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## An Intellectual Comparison of Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Rabindranath Tagore

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### Abstract

*Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Rabindranath Tagore are two most great personalities of literature of All India Sub Continent. The excellence and abilities of these two personalities are beyond exception. Both belonged to the same age and both have almost faced the similar circumstances. Apart from this, both have been brought up in religious and educational environment. That's why we can find similarity up to some extent in their ideologies and thoughts. But because both belonged to different nationalities, the purpose of their writing was also different. That's why conflict in some of their ideologies is also evident from their works. That's why; the purpose of my article is to find similarities and differences between the ideologies and views of these two great personalities.*

**Keywords:** All India Sub Continent, Personalities, Circumstances, Ideologies, Similarity, Conflict.

Allama Iqbal and Tagore remained peerless and influential figures in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century literature. Both were born in the same region and era, with a slight age difference. They lived their lives under the same government, immersed in a religious ambiance. Interestingly, both went to Europe for higher education, where they observed its civilization. They earned acclaim in poetry, leaving an indelible mark. Consequently, they share unintentional similarities, prompting many critics to compare and some to identify differences based on their notions and ideologies.

Iqbal and Tagore were poets of two different languages. Iqbal used Urdu and Persian as mediums to express his philosophical notions, while Tagore used Bengali as a medium to share his spiritual thoughts. However, both not only inspired and gained recognition in the East but also achieved a monumental position in the West, becoming universal figures."

- According to researcher Rehan, both Iqbal and Tagore are recognized figures in Indian literature. Their insightful and thought-provoking creations not only capture the attention of Indians but also provide literary satisfaction for a global audience.
- The translations into Western and Asian languages serve as evidence of this. Their works

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have been translated into English, French, German, and many other languages.

- They were honored with praise and admiration.

Both Iqbal and Tagore share a common admiration and adoration for nature and its vibrant hues. They have vividly depicted the picturesque views of nature in their respective works. The elegance of nature is gloriously buoyant in their poetry. Iqbal's expressions of love for nature are lively instances, exemplified in poems like 'Himalaya,' 'Gul Rangen,' 'Aab-i-kusar,' 'Jugnu,' 'Chand,' etc., which are top-notch examples of his appreciation for the natural world. He paints the image of nature in one of his poems this way

beneath the moon's caress, on a shore washed by whispered waves,  
My burdened heart sought solace, a refuge from shadows and craves.  
The night, a velvet shroud, draped peace upon the rippling sea,  
And I, entranced, questioned if dream or reality kissed me.  
Lulled like babes in the heavens' cradle, the waves, serene and slow,  
Hid a restless undercurrent, where slumbering secrets flow.  
Night's whispers held the birds captive, their songs in darkness bound,  
As constellations, faint embers, in moonlight's spell were wound.  
In this tapestry of stillness, where whispers dance with light,  
My soul finds anchor, adrift in the ocean's boundless might.  
The moon, a silent artist, paints silver on the tide,  
Washing away anxieties, where peace and wonder reside.

Like Iqbal, Tagore also had a sincere recognition for the elegance of nature and entrancement vistas of the natural world. From the get-go, he delved into several turfs, and these initial visits made him a genuine lover and praiser of nature. Therefore, he portrayed the irresistible landscape of nature in his poetry. The crimson of the dawn, the silence of the sea, the indigo sky, flying birds, the shadows of a tree, the grass by the water, and all the beautiful natural views that come into sight are depicted with great elegance in his couplets. An instance can be found in "Gitanjali

the silence of the dawn was broken by the chirping of birds.  
Flowers smiled on the beautiful paths.  
The air spread gold all over the clouds.  
The sun rose.  
The ducks hid in the shade and fell asleep.  
Only the dry leaves flew with us in the heat of the day.  
Sheep herds slept under the dense oak trees, tired.  
It was very hot.  
I stopped by the river and stretched out my tired feet on the ground.  
I stopped and started to rest

"Like Iqbal, Tagore also expressed empathy for the toiling class. He spent some years in Shantiniketan living as a landlord, experiencing directly the conditions and grievance of the working class. Despite being a landlord, he was fully cognizant of the circumstances and problems of the hardworking class, often used to vocal for the rights of poor farmers. Tagore felt profound sympathy for the poor farmers and laborers in rural areas. Therefore, he passionately criticized landlords and capitalists in his poems. An instance can be found in one of his poems where Tagore criticizes the greed of the landlord

Oh, the world,

Within this realm,  
Only those with abundant treasure,  
Crave for more, it seems.  
The monarch's grasp, just and supreme,  
Seizes and takes, without a gleam

Another poem titled 'Akayatan,' Tagore also raised his voice for the rights of farmers and the poor. He wanted the conscious and educated class of the country to step forward to advocate for the rights of the poor farmers and laborers. In a part of the poem, he expresses a desire to hear the voice of a poet who is a companion of the poor farmers and laborers:

Ah, the farmer's comrade,  
In harmony they converse,  
A friend in the field,  
Bound to the earth, immersed.  
A poet's pen may describe,  
With words that enchant and enthrall,  
A kindred spirit, near and dear,  
Whose voice echoes through the sprawl.

Iqbal and Tagore, after witnessing the conditions in India, developed a deep love for their homelands. As a result, both were infused with sentiments of patriotism, humanism, human dignity, freedom, equality, and mutual understanding, along with spirituality, ethical elevation, and broad-heartedness. They both had great objectives before them. Both were desirous of national progress and the strength of the country. Therefore, for the achievement of these objectives, both emphasized mutual unity. For example, Iqbal says

Our faith knows no division, unity we must uphold,  
In Hindustan, our beloved land, together we unfold.

"Iqbal's early poems are brimming with patriotic sentiments. The first poem of Iqbal's initial Urdu poetry collection, 'Bang-e-Dra,' titled 'Himalaya,' is the finest example of patriotic emotions. Please observe the first stanza of the poem:"

O Himalayas, majestic fortress of India's land,  
The heavens gently caress your lofty peaks, so grand  
. Ageless you stand, untouched by time's hand, Forever youthful  
amidst each day's shifting sand.  
To Moses, a vision on Sinai's sacred height,  
To the discerning eye, a wondrous sight

"Rabindranath Tagore, like a true lover of his country, strongly opposed the harsh partition based on nationality or regionalism in India. He vehemently condemned divisions based on race or religion. According to him, the concept of nationality and patriotism meant that all humans should live together without any distinctions of caste, creed, or religion, as one nation in peace. He had no tolerance for bias or sectarianism. Tagore advocated for humanity and spirituality and wished for all people in the world to live together in harmony and love. He saw humanity in humans and gave priority to humanity over religion. Regarding Tagore's humanism, Zakir Hussain writes in the preface of 'Nazr-e-Aqeedat:'

Come, non-Aryans  
come forth, Hindus and Muslims,  
let us unite,

Oh English, join us today, And Brahmins, cleanse your hearts, take flight  
Come, let's hold hands, one and all,  
he was not only inclined to homeland but his heart was brimmed for freedom of the land also,  
in a land where pride soars high  
Where fearless passions never die,  
Where knowledge thrives, thoughts unbound,  
Where traditions in warm sands aren't confined,  
In a land where minds, by your grace, expand,  
Where the homeland shines bright and grand,  
In this heavenly paradise of freedom's embrace,  
Awake us in such a gaze

His heart was filled with love for humanity, and in its vastness, every individual's horizon could be without any discrimination of religion or community. His yearning was not limited to any specific group or class.

However, according to some critics, although Iqbal and Tagore were two big names of the same era, their styles of thinking and theories were different from each other. Tagore's approach was one of tranquility, stability, silence, and beauty in silence. For him, the secrets of life were found in the calmness of nature and its beautiful silence. In contrast, Iqbal believed in continuous movement, struggle, and teaching through action, and he advocated facing the tumultuous events of life through action. According to him, stability and silence were synonymous with death.

Iqbal and Tagore also differed in their ideologies about religion. Iqbal was a strong advocate of Islam, considering it the true religion among all other religions worldwide. His love for Islamic teachings and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is evident in all his theories, and the foundation of all his ideas is based on Islamic and Quranic teachings. On the other hand, despite having a connection with Hinduism, Tagore did not adhere to any specific religious beliefs. He viewed humanity and spirituality as being greater than any religion. His thoughts reflected a belief in humanity and spirituality, transcending the limitations of any particular faith.

Additionally, Iqbal initially expressed patriotic sentiments for the homeland under the influence of nationalistic emotions, continuously singing songs of love for the country. However, as Iqbal's thoughts and ideas matured, a clear and consistent philosophy emerged, deeply rooted in Islamic teachings. Thus, we observe that as his philosophical ideas developed, his theories became distinctly Islamic. This is evident in his life philosophy, the concept of selfhood, the perception of men and women, the concept of nation and nationalism, and other aspects. Ultimately, he raised the slogan of an independent Islamic nation in united India, based on the teachings of Islam.

a nation falls in the realm of religion, without Faith, you are nothing ,  
The missing bond, the stars' absence,  
No mutual attraction, no celestial dance.

In contrast, Tagore, despite initially having patriotic sentiments for the homeland, did not embrace any specific religious beliefs. He had a broader vision that extended beyond the boundaries of any particular group or class. As both thinkers continued to evolve, we witness that Iqbal's thoughts became deeply rooted in Islamic philosophy, whereas Tagore's ideas encompassed a universal and humanistic perspective, free from any particular religious

allegiance.

In conclusion, while Iqbal and Tagore were prominent figures of their time, their philosophical foundations, ideologies, and the evolution of their thoughts marked significant differences between them. Iqbal's theories were firmly grounded in Islamic teachings, advocating for the unity of the Islamic nation and the establishment of an independent Islamic state. On the other hand, Tagore's approach was more universal and humanistic, emphasizing the importance of humanity and spirituality beyond the confines of any specific religion.

While Tagore advocated for social equality and strongly condemned the sectarianism based on nationality or region, his concept of nationality emphasized that all humans, without discrimination of caste, creed, or religion, should live together peacefully under the identity of one nation. For these ideas, Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1913. However, some people objected, suggesting that the award should have been given to Iqbal instead.

The primary reason for the objection was that, in 1913, amidst the destructive wars in Europe, the committee felt that the Nobel Prize should be given to a writer who imparts a lesson of peace, tranquility, and humanity. The impact of a Nobel laureate's writings is felt worldwide, and after reviewing various experts' reports, the committee concluded that the award should not be given to an author who supports specific religious or nationalistic sentiments and is promoting dominance worldwide. Therefore, it seemed impossible for someone like Allama Iqbal, whose poetry predominantly focuses on uplifting the greatness of Islam and Muslims and considering his own nation superior to Western nations, to receive the Nobel Prize. For instance, Iqbal's poetry is primarily centered around reviving the greatness of Islam, and he considers his nation superior to Western nations. Consequently, it was deemed implausible for him to receive the Nobel Prize.

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