

## A Kierkegaardian Reading of Iqbal's Poetry as a Communicative Act

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**Abstract :** The overall aim of this paper is to present a Kierkegaardian approach to Iqbal's use of literature as a form of communication. Despite belonging to different historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds, the philosophical approaches of Soren Kierkegaard, 'the father of existentialism,' and Muhammad Iqbal 'the spiritual father of Pakistan' present certain parallels. Both Kierkegaard and Iqbal take human existence as the starting point for their reflections, emphasise the subject of becoming genuine religious personalities, and develop a notion of the self. While doing these they both adopt parallel methods, employ literary techniques and poetical forms, and use their literary works as a form of communication. The problem is that Iqbal does not provide a clear account of his method as Kierkegaard does in his works. As a result, Iqbal's literary approach appears to be a collection of contradictions. This is mainly because despite he writes most of his works in the poetical form, he condemns all kinds of art including poetry. Moreover, while attacking on Islamic mysticism, he, at the same time, uses classical literary forms, and a number of traditional mystical, poetic symbols. This paper will argue that the contradictions found in Iqbal's approach are actually a significant part of Iqbal's way of communicating his reader. It is the contention of this paper that with the help of the parallels between the literary and philosophical theories of Kierkegaard and Iqbal, the application of Kierkegaard's method to Iqbal's use of poetry as a communicative act will make it possible to dispel the seeming ambiguities in Iqbal's literary approach. The application of Kierkegaard's theory to Iqbal's literary method will include an analysis of the main principles of Kierkegaard's own literary technique of 'indirect communication,' which is a crucial term of his existentialist philosophy. Second, the clash between what Iqbal's says about art and poetry and what he does will be highlighted in the light of Kierkegaardian theory of indirect communication. It will be argued that Iqbal's literary technique can be considered as a form of 'indirect communication,' and that reading his technique in this way helps on dispelling the contradictions in his approach. It is hoped that this paper will cultivate a dialogue between those who work in the fields of comparative philosophy Kierkegaard studies, existentialism, contemporary Islamic thought, Iqbal studies, and literary criticism.

**Keywords :** comparative philosophy, existentialism, indirect communication, intercultural philosophy, literary communication, Muhammad Iqbal, Soren Kierkegaard

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