that period, the glory slowly faded, became stagnant, and even declined until the 21st century (Qifari, 2021).

However, in the situation mentioned above, it does not mean that Islamic education has no possibility of rising. With proper handling, the challenges that come from modernisation and globalisation can actually be useful for boosting the revitalisation of Islamic education. Many contemporary Muslim thinkers are now planning to find solutions by applying modern science to the Islamic education system and structure (Wahyuni et al., 2024). With this effort it is expected to restore the brilliant intellectual dynamics of Islam as in the past and at the same time be relevant to the needs of this era. One of the steps that can be taken is to conduct a philosophical study of Islamic education through the study of the philosophy of Islamic education.

Islamic educational philosophy provides a theoretical basis for determining the right educational approaches, methods, and strategies for Islamic education to achieve the goals of Islamic education itself (Falah, 2017). With a philosophical understanding, educators can be more critical in facing practical challenges in the field, integrating various perspectives of science, morality, and culture, so that education does not only focus on technical skills, but also on character building and critical thinking of students.

The harmony between Muhammad Iqbal's thoughts and the goals of Islamic religious education can be seen from several aspects. First, in Islamic education, humans are seen as creatures who have natural potential that needs to be developed optimally. As in Iqbal's philosophy, humans are expected to be able to actualise *khudi* to achieve a higher degree in life. Second, Islamic education aims to create *insan kamil*, namely humans who have a balance between reason, spirit, and body, which is in line with Iqbal's idea of an ideal human who not only has knowledge, but also has a fighting spirit, strong faith, and a life orientation based on monotheism.

Muhammad Iqbal is known as a great poet and philosopher of the Islamic world whose ideas resonate to this day. Through his philosophical and poetic works such as *Asrar-i Khudi*, *Rumuz-i Bekhudi*, and *Bang-i Dara*, Iqbal voiced the importance of self-awareness (*khudi*), the revival of the Muslim community, and the reconstruction of progressive religious thought. However, there is a clear clash between the ideals of Iqbal's thoughts and the reality of the contemporary world of Islamic education. Iqbal's ideas that contain the spirit of liberation, courage to think, and development of self-potential often face educational practices that are still normative, conservative, and less down-to-earth. Herein lies the main paradox, namely that Iqbal's teachings, which are full of transformational thrust, have not been systematically internalised in Islamic educational practices.

In addition, Iqbal's ideas have so far not been utilised optimally as a theoretical basis in the development of contextual and progressive Islamic education. Contemporary Islamic education discourse still revolves around classical models or repetition of concepts without accommodating the dynamics of modern thought initiated by figures such as Iqbal. In fact, Iqbal offers an educational paradigm that emphasises existential awareness, the search for identity, and the formation of free human beings who are creative and responsible spiritually and socially.

Based on the explanation above, this research is important to conduct because it presents novelty through an integrative approach that connects Iqbal's life and historical experiences with the philosophical and aesthetic dimensions of his poetry, as a medium to explore Islamic religious education (PAI) values. This study raises a novel research question: How can the values of Islamic religious education be philosophically and aesthetically explored through Muhammad Iqbal's poetic expressions in *Asrar-i Khudi*?

Thus, this research not only fills a gap in academic studies by integrating literature and philosophy in educational inquiry, but also contributes to the development of an Islamic education theory that is spiritually rich, contextually grounded, and rooted in the poetic imagination of Islamic thought.

Several previous studies related to this research include Raha Bistara's thesis (Bistara, 2021) entitled "*Mystical Rationality in Muhammad Iqbal's Khudi Philosophy*". Furthermore, Chesy Veronika Saras Wenti's thesis (Wenti, 2022) entitled "Freedom of Will from Muhammad Iqbal's Perspective". Then, Zulkarnain's thesis (Zulkarnain, 2016) entitled "Muhammad Iqbal's Khudi Philosophy and Its Relevance to Contemporary Indonesian Problems". Furthermore, Arsyad Nur Aziz Aji Utomo's thesis (Utomo, 2024) entitled "The Relationship between Art and Religion: A Comparative Study of the Thoughts of Muhammad Iqbal and Theodor Adorno". Finally, Apriana's thesis (Apriana, 2008) entitled "Muhammad Iqbal's Concept of the Islamic State". In contrast to these works, the present article entitled "Exploration of Muhammad Iqbal's Philosophical Dimension of Islamic Education (Ontological, Epistemological, Axiological Study of Muhammad Iqbal's Philosophical Poetry in The Book *Asrar-i Khudi*)" offers a distinctive contribution by analyzing Iqbal's poetic work, *Asrar-i Khudi*, as a primary source to uncover the ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of Islamic education. This approach not only integrates philosophical and literary analysis but also fills a significant gap in previous scholarship, presenting a more holistic understanding of Iqbal's educational vision through his philosophical poetry.

This study aims to find Iqbal's ideal ideas about Islamic education in his philosophical poems reviewed from the ontological, epistemological, and axiological aspects in the book *Asrar-I Khudi*. By dissecting the historical, social, and cultural backgrounds that influenced Iqbal, as well as examining the conception of Islamic education in his poems, this study also explains the conceptual structure of Islamic education within the framework of contemporary Islamic philosophy. The novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary approach that integrates literary analysis and philosophical interpretation to extract values of Islamic religious education (PAI) embedded in Iqbal's poetic language. By treating poetry not only as a literary product but also as a rich source of educational philosophy, this research offers a new perspective in studying Islamic education through the lens of aesthetic experience. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a valuable reference for educators, academics, and Islamic education observers in formulating a holistic educational model that includes aspects of cognition, spirituality, morality, and civility. In addition to tracing Iqbal's historical and conceptual contributions to Islamic education, this research has the potential to inspire the design of Islamic education systems that are spiritually grounded and responsive to contemporary challenges, while bridging Islamic traditions with modern educational transformations.

This article begins by presenting the background and urgency of exploring Muhammad Iqbal's educational thought through his philosophical poetry, especially in the book *Asrar-i Khudi*. It then reviews several previous studies to highlight the research gap and clarify the novelty of using an aesthetic – philosophical approach to Islamic religious education. The next section explains the methodology used to analyse Iqbal's selected poems from ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives. The core of the article discusses the interpretation of each poem in relation to Islamic educational values, followed by a theoretical synthesis of Iqbal's vision of holistic education. Finally,

the article concludes with the implications of these findings for the development of a contextual and transformative Islamic education model today.

This is the description that makes the researcher feel the need to conduct further analysis related to Muhammad Iqbal with all his thoughts related to the philosophical dimension and his literary works.

## MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S IDEAL IDEAS ON ISLAMIC EDUCATION

### 1. Ontological Study

Ontology, etymologically, comes from the Greek language, with the root word 'Ontos' meaning 'that which is' or 'being' and 'Logos' meaning 'science' or 'study'. Aristotle viewed ontology as the study of essence and reality (Ulum & Utami, 2023). The first poem that contains ontological value is entitled "*Showing that the system of the universe originates in the Self, and that the continuation of the life of all individuals depends on strengthening the Self.*" Iqbal in this poem, describes that the entire system of the universe originates from the power of the self, and that all forms of life continuity depend on the extent to which individuals are able to strengthen themselves. In the context of Islamic education, this shows that true education is education that raises self-awareness, fosters inner strength, and guides humans towards their true self-actualisation as caliphs on earth. Education is not just a cognitive or memorisation process, but rather character formation, spiritual strength awakening, and encouragement to act creatively and independently (Lisnawati, 2019) .

The following are verses and explanations regarding Islamic education in the thoughts of Muhammad Iqbal:

*" The form of existence is an effect of the self  
Whatsoever thou seest is a secret of the self..."*

This verse illustrates that everything that exists is a manifestation of self-power. In the context of Islamic education, this emphasises the importance of education that aims to foster students' existential awareness, namely realising their existence and connecting it to the reality of the universe. (Husaini, 2021) .

*"When the self awakens to consciousness,  
It revealed the universe of thought"*

The awakening of self-awareness leads humans to the world of thought. In this context, " self " refers to the human essence that has the potential for consciousness. When the self "awakens" or becomes aware of its existence, then access opens to the universe of thought, namely the world of ideas, reflection, and intellectuality.

*"Self-affirmation brings not-self to light..."*

Self-strengthening gives birth to the ability to understand reality outside of oneself. In education, this illustrates that students who know and understand themselves will be able to recognise and understand their environment and God more deeply. This leads to the concept of ma'rifatullah in Islamic education (Aziz et al., 2020) .

*"Its self-deceptions are the essence of life ;  
Like the rose, it lives by bathing itself in blood."*

Iqbal describes that the process of becoming a true self cannot be separated from sacrifice and struggle. In the journey of life, humans are often trapped in illusions or deceptions of themselves, whether in the form of worldly pleasures, ego, or empty ambitions. However, it is precisely through awareness of these limitations and mistakes that humans can learn and grow.

In the context of Islamic religious education, this poem reflects the reality of the process of forming a true soul. Islam teaches that learning is not only done through books and teachers, but also through life experiences full of tests and trials (Pujianti, 2024).

*"The excuse for this wastefulness and cruelty  
Is the shaping and perfecting of spiritual beauty..."*

For Muhammad Iqbal, education is not just about studying in class or memorising lessons. He views education as a process of forming inner beauty, a long journey that sharpens the soul. According to him, every difficulty that arises in the learning process is not an obstacle, but rather part of the path to spiritual maturity. Spiritual beauty, said Iqbal, is born from struggle, from wounds, from failures that lead humans to know themselves and their God more deeply.

*"Subject, object, means and causes  
They all exist for the purpose of action"*

Iqbal rejected merely theoretical education. He emphasised that all knowledge must lead to action, everything in this world—including humans as actors (subjects), what they do (objects), the tools or facilities they use (means), and the reasons or background for something happening (cause) all have an ultimate goal, namely real action or good deeds. In Islamic education, this is in line with the principle of *'ilm al-nafi'* (Abdirrahman, 2021), knowledge that is useful and practiced, which means that religious knowledge is not enough just to be understood or memorised; it must be brought to life in real actions: such as worship, having noble character, helping others, and contributing to society.

*"It dissolved itself and created the atoms,  
It was scattered for a little while and created the sands."*

Education is a process of decomposition and reassembly of identity. Iqbal describes how the scattered soul must be reassembled to build existential wholeness. In this verse, Iqbal describes the power and creativity of the "self" (*self/khudi*). He says that the self (soul or consciousness) dissolves itself to create particles of life (atoms), and is scattered for a moment to form grains of sand. This shows that from the process of self-sacrifice and transformation, new realities are born, namely life, matter, and even civilisation. Iqbal views *khudi* (self) as the center of human existence. However, *khudi* must be formed, fought for, and refined through experience, education, and spiritual struggle (Utami, 2024).

*"Then it wore off dispersion  
And by re-uniting itself it became the mountains"*

This verse describes the transformation of the soul (*self/khudi*) which previously experienced dispersion, namely a state of being scattered, losing focus or direction and then feeling tired by that state. In that fatigue, he tried to gather himself back together, and from this re-unification process something solid and majestic was born: depicted by mountains. For Iqbal, self-dispersion is a sign of losing the meaning of life. So true education, according to him, must be able to gather human potential back together completely: intellectual, emotional, and spiritual (Puspitasari, 2019).

*"Even though the cup of wine assumes a form,  
It is indebted to us for its motion."*

This verse depicts a profound metaphor: the cup of wine symbolises form, appears tangible, static. However, although it has a beautiful form, its movement depends on

humans, namely on the power of human consciousness and action. In this sense, true value is not only in form, but in the spirit that moves it. Iqbal invites us to understand that the essence of something is not only in its existence, but in its function and movement that comes from the conscious, active, and empowered human soul (Wasya, 2022).

*"The candle too concatenated itself  
And built itself out of atoms"  
"Then it made a practice of melting it away and fleeing from itself  
Until at least it trickled down from its own eye, like tears."*

This poem depicts the existential paradox of humans: forming themselves with great difficulty, but then melting their own existence because they are unable to maintain the meaning and awareness of their identity. Muhammad Iqbal believed that true education must foster a high sense of self-awareness, independence, strength, and connection with God. Iqbal criticised the form of education that only fills the head, but does not ignite the fire in the soul (Usman, 2023). In this verse, the candle that initially formed itself (a positive process) finally melted because it lost its direction and value. This illustrates the dangers of education without spirituality, education that distances humans from themselves and from God.

*"Because the earth is firmly based on self-existence  
The captive moon goes round it perpetually."*

In this verse, Iqbal uses the metaphor of the earth and the moon to explain the power of self-existence (*khudi*). He says that the earth is able to attract and control the moon because the earth has the strength of existence (*self-existence*). In contrast, the moon is described as "captive" bound and orbiting the earth without the power to escape its pull. This verse emphasises that the spiritual and existential power of an entity makes it a center of influence for others (Wasya, 2022). Iqbal shows that a person's existential power will make him a center of influence and gravity. True education makes a person the axis of goodness in society.

The second poem entitled "A Tale of Which the Moral Is That Negation of the Self Is a Doctrine Invented by the Subject Races of Mankind in Order That by This Means They May Sap and Weaken the Character of Their Rules" by Muhammad Iqbal is a profound allegory that depicts a sharp critique of passive ideology, denial of self-identity, and the dangers of education that does not build *Khudi* (self). Iqbal uses the story of the lamb and the tiger to show how power can be paralysed by the ideology of submission wrapped in false morality. This is a critique of the educational and cultural systems that weaken the character of the people, especially in the context of Muslims who were colonised and lost their spirit of independence and inner strength.

The following are verses and explanations regarding Islamic education in the thoughts of Muhammad Iqbal:

*"Paradise is for the weak alone,  
Strength is but a means to perdition."*

This is again the rhetoric of the lamb, equating weakness with the path to heaven. This verse seems paradoxical, as it states that heaven is for the "weak," while strength can be the path to destruction. However, "weak" here does not mean lowly or helpless, but rather humility, meekness, and an awareness of one's limitations before God. In contrast, "strength" in this verse refers to pride, arrogance, and self-sufficiency, which if not properly directed can lead to moral and spiritual downfall.

*"Penury is sweeter than princedom."*

In this verse, Muhammad Iqbal conveys a profound paradoxical value: that poverty (*penury*) in the spiritual and existential sense can be sweeter and more meaningful than worldly power or luxury (*princedom*). Iqbal is not glorifying poverty literally or romantically, but rather emphasising that the simplicity of life lived with self-awareness and piety is often more profound in value than living in luxury that neglects and erodes the soul.

*"Forget thyself, if thou art wise!  
If thou dost not forget thy self, thou art mad."*

This verse is full of existential and Sufi meaning. On the surface, it seems to contradict the concept of "*Khudi*" (identity), which is famous in Iqbal's thought. But in fact, this verse describes an important stage in the human spiritual journey, namely the conquest of the ego (*nafs*). "Forget yourself" means to let go of your ego, throw away arrogance and attachment to the world and false identity. A wise person will let go of egocentrism, and precisely with that, he will gain wisdom and spiritual peace. On the contrary, if someone is unable to transcend his ego, then he will be trapped in worldly madness, ambition, envy, revenge, and emptiness.

*"Close thin eyes, close thin ears, close thin lips,  
That thy thought might reach the lofty sky!"*

This verse contains an invitation to withdraw from the hustle and bustle of the world, to enter into the depths of the soul, and to build true thinking and spiritual strength. Closing the eyes, ears, and mouth is a symbol of avoiding external influences that damage inner concentration, and distancing oneself from misleading visions, vain words, and hearing the noise of the world.

Iqbal encouraged education that was not only cognitive but also contemplative. For him, high thoughts are born from a calm and pure soul. Iqbal believed that inspiration and spiritual awakening could not be achieved through worldly interactions alone, but through inner awareness and dialogue with oneself and God. Iqbal wanted Muslims not to be merely reactive and consumers of information, but to become subjects who create, think, and reflect in an original way and which requires silence, clarity, and introspection.

*"The tigers took kindly to a diet of fodder:  
At length their tigerish nature was broken."*

Iqbal illustrates that the wrong pattern of education can eliminate the natural strength of humans. This verse is a subtle but sharp satire on the education system or lifestyle that is not in accordance with human nature. The lion is a symbol of strength, courage, and leadership. However, when given food that is not in accordance with its nature, namely grass, which is usually eaten by tame animals, then its natural characteristics, strength and courage, eventually disappear.

*"They lost the power of ruling and the resolution to be independent,  
They lost reputation, prestige and fortune."*

This verse describes the decline of a people or nation that has lost the spirit of independence and leadership, thus falling into humiliation and losing everything they once had, be it political power, social honor, or economic and cultural glory. Iqbal uses this as a sharp criticism of the condition of Muslims at that time which, according to him, had been far from the spirit of true Islam: steadfastness of soul, courage to lead,

and independence of thought. True Islamic education according to Iqbal is education that restores the courage and leadership of the people.

*"Spiritual fear robbed them of courage.  
Lack of courage produced a hundred diseases:  
Poverty, pusillanimity, low-mindedness."*

This verse contains a profound reflection on the existential crisis and decline of civilisation. Iqbal states that spiritual fear, namely fear born from the failure to understand the nature of God, self, and the responsibility of life, robs humanity of true courage. As a result of this loss of courage, people are infected with various social and moral diseases such as: Poverty, not only in wealth, but in spirit and ideas. *Pusillanimity*, weakness of the soul or cowardice. *Low-mindedness*, shallow ideals and low enthusiasm for life.

## 2. Epistemological Study

Epistemology originates from the Greek language, derived from *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (theory). Simon Blackburn, in *The Dictionary of Philosophy*, explains that the term epistemology comes from the Greek word *episteme*, meaning knowledge, and *logos*, which means word, discussion, or science. In general, epistemology is a branch of philosophy that discusses the origin, nature, characteristics, and various types of knowledge (Pajriani et al., 2023). The first poem entitled "*Showing That The Life of The Self Comes From Forming Desires and Bringing Them To Birth*" by Muhammad Iqbal is a work full of philosophical and spiritual meaning, which in the context of education, can be interpreted epistemologically, namely, related to the sources and methods of obtaining knowledge in Islamic education. This poem emphasises the importance of desire (*shawq*) and idealism (*maqṣud*) as sources of life and knowledge, and shows that reason and knowledge are the result of human inner drive to realise their deep desires. This is very close to the epistemology of Islamic education according to Iqbal, which is not only based on logic and senses, but also intuitive, spiritual, and creative.

The following are verses and explanations regarding Islamic education in the thoughts of Muhammad Iqbal:

*"Life is latent in seeking,  
Its origin is hidden in desire."*

This verse of poetry is a deep reflection of Muhammad Iqbal's epistemological views which are full of Islamic educational values. Two prominent keywords in this verse are "*seeking*" and "*desire*". In the framework of epistemology, these two concepts are the basis of the process of gaining knowledge which is not only intellectual, but also existential and spiritual.

*"Desire is a noose for hunting ideals,  
A binder of the book of deeds."*

In this stanza, Muhammad Iqbal conveys a very deep view about the nature of desire. Desire, in Iqbal's thinking, is the starting point of a journey of knowledge and charity. He calls desire a "hook" that catches high ideals. However, these ideals do not remain empty dreams. It must be realised in action, becoming part of the "book of good deeds", a record of human actions that reflect the values that he believes in and fights for.

*"Tis desire that enriches life,*

*And the intellect is a child of its womb."*

Here, Iqbal emphasises that reason is born from desire, not the other way around. This means that in Islamic education, reason is not the sole source of truth. In rationalistic Western epistemology, reason is considered the primary source of knowledge (Daulay et al., 2023). But Iqbal, in line with integrative Islamic epistemology, emphasises that natural desire *is* the origin of the search for knowledge and the meaning of life. Desire (as a spiritual dimension) is the mother of knowledge and reason. Iqbal said that "*intellect is a child of its womb*", reason is a product of desire. This is not belittling reason, but affirming that reason works because there is a desire to know. Knowledge is not born from emptiness, but from an existential longing to understand and find meaning.

*"Thought, imagination, feeling, memory, and understanding  
All these are weapons devised for self-preservation  
By him who rides into the battle of Life."*

In this verse, Muhammad Iqbal describes various cognitive and spiritual tools (such as mind, imagination, feelings, memory, and understanding) as epistemological weapons used by humans to maintain and actualise their existence (*khudi*) in the dynamics of life. Iqbal does not see reason alone as the only tool of knowledge, but rather emphasises the unity of cognitive and spiritual functions as part of the complete human experience (Zainah, 2018). Various cognitive abilities are not goals, but tools that emerge because of human existential needs. In Islamic education, this implies that educational methods should not only be theoretical, but must be embedded in life experiences and struggles.

*"Science is an instrument for the preservation of Life,  
Science is a means of establishing the Self."*

This verse displays Iqbal's typical view of science: that science is not just a collection of objective information, but an existential tool that is closely related to the purpose of human life, namely maintaining life and upholding self-existence (*khudi*) (Salimah, 2023). Iqbal rejects the Western view that separates science from the existential purpose of humans. Muhammad Iqbal is in line with this, rejecting the separation between knowledge and values.

*"We live by forming ideals,  
We glow with the sunbeams of desire!"*

This verse contains a philosophical and spiritual meaning that is very typical of Muhammad Iqbal's thinking. It implies that human life finds its true meaning through the process of forming ideals *and* that the existential energy that drives humans to grow and shine comes from noble desires or will (*desire*). Within this framework, Iqbal offers an epistemology that is not only rationalistic but also existential and spiritual, very relevant to Islamic religious education.

*"If thou art an ideal, thou wilt shine as the dawn...  
A destroyer of ancient falsehood,  
Fraught with turmoil, an embodiment of the Last Day."*

For Iqbal, ideals are more than just dreams or goals. Ideals are the most profound things that can shape our character and the way we see the world. Iqbal believes that a meaningful life is a life guided by noble ideals, which give direction, provide a purpose that is more than just worldly achievement. Such ideals not only lead us to truth and

perfection, but also direct us to a deeper search for justice, truth, and higher values in life (Salimah, 2023).

The second poem the poem *"Showing That the Self Is Strengthened by Love"* by Muhammad Iqbal is not only a spiritual poem, but also holds epistemological depth, especially related to the sources and methods of Islamic education. In Iqbal's thinking, education is not just a transfer of knowledge, but a process of forming the soul (*self*) driven by love as epistemological and existential energy.

The following are verses and explanations regarding Islamic education in the thoughts of Muhammad Iqbal:

*"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."*

Iqbal begins with a definition of the self as the existential core of humans. He asserts that love (*mahabbah*) is the main epistemological source that enlivens and strengthens the soul (Nurbaety, 2015) . In the context of Islamic education, love for Allah and the Messenger is a spiritual method that guides humans towards true knowledge (*ma'rifah*).

*"Love instructs it to illuminate the world.  
Love fears neither sword nor dagger.  
Love is not born of water and air and earth.  
Love makes peace and war in the world."*

In Islamic religious education, this verse teaches that education must lead to the formation of individuals who are full of love for Allah and for others (Nurbaety, 2015) . Education that is in line with the principle of divine love will produce individuals who are not only intelligent in knowledge, but also have steadfastness, dare to face life's challenges, and dare to fight for the truth even though they have to face difficulties.

*"In the Moslem's heart is the home of Mohammed,  
All our glory is from the name of Mohammed."*

In Iqbal's epistemology, knowledge is not only about mastering information or theories, but also about building a deep inner relationship with God and with the examples of the prophets, especially the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Iqbal taught that true knowledge can only be obtained when an individual connects himself to high spirituality, which, in this context, the Prophet Muhammad SAW is the centre.

*"He chose the nightly solitude of Mount Hira,  
And he founded a state and laws, and government."*

This verse of the poem conveys a profound message: that knowledge born from spiritual contemplation (*khalwat*) and the enlightenment of revelation is not only important for personal development, but also becomes the foundation for the formation of a just and prosperous society. In Iqbal's view, Islamic religious education cannot stop at memorising or mastering religious material. It must touch the deepest layers of the soul, encouraging each individual to seek and understand divine values in their entirety.

*"He opened the gates of mercy to his enemies,  
He gave to Mecca the message, "No blame shall be laid upon you."*

In Iqbal's epistemology, knowledge is not only related to facts or theoretical information, but also to moral knowledge that includes human values such as compassion, forgiveness, and justice (Utomo, 2024) . This verse reminds us that true

knowledge must be transformative; it not only changes the way we think, but also the way we act and interact with others. The value of rahmah (compassion) as an epistemological and methodological basis. Education in Islam is not built on violence, but on mercy and forgiveness. Iqbal implies that this is the true power in shaping a knowledge society.

*"He burnt clean away distinctions of lineage,  
His fire consumed this trash and rubble.  
We are like a rose with many petals but with one perfume"*

This verse of the poem reflects Muhammad Iqbal's profound views on the equality of humanity and respect for human values that are not limited to social, racial, or hereditary differences. This poem refers to Islamic teachings that emphasise that the noble value of an individual lies not in their background or heredity, but in their faith, good deeds, and noble morals (Pratiwi, 2018). Iqbal rejected the limitation of knowledge based on social class or heredity. All humans are equal in the search for knowledge and truth.

*"The Moslem's being is where he manifests his glory:  
Many a Sinai springs from the dust on his path."*

From an epistemological perspective, this verse teaches that true knowledge in Iqbal's view does not only come from theories or texts contained in books, but more importantly comes from life experiences and the individual's spiritual journey. This knowledge is not just cognitive knowledge, but knowledge that is transformative, knowledge that allows an individual to witness the glory of God in every aspect of their life.

*"Sojourn for a while on the Hira of the heart,  
Abandon yourself and flee to God.  
Strengthened by God, return to yourself  
And break the heads of the Lata and Uzza of sensuality."*

Iqbal's epistemology emphasises that true knowledge is not only obtained through intellectual education or book study, but through a spiritual journey that transforms one's self and life. In the context of this verse, Iqbal suggests to "*sojourn for a while on the Hira of the heart*" which means to dwell for a while in the Cave of Hira, where the Prophet Muhammad SAW received his first revelation. The Cave of Hira is a symbol of a place of solitude full of contemplation, and invites one to reflect deeply to purify the heart and soul.

The third poem the poem "*Showing That When The Self is Strengthened by Love it Gains Dominion Over The Outward and Inward Forces of The Universe*" by Muhammad Iqbal contains a deep spiritual–philosophical meaning, especially in the context of Islamic epistemological studies, namely about the sources and methods of Islamic education according to Iqbal. In this poem, Iqbal emphasises that the "Self" (*khudi*), which is strengthened by love (*mahabbah*) becomes a great tool of spiritual and social transformation and is even able to move the power of the universe, both physically and mentally.

The following are verses and explanations regarding Islamic education in the thoughts of Muhammad Iqbal:

*"When the Self is made strong by Love  
Its power rules the whole world.  
The Heavenly Sage who adorned the sky with stars  
Plucked these buds from the bough of the Self."*

This verse of poetry is a manifestation of Muhammad Iqbal's epistemology that unites love, khudi, and spiritual power as the basis for achieving true knowledge. In Islamic religious education, he invites us to foster a generation that is not only intelligent, but also strong in spirit and in love because only then can the world be reorganised, and humans can carry out the mandate of the caliphate on earth.

*"Its hand becomes God's hand,  
The moon is split by its fingers.  
It is the arbitrator in all the quarrels of the world.  
Its command is obeyed by Darius and Jamshid"*

This verse of the poem illustrates the culmination of Iqbal's epistemology: the self enlightened by God's love becomes the implementer of God's will on earth. In Islamic religious education, this means cultivating a human being whose knowledge is connected to faith, and whose deeds are united with divine love. Only in this way can knowledge become light, not embers; it can split the moon and unite the world, not destroy it. When love strengthens the "Self," it not only becomes united with the divine will, but also becomes an agent of social and cosmic transformation.

*"His young disciple went one day to the bazaar  
The wine of Bu Ali's discourse had turned his head.  
The staff-bearer, drunken with pride,  
Broke his staff on the head of the dervish.  
He came to Bu Ali and complained  
And released the tears from his eyes.  
Take your pen and write a letter  
From a dervish to a sultan!  
The letter of the saint who had access to God  
Caused the monarch to tremble in every limb."*

In Iqbal's epistemology, this emphasises that truth does not always speak through worldly power, but rather through a soul enlightened by the light of God. Thus, Islamic religious education, according to Iqbal, is a process of forming humans who do not submit to worldly arrogance, but stand firm in moral courage and spiritual clarity. This verse strongly displays the epistemological principle of Muhammad Iqbal: that true knowledge is born from a deep inner relationship with God, not merely an accumulation of information (Hidayatullah, 2018).

### 3. Axiological Study

Axiology can be defined as a branch of knowledge that examines the nature of values in general from a philosophical perspective. It is a branch of value theory that discusses the meaning, benefit, and function of an object under study (Wibowo et al., 2024). This poem by Muhammad Iqbal is part of *Asrar-i-Khudi* entitled "Showing That The Education of The Self Has Three Stages: Obedience, Self-Control, And Divine Vicegerency." This work is very relevant to be studied in the context of axiology or the goals and values of Islamic education, especially in Iqbal's thoughts that integrate spirituality, moral greatness, and spiritual leadership as the final result of education.

The following are verses and explanations regarding Islamic education in the thoughts of Muhammad Iqbal:

#### a. Obedience

*"So wilt thou enjoy the best dwelling place, which is with God.  
Endeavor to obey, O headless one!"*

*Liberty is the fruit of compulsion.  
By obedience the man of no worth is made worthy;  
By disobedience his fire is turned to ashes."*

In this verse, Iqbal emphasises that obedience is not in the sense of blind surrender, but in the sense of being conscious and loving is the path to human existential dignity. Islamic religious education in this framework does not merely teach law and morals theoretically, but forms a sense of value, that obedience to Allah is a process of true self – actualisation. It transforms someone who appears lowly into noble, and vice versa, burns a person's potential to ashes if he turns away from divine values (Pratama, 2023).

Iqbal challenges the modern view that worships freedom without direction. In this verse, he writes "*Liberty is the fruit of compulsion.*" That is, true freedom is not unlimited freedom, but the fruit of spiritual and moral discipline. Islamic education, within this axiological framework, must teach that discipline in living within the framework of sharia is the way to true freedom, freedom from lust, from value confusion, and from existential humiliation.

#### b. Self Control

*"He that doesn't command himself  
Becomes a receiver of commands from others...  
One to whom God is as the soul in his body,  
His neck is not bowed before vanity.  
Fear finds no way into his bosom."*

In this verse, Iqbal emphasises that self – command is the essence of true freedom and the glory of life. A person who is unable to control himself will become an object of external control, either by lust, social pressure, or an oppressive system. In the context of Islamic religious education, this emphasises that the main value of education is to form a spiritually autonomous human being, namely one who makes Allah the centre of consciousness and source of strength (Mahmudi et al., 2023).

#### c. Divine vicegerency

*"'Tis sweet to be God's vicegerent in the world  
And exercise sway over the elements.  
God's vicegerent is as the soul of the universe.  
His being is the shadow of the Greatest Name."*

In Islam, humans are given the honour and mandate as khalifatullah fard – ardh, God's representative on earth. Iqbal in this verse mentions that being God's representative is something " *sweet* ", beautiful, and of noble value. Therefore, Islamic religious education must be directed at forming individuals who are aware of their caliphate duties: protecting nature, spreading justice, voicing the truth, and creating a civilisation based on monotheism.

*"He gives a new explanation of Life,  
A new interpretation of this dream.  
His hidden being is Life's mystery,  
The unheard music of Life's harp."*

This verse of Muhammad Iqbal's poem describes the ideal human figure as a person who is able to give new meaning to life, awaken the deepest awareness of the mystery of existence, and become a tone that has never been heard from the harp of life. From the axiological side, namely the values and goals of education, Iqbal's view is very much in line with the spirit of Islamic religious education which not only educates

humans to understand life externally, but also teaches them to interpret life deeply and transcendently.

The third poem entitled *"Showing That The Self is Weakened by Asking"* by Muhammad Iqbal is a sharp criticism of the culture of begging and dependence on others, which according to Iqbal, damages the dignity and values of the formation of *the Self (khudi)*. This poem is very relevant in the axiological study of Islamic education, because it discusses the goals and noble values that should be inherent in the education process, especially in forming a strong, independent, and dignified character.

The following are verses and explanations regarding Islamic education in the thoughts of Muhammad Iqbal:

*"Asking disintegrates the Self  
And deprives of illumination the Sinai bush of the Self."*

In the context of the axiology of Islamic education, Iqbal emphasised that the core of education is not merely the transfer of knowledge, but the formation of a whole, independent, and radiant khudi (true self). Requests or in a broad sense, continuous dependence and hope on other than Allah or other humans are actions that damage the integrity and strength of the self. *"Asking"* here is not just a material request, but a symbol of a passive and non – proactive inferior mentality, something that is contrary to the spirit of Islam which encourages effort, hard work, and determination. Islamic education in Iqbal's view, therefore, must be directed to awakening the inner strength of students so that they are able to stand on their own two feet (*self-reliant*), not become intellectual or spiritual beggars. This kind of educational axiology makes independence not only a practical value, but a spiritual value that glorifies and illuminates life.

*"Seek not your daily bread from the bounty of another.  
Seek not the waves of water from the fountain of the sun."*

In Iqbal's view of the axiology of Islamic education, humans should not live depending on the mercy or help of others to simply survive, like hoping that water will flow from the sun, something that is impossible because that is not where the source comes from. Iqbal uses this metaphor as a sharp satire on the mentality of dependency that actually weakens one's potential and hinders spiritual growth. According to Iqbal, ideal education is not just a process of transferring knowledge, but a process of forming a complete human being who is mentally, spiritually, and economically independent. Education must be able to produce individuals who are responsible for their own lives, who do not easily depend on others, and who are ready to face the reality of life with determination.

*"Do not sully the honour of the pure religion!  
He who swept the rubbish of idols out of the Ka'ba  
Said that God loves a man who earns his living."*

In Iqbal's axiological view, Islamic religious education should not only emphasise aspects of symbolic or ritualistic worship, but must also instil moral values, social responsibility, and a work ethic (Suripto, 2023)s. Iqbal reminded that the Prophet Muhammad SAW, a central figure in Islam who cleansed the Kaaba from idols, also taught the importance of working with one's own hands as a form of worship and devotion to God.

*"Happy the man who thirsts in the sun  
Doesn't crave of Khizr a cup of water!"*

The verse above conveys a profound axiological message in the context of Islamic religious education, especially in forming an independent, steadfast, and integrity-based character. From the perspective of the axiology of Islamic education according to Iqbal, true happiness and glory do not lie in the ease of life or dependence on outside help, but in the inner strength to endure suffering in order to maintain self-esteem and a noble purpose in life (Chasanah, 2024). Education, in this context, must instill the values of courage, patience, and determination to reject shortcuts that weaken personality.

*"Be a man of honor, and like the bubble  
Keep your cup inverted even in the midst of the sea!"*

The verse above contains a deep axiological message, especially related to character formation in Islamic religious education. In this context, Iqbal teaches that a person who is honourable, true, and has integrity must be able to maintain noble values within himself, even though he is surrounded by great challenges and temptations. The metaphor *"like the bubble/Keep the cup inverted even in the midst of the sea"* describes someone who maintains purity and self-respect even though he is in a situation full of negative influences, or an "ocean" that can damage integrity. Like a bubble floating on water, a person who holds on to self-respect will maintain his spiritual and moral values, not being tempted by a world full of temptations..

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Muhammad Iqbal's *Asrar-i Khudi* offers a comprehensive philosophical framework for Islamic education that integrates ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions. Ontologically, Iqbal envisions education as the realization of the Self (*khudi*) in harmony with divine reality, positioning selfhood as the foundation for personal and societal transformation. Epistemologically, his thought emphasizes critical reasoning, dynamic *ijtihad*, and the synthesis of rational and intuitive knowledge, advocating an educational model that nurtures intellectual vitality alongside spiritual depth. Axiologically, Iqbal proposes a moral progression—from obedience to self-control and ultimately divine vicegerency—underscoring ethical responsibility as central to human development. These findings suggest that Iqbal's educational philosophy not only provides metaphysical depth but also a transformative paradigm for contemporary Islamic education, aiming to produce individuals who are intellectually autonomous, ethically grounded, and spiritually empowered.

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