



Afghan Psychological Perspectives in the Poetry of Muhammad Iqbal Lahori

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Abstract

This study examines Afghan psychological concepts as reflected in the poetry of Muhammad Iqbal Lahori. The late Iqbal is widely recognized as a leading Eastern intellectual, literary figure, and political thinker. From a psychological standpoint, and in terms of intelligence quotient (IQ), eminent poets and writers such as Iqbal are generally classified among the highest category of gifted or genius individuals. The thought of such figures encompasses complex and far-reaching ideas that demand rigorous analysis and deep reflection across multiple domains of human experience and reality. The primary objective of this research is to identify, explicate, and critically analyze the manifestations of Afghan psychological perspectives in the poetry and intellectual outlook of the late Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal Lahori. The central research problem arises from the fact that the ideas of Eastern thinkers, intellectuals, and scholars have not been adequately or systematically studied. As a result, the rich treasury of their intellectual contributions has remained largely underexplored and, to a considerable extent, undisclosed. Within Iqbal's poetry, alongside other salient dimensions, there are distinctive views and interpretations concerning Afghanistan and the Afghan people that call for comprehensive and multidimensional analysis. The psychological characteristics of Afghans—such as courage, self-awareness, leadership, unity, spirituality, and resilience—are reflected throughout his poetry. A careful analysis of these characteristics provides a deeper understanding and a more comprehensive explanation of the psychological perspectives and collective mindset of the Afghan nation. This study adopts a library-based qualitative research design and employs a descriptive-analytical method. The findings indicate that Allama Iqbal (may Allah have mercy on him) held a special reverence for Afghanistan and the Afghan people and articulated a distinctive analytical and evaluative perspective on them. His reflections in this regard warrant detailed investigation and clarification. Overall, this thematic dimension of Iqbal's thought is of considerable significance for the wider Muslim ummah and, in particular, for Afghans. It therefore merits thorough analysis, nuanced interpretation, and wide dissemination through scholarly publication.

Keywords: Afghans, Afghanistan, Psychology, Poetry, Allama Iqbal.

Introduction

In the study of nations and national identity, social psychology offers specialized and systematic frameworks for understanding and definition. Examining the characteristics, traditions, and cultures of a people is crucial, as such inquiry uncovers the fundamental elements that shape and consolidate national identity—elements whose recognition is essential for any meaningful comprehension of a nation. The Qur'anic conception of human diversity is grounded in the idea of a common human origin. According to Qiamuddin Kashaf's translation of Holy Qur'an in Pashto language, Qur'an 49:13, humanity was created from a single male and female and subsequently organized into nations and tribes for the purpose of mutual recognition and social interaction.

Afghans are regarded as among the most ancient inhabitants of the Asian continent. Findings from various domestic and international researchers indicate that, throughout history, Afghans have lived as a vigilant and distinguished people, possessing their own autonomy and a clearly defined collective identity. Research further shows that Afghans are of Aryan origin and possess a deep-rooted and ancient history. In this connection, the studies of the late Habibi, Kahzad, Parishan Khattak, and other prominent scholars are particularly noteworthy.

While the relative identification of a nation and the delineation of its geographical boundaries are of considerable importance, the psychological identification of a nation is even more critical. This latter dimension focuses on the systematic study of a nation's characteristics, traditions, culture, and social practices, thereby completing the psychological aspect of national identity formation. Researchers employ various theoretical and methodological approaches for such identification. One of the most fundamental and significant sources in this regard is the corpus of reflections offered by thinkers, literary figures, philosophers, and political leaders concerning a given society. Some of these figures formulate their views on the basis of direct experience and lived presence within that society, whereas others present their perspectives through historical research, observation, and interpretive analysis. Taken together, these contributions constitute the substantive foundation of a society's socio-psychological profile and are of high scholarly value.

In the present study, an effort is made to examine the psychological dimensions of Afghan identity as reflected in the poetry of the renowned literary figure and thinker Allama Muhammad Iqbal Lahori. His ideas and perspectives on Afghanistan and the Afghan people are subjected to systematic analysis and interpretation, with the aim of elucidating their implications for understanding Afghan national psychology.

One of the key challenges facing the Afghan nation is the lack of comprehensive psychological research and a systematic understanding of its collective character. In response to this gap, the present article examines Afghan psychological insights in the thought, poetry, and intellectual positions of the late Allama Muhammad Iqbal Lahori (may Allah have mercy on him), with particular attention to his reflections on Afghans and Afghanistan. By critically engaging the perspectives of a distinguished Eastern scholar, intellectual, literary figure, and political thinker, this study offers constructive material for researchers in the social, literary, historical, and psychological fields related to Afghanistan.

The study aims to help Afghans develop a deeper understanding of their identity, historical value, and significance, and to elucidate the broader meaning of their presence in this region. It also seeks to inform the wider Muslim ummah about the distinctive characteristics of this Muslim nation, thereby contributing to a clearer and more accurate picture of its collective identity.

Previous studies have explored Iqbal's views on Afghans, including the extensive work of Muhammad Akram Chughtai in two volumes, a dedicated treatise by the late Bakhtani Sahib, and a doctoral dissertation by Dr. Rafiqi, among others. The book *Iqbal, Afghan and Afghanistan* discusses this subject, examining and analyzing Allama Iqbal's journey to Afghanistan, as well as the arrival of Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi and Masood Raees and their consultations regarding curriculum development in Afghanistan. This book is a highly important work on Muhammad Iqbal Lahori's memories and journey concerning the Afghan people, and it provides a detailed account of the subject in two major volumes. However, the psychological aspects of the Afghan people have not been explained in the book. Similarly, the late Bakhtani Sahib examined this aspect in a monograph published by the Pashto Society of Afghanistan. The late Ustad Gul Pacha Ulfat, who was the president of the society, also wrote the preface to the monograph. The title of the monograph is *Pashtuns in the View of Iqbal*. However, it only presents Iqbal's references to the Pashtuns and does not examine their psychological dimensions. Likewise, Dr. Rafiqi completed a doctoral dissertation on this subject, but the psychological aspect has not been analyzed in his study either. On this basis, it can be stated that These works, however, have largely documented and described Iqbal's views. The present study differentiates itself by offering an explicitly psychological reading, seeking to identify and analyse elements of Afghan social psychology embedded in Iqbal's thought. In doing so, it contributes new material to the field of Afghan social psychology. This study focuses on this question that how does Allama Iqbal employ various metaphors, allusions, and poetic references in his poetry to portray and articulate Afghan psychological perspectives?

Material and Method

This research is library-based and employs a descriptive-analytical and exploratory method. It draws on a wide range of scholarly works on the personality and poetry of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Lahori, with particular emphasis on his views regarding Afghans and Afghanistan. All sources have been critically reviewed and cited in accordance with established academic standards of referencing. Various poems, Ghazals, and other poetic works of the late Lahori have been studied in depth. Both his Urdu and Persian poetry have been examined, after which the sections relevant to the subject of the study have been analyzed and interpreted. His complete collections of Persian and Urdu poetry have also been studied.

Research on poetry differs from other types of research. In this type of study, all the poems of a literary figure need to be examined systematically, after which the passages relevant to the research topic are selected. This process requires considerable effort, time, and precision. Among the methods of content analysis, this approach is effective because it involves the systematic study of the entire body of poetry, followed by discussion and analysis of the relevant content. Therefore, this method has been employed in the present study.

Muhammad Iqbal Lahori

In discussions of the intellectual awakening and renaissance of the modern East, the name of Allama Muhammad Iqbal Lahori (may Allah have mercy on him) is mentioned immediately after that of Allama Sayyid Jamal al-Din Afghani. Iqbal was a penetrating thinker, a profound philosopher, an accomplished literary figure, and a statesman endowed with far-reaching vision. Alongside his formal education, he possessed an exceptional capacity for independent thought and the generation of original ideas (Miyakhail, 2022).

Through a study of Iqbal's works, the reader encounters a vast intellectual landscape: the depths of his philosophy, his diagnosis of the crises of the East, his vision for the Muslim Ummah, and, within this wider horizon, his reflections on Afghan psychology. His poetry unites artistic beauty with a powerful ethical and spiritual message, issuing a compelling call to awakening. In seeking to understand Iqbal, one encounters a rare personality whose ideas aim to revive the heart and conscience, offering a potential remedy for the spiritual lethargy of his time.

Iqbal, often described as the "Eastern genius," was a major philosophical poet of the Indian subcontinent who wrote in both Urdu and Persian. His family embraced Islam in the early eighteenth century and, after experiencing various forms of oppression, migrated to Sialkot, near Lahore. In 1861, his grandfather Muhammad Rafiq purchased a house in the old quarter of Sialkot (Churi Garan), now known as Iqbal Street. There, on 22 February 1873, Iqbal was born to Sheikh Noor Muhammad, known for his piety and modest livelihood through trade, and his wife Imama. The youngest of four sisters and one brother, he later emerged as a distinguished religious scholar, a poet of Islam, a key theorist of Islamic unity, and a devoted lover of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). In the final years of his life, he suffered prolonged illness and was cared for by his elder brother, Ata Muhammad (Hussam, 2019). Iqbal passed away on 19 April 1938 at the age of sixty-four and was buried with special ceremonial honors. His mausoleum preserves several valuable plaques gifted by the government of Afghanistan, regarded as among the world's notable commemorative offerings (Hussam, 2019).

Education and Works

Iqbal's education began, in keeping with local custom, at the mosque, where he first learned the Qur'an. He then attended school in Sialkot and pursued higher studies at college. Under the guidance of his teacher Mir Hasan, he mastered Arabic and Persian and developed a deep appreciation for Islamic culture and literature. For further studies, he moved to Lahore and enrolled at Government College, where he completed his B.A. with distinction and formed an important academic association with Thomas Arnold. He subsequently earned an M.A. in Philosophy and, in 1905, traveled to Europe. At Cambridge he studied philosophy and economics; he then obtained a doctorate from the University of Munich and professional qualifications in economics and political science in London, learning German in a remarkably short period.

As an artist and poet, Iqbal is counted among the foremost poets of Persian and Urdu. Many scholars have described him as the "Poet of Islam," and his poetry is widely regarded as a literary expression of Islamic awakening and renewal. His verse is marked by fluency, metrical harmony, and lyrical depth, offering readers both aesthetic pleasure and intellectual stimulation.

Among his most important works are: *Bang-e-Dara*, *Bal-e-Jibril*, *Zarb-e-Kalim*, *Shikwa* and *Jawab-e-Shikwa*, *Asrar-e-Khudi*, *Rumuz-e-Bekhud*, *Payam-e-Mashriq*, *Javid Nama*, *Zabur-e-Ajam*, *Masnavi-ye Musafir*, *Pas Cheh Bayad Kard Ay Aqwam-e-Mashriq*, and *Armaghan-e-Hijaz*, among others.

Poetry

By virtue of possessing speech and articulated expression, the human being occupies a distinct and privileged position among all living creatures. Allah states: *"He created the human being. He taught him eloquent expression (al-bayān)"* (Qur'an, Surah al-Rahman, 55:3-4).

Translation: "He created the human being, and He taught him expression – speech through which the intentions of the heart are conveyed" (Hay'at, 2010: 1647).

Closely linked to the creation of humankind is the question of the value and significance of human expression. The human being is a speaking creature, and language constitutes a central dimension of human existence. To articulate inner meanings and achieve mutual understanding, people primarily use two forms of discourse: prose and verse (poetry). Both are vehicles of communication, yet the very existence of poetry raises a fundamental question: why are two forms needed, and why is prose alone not sufficient? This question opens an important field of inquiry.

The emergence and persistence of poetry suggest that human beings experience inner states and qualitative nuances that cannot be fully conveyed through prose. If prose were sufficient for all expression, poetry would be unnecessary. Because this need is clearly felt, poetry must be regarded as a vital component in the development and refinement of human language. As Majrouh observes, poetry and literature have played an immensely significant role in history: in epic form, they have stirred martial zeal; in philosophical form, they have inspired intellectual revolutions; and in romantic or hedonistic form, they have encouraged indulgence and negligence (Ulfat, 2013).

In many definitions, poetry is described as a type of speech whose words are beautiful and whose creator unites intellect, knowledge, taste, emotional intensity, and spiritual depth. Eloquent, distinctive, rhythmical language that integrates thought, understanding, aesthetic sensibility, and inner fervor attains the quality of poetry. Here the focus shifts to the heart and soul, understood as a distinct inner realm. From this realm, nourished by aesthetic taste, arises a special kind of rhythmic, evocative, and imaginative discourse that colors thought and satisfies the human need to express inward states – something ordinary prose often fails to achieve.

Poetry thus occupies a different plane from everyday language. It is tied to particular mental and emotional states and does not exert the same attraction at all times or for all people, though its pleasure and impact are rarely denied. Humanity's relationship with poetry is ancient. Even a mother soothing a child to sleep instinctively resorts to rhythmic, melodious speech rather than plain instruction, suggesting a deep connection between poetry, the soul, and the mind. While poetry does not heal the body in a medical sense, it offers spiritual consolation, giving voice to inner experiences that resist prosaic expression. Linguists, critics, philosophers, and thinkers have proposed many definitions of poetry. Ustad Alfai, for example, emphasizes the centrality of heart and mind: from the mind emerge knowledge and philosophy; from the heart, poetry and literature. For Europeans, the heart is the seat of emotion; for Muslims, it is also the locus of faith. The cultivation of emotion is the task of poetry, whose subject matter includes elevated ideas, refined feelings, impressions of the heart, the

echoes of joy and sorrow, the effects of spiritual and physical beauty, and love and affection. The poet must see the world differently from others; the life of poetry lies in originality of thought, while imitation and triviality signify its death. In this sense, poetry is not merely colorful or rhythmic language but the communication of a meaningful message in an aesthetically structured form. Without a message, mere imagery does not meet the definition of true poetry (Alfat, 2013: 86-87).

The essence of poetry is like the human form,

While vivid words are its clothing and ornaments.

Both are indispensable to true verse,

Even when the form itself is charming and fair. (Chughtai, 2019, translated by Jawad Anwari, the author)

The late Sheida argues that poetry requires both substance and form. He likens substance (content) to the structure or body, and form to adornment and attire. When both are aesthetically refined and in harmony, a state of balance is achieved that captures attention and produces artistic appeal. This equilibrium constitutes genuine poetic quality.

The Perspective of Islamic Sharia on Poetry

Poetry may be defined as rhythmic, metered speech with rhyme that exerts a distinctive influence on the heart and stirs human emotions. Poetry was mentioned and recited in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), indicating its recognized impact and significance within the Islamic tradition. he stated: "Poetry is speech; its good is like good speech, and its bad is like bad speech" Narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr and Aisha; authenticated by Al-Albani; source: *Sahih al-Jami'*, no. 3733; grading: authentic.

Allah states in the Holy Qur'an:

"And the poets are followed by the misguided" (Surah al-Shu'ara, 26:224).

Translation: "As for the poets, they are followed by those who have gone astray."

Mufti Muhammad Shafi' (may Allah have mercy on him), citing a narration from *Fath al-Bari*, explains that when the verse on poets was revealed, three renowned poet Companions – 'Abdullah ibn Rawahah, Hassan ibn Thabit, and Ka'b ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with them all) – came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) in tears and said: "O Messenger of Allah, this verse has been revealed, and we also compose poetry." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) instructed them to recite the concluding part of the verse, indicating that their poetry did not serve false or corrupt aims and thus fell under the Qur'anic exception. For this reason, exegetes clarify that the poets condemned at the beginning of the verse are the polytheist poets, whose verses were followed and transmitted by misguided people, rebellious devils, and disobedient jinn.

From this it is clear that poetry, as such, is not prohibited in Islam. Rather, it is judged by its message and purpose: if its content is virtuous and constructive, it is praiseworthy; if it promotes corruption or falsehood, it is blameworthy. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) explicitly appreciated noble poetry and on many occasions listened to the verses of Hassan ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him). Although the Prophet himself did not compose poetry, he is reported to have recited poetic lines during the Battle of the Trench when the Ansar were filled with zeal, further indicating the positive role that rightly guided poetry can play in Islamic life.

Psychology

Psychology is the scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. Etymologically, the term derives from two Greek words: *psycho* (soul or psyche) and *logos* (knowledge or study). In our context, this discipline is referred to as *arwā-pohena* (psychology), *rawān-pohena* (mental studies), *sulūk-pohena* (behavioral studies), *rawān-pezhendana* (psychological cognition), *rawān-shenāsi*, and *‘ilm al-nafs* (the science of the soul) (Safa, 2017, p. 11).

Because comprehensive knowledge of the essence of the soul lies beyond human capacity, psychology does not directly investigate the metaphysical nature of the soul. Instead, it focuses on observable behavior and the inner mental processes that underlie it. In this sense, psychology is the systematic and analytical study of human mental operations and actions (*ibid.*, p. 12).

As a specialized discipline, psychology engages with the complexity of the human being, who is regarded as the most honored creature in the universe. Understanding human behavior and experience requires rigorous, expert analysis and methodical inquiry. Safa notes that “psychology is an essential key to self-knowledge and social understanding” (*ibid.*, p. 12).

Building on this, and within the broader field of social cognition, the present study examines the thought of Allama Iqbal as it pertains to the psychological understanding of Afghan society. His ideas are analyzed and interpreted through the conceptual and methodological framework of social psychology.

Afghan Identity (Afghanity)

Afghanistan is one of the oldest countries in the heart of Asia and has an exceptionally complex history that demands thorough political, cultural, and historical analysis. Afghans—identified by many scholars, on the basis of extensive and well-documented research, as Aryans and among the earliest inhabitants of this region—have preserved distinctive social traits and a strong sense of *khudi* (selfhood) from antiquity to the present.

According to certain traditions, the earliest Aryan civilization arose in the East, and its first king was Yima (Jamshid). Ariana, or the Aryan land, was the ancient name of Afghanistan. From the period before the Avesta—around one thousand years before Christ—until the seventh century CE, this region was known as Ariana. Its frontiers extended eastward to India, northward to the Hindu Kush, southward to the Indian Ocean, and westward to the Caspian Sea. Major regions included Balkh, Takhar, Herat, Khwarazm, Nishapur, Kerman, Kandahar, Baluchistan, Paktia, and others (Shahbazkhel, 2020, p. 18).

In ancient Ariana, an ancient people known as the Aryans were settled. This people had their own traditions, culture, and history, as well as civilized ideas for organizing and managing the affairs of life. Agriculture and animal husbandry were among their important economic activities and contributed significantly to their economic well-being. Their social structure was based on the family and tribe. They practiced marriage and held women in high regard. They managed their affairs through consultation and established tribal *jirgas* at the community level to resolve public problems. At the governmental level, they also held grand *jirgas* to address and resolve major issues.

Mr. Irshad writes: “According to the view of some scholars, the original homeland of the Aryans was the highlands of the Pamirs and the sources of the Amu Darya. When they lived together in one place, they spoke a common language, which they called ‘Arik.’ In

that ancient language, they referred to their region and country as 'Aryana Vaejo,' meaning 'the land of the Aryans,' the homeland of the noble, distinguished, and pure-born. As their population increased, they migrated in different directions and became dispersed toward Europe, India, and Iran. Over time, they developed distinct languages, and the collective term for these languages is Indo-European or Aryan languages. Linguists later divided these languages into two major groups, known as 'Centum' and 'Satem'" (Irshad, 2005: 58).

The first term that we examine and investigate as a possible lexical basis for the authenticity of the Pashto language is the word *Arya-Aryan* itself. This term is very ancient. Historians state that the peoples who spread from the banks of the Amu Darya into Bactria, India, and Iran considered themselves *Aryan*, meaning noble, distinguished, and honorable. When they spread into India, where dark-skinned populations were already living, the Aryans fought against them and drove them back. Just as the Aryans referred to themselves as *Aryan*, meaning noble and honorable, they referred to those tribes as *Asu* or *Dasyu*. Both terms are mentioned in the *Rigveda* (Shahbazkhel, 2020: 18).

Numerous studies have been conducted on the life and practices of the Aryans, and this ancient people has been examined by many historians. Archaeologists and historians have presented numerous examples of their achievements, particularly in relation to their way of life, governance, and social practices. The fact that they established the foundations of an agricultural way of life thousands of years ago and developed various means of improving their living conditions indicates their capabilities and knowledge. Professor Habibullah Rafi states in this regard:

"Five to five and a half thousand years ago, the Aryans settled in the northern parts of Afghanistan. They developed animal husbandry in the green pastures and laid the foundations of Vedic culture. Gradually, alongside animal husbandry, they turned toward agriculture and settled village life. Their material and spiritual culture developed; their pottery, tools, clothing, and other necessities of life improved, and they engaged in new experiments and made new inventions. Vedic literature emerged, and the arts flourished..." (Shahbazkhel, 2020: 30).

During the period when the Aryans were living in the world and establishing the foundations of a civilized way of life, very few nations may have existed elsewhere, and even where such societies existed, comparable evidence concerning the organization and regulation of social life is not readily apparent. Regarding the historical significance of this region, Mr. Ali Ahmad Kohzad writes:

"The civilizations of the Aryans were familiar with and connected to the civilizations of the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, while they also maintained cultural and civilizational exchanges with the civilizations of India and China. Another important reason for these connections is that Afghanistan is geographically linked to the plains and steppes of Transoxiana (Central Asia). This was a region inhabited by humans long before the beginning of recorded history. On the other hand, the histories of northern India and Iran are also closely connected with the history of Afghanistan. In this respect, Afghanistan represents a link that connects these two major civilizational chains. From one side, it transmitted cultural, religious, and civilizational values to the other, and from the other side, it transferred them in the opposite direction. Afghanistan occupies a central position within these interconnected regions. This is why, whether we read the history of India, study the history of Iran, or turn the pages of Central Asian history, these histories remain

incomplete unless we also study Afghan history. Likewise, if they examine their own histories without incorporating Afghanistan's history, the historical picture remains incomplete. In brief, during the period when the urban civilizations of the Indus, Saraswati, and Mesopotamia reached their height, present-day Afghanistan served as a bridge connecting these civilizations" (Kohzad, 2000: 28).

Afghan identity constitutes the national identity of the people of Afghanistan and symbolizes shared cultural values, traditions, and unity across diverse ethnic groups. Rooted in Islam, it emphasizes brotherhood, tolerance, and coexistence among Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, and other communities. The concept of Afghanity has been reinforced over time through historical transformations, foreign invasions, and nation-building processes, in which the synthesis of Islamic and national values has been decisive. The country's official languages, Pashto and Dari, have likewise played a crucial role in strengthening national cohesion.

Despite enduring challenges related to ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences, core Afghan values—religious devotion, attachment to the homeland, hospitality, loyalty, and honor—have remained central to Afghan identity. These values continue to shape everyday life and cultural practices, even amid war, migration, and political upheaval. Afghans have consistently sought to preserve their national identity and cultural distinctiveness, regarding this identity as essential for independence, peace, unity, and progress.

Historically, Afghans have defended their religious and national values with determination. This steadfastness is precisely what Allama Iqbal captures in his concept of *khudi* (selfhood). One reason for Iqbal's deep affinity with Afghans may thus be that they have long acted as guardians of their selfhood.

Social Psychology

Psychology is concerned with the study and investigation of human behavior and conduct. The term *psychology* is derived from two Greek words: *psyche*, meaning soul or mind, and *logy*, meaning knowledge or the study of something. In our language, this discipline is referred to by various terms, including *arwa-pohana* (psychology), *rawan-pohana*, *saluk-pohana* (the study of behavior), *rawan-pe'andana*, *rawan-shanasi*, and *ilm al-nafs* (Safā, 2017: 11).

Since acquiring comprehensive knowledge of the nature of the soul is beyond human capacity, psychology does not investigate, nor can it fully investigate, the essence of the soul itself. Rather, it focuses on human actions and mental processes. In other words, psychology is the scientific and analytical study of human mental processes (ibid., 12).

In brief, psychology can be described as the study of human behavior and conduct. This is a broad and highly significant field because human beings occupy a distinguished position in the universe, and understanding human nature involves many complex issues that require specialized knowledge, systematic analysis, and professional expertise. Psychology is the discipline that addresses these needs. Safā writes: "Psychology is an important key to self-understanding and understanding society" (ibid., 12).

Psychology has numerous branches, one of the most important of which is social psychology. Social psychology examines the habits, culture, conduct, history, and characteristics of people within a particular society. It is a discipline through which the people of a specific geographical region or ethnic group are studied on the basis of their actions, traditions, behavior, and conduct, with the aim of identifying and explaining their

distinctive characteristics. Different nations and ethnic groups possess different characteristics and patterns of behavior. Social psychology provides a framework for understanding these differences and examining the psychological characteristics of different peoples and communities.

In this process of understanding, historical realities and developments, as well as the views and writings of prominent poets, thinkers, and scholars concerning a particular nation, can serve as important sources for understanding its psychological and social characteristics. Accordingly, in the present study, the views of the renowned poet and thinker Muhammad Iqbal Lahori concerning the Afghans have been identified in his poetry and subjected to analysis and interpretation for the purpose of exploring the psychological and social characteristics of the Afghan people.

The findings indicate that Lahori regarded the Afghans as a falcon-like people in temperament and character, and in various passages of his poetry, he praised and portrayed them in relation to leadership, courage, patience, perseverance, and struggle.

Examples from Iqbal's Poetry on Afghanistan

Allama Iqbal is a leading Eastern poet, thinker, and reformer whose artistic and philosophical legacy merits sustained scholarly attention. Known as the poet of awakening and khudi (selfhood) and often called the "Poet of Islam," Iqbal envisioned the establishment of a just, divinely oriented social order and sought to restore Muslims to a position of intellectual and moral leadership. He identified the true basis of human salvation and perfection, and he addressed the dormant Muslim community with passion and urgency, warning against lethargy, aimlessness, and loss of self-respect.

Iqbal invested art with ethical purpose and responsibility. His enduring message, conveyed through highly crafted verse, became a catalyst for Muslim awakening. Writing at a time when Islamic political power and prestige had sharply declined, he recognized that a call to renewal had become indispensable and that the Ummah needed once more to respond to the awakening voice of Sayyid Jamal al-Din Afghani. Iqbal sought to carry forward Afghani's intellectual legacy, presenting Pan-Islamism as the organizing principle of Muslim unity so that the light of justice and brotherhood might again spread across the world – despite the growing obstacles that have made this path increasingly difficult.

In the contemporary context, marked by the absence of Muslim political dominance, the need to revisit and revitalize Iqbal's thought has become even more urgent, both to reawaken the sensibilities of Muslim youth and to strengthen the resolve of sincere believers. In his poetry, Iqbal strongly condemns every form of servitude – of body, thought, and mind. He argues that such bondage has no place in genuine art, for it destroys intellectual capacities and reduces nations to subjugated masses. For Iqbal, the appreciation of beauty presupposes insight and awareness, and true art must dispel despair and breathe new life into the community.

Because Iqbal understood himself as the bearer of an awakening message for the entire Muslim Ummah, it was natural that he would also turn his attention to Afghanistan and the Afghan people as a steadfast and resilient nation within that Ummah. In his verse, Afghanistan often appears under the symbolic names Kohistan or Kohsar (the land of mountains), while Afghans are described as Farzand-e-Kohistan (sons of the mountains). Numerous instances of this symbolism occur in both his Urdu and Persian poetry. The following discussion presents selected examples from Iqbal's works that directly concern Afghanistan and the Afghan people.

Asia is a corporeal body fashioned from water and clay;
 Within that body, the Afghan nation is the heart.
 From its corruption arises the corruption of Asia;
 From its flourishing comes the flourishing of Asia.

(Iqbal, 2003, translated by the author)

In these couplets, taken from a longer poem, Iqbal portrays the Afghans as the “heart of Asia.” Just as the heart governs the body—its life or death determining the body’s survival—Afghanistan, in his view, sustains the vitality of the entire region. This image is not merely rhetorical; it expresses the historical weight and civilizational value Iqbal ascribes to the Afghan nation. By casting Afghans as Asia’s heart, he affirms their central role and presents them as a people endowed with a natural claim to leadership on the continent.

Similarly, in another context, he states:

A land of partridges, yet falcon-natured in spirit;
 Even its gazelles exact tribute from lions.
 Within its skies soar falcons with sharpened claws,
 Whose fierce cry makes the tiger’s body tremble.

(Chughtai, 2019, translated by the author)

Allama Iqbal depicts Afghanistan as a homeland of the brave, endowed with the temperament of the eagle. Through this image, he celebrates both the beauty and the grandeur of the Afghan people, suggesting that their union produces genuine nobility and excellence. He further remarks that the gazelles and wild goats of this land pay homage to its lions; if such deference is shown by the lesser creatures, the stature of the leaders can only be imagined. Through this purposeful hyperbole, Iqbal highlights the aesthetic and regal dimensions of Afghanistan, presenting it as a nation of exceptional dignity and prominence.

Kandahar, that land of paradisaal grace and refinement;
 Its soil is the cherished ground of those endowed with spiritual insight.

(Iqbal, 2003, translated by the author)

The Persian expression *Mino-e-Savad* denotes paradise or a radiant, sacred, and beautiful realm. Poets use it to evoke an ideal, spiritual, or divine space marked by purity, serenity, and inner tranquility. The term *Ahl-e-Del*, employed by Sufi thinkers, refers to mystics and seekers committed to self-purification, for whom the heart is the locus of divine illumination and secrets. It also characterizes those endowed with spiritual insight and an appreciation of inner truths over outward appearances. As Ayubi notes in *Erfan*, “The world is a place of toil, the hereafter is a place of blessings, and the heart is the locus of knowledge” (Ayubi, 1434, p. 271).

Allama Iqbal composed a major poem in praise of Kandahar, from which the cited couplet is drawn in summary form. Given its illustrious history and grandeur, Kandahar is, in his view, fully deserving of such exalted praise. It embodies the power and majesty of Islamic and Afghan sovereignty and functions as a homeland of mystics and devout individuals. Its inhabitants display a distinctive combination of royal dignity and spiritual austerity: they are upright in conduct, few in words, industrious, content, self-reliant, courageous, and generous. These traits resonated with Iqbal’s elevated imagination and philosophical vision, enabling him to employ rare and intricate metaphors in their honor.

Consistent with this portrayal, Iqbal maintained that Afghans would realize their true aspirations only by fortifying the foundations of their *Khudi* (selfhood).

O morning breeze, convey my message to the Afghan highlands:

The nation that attains its destination is the one that possesses self-awareness.

(Chughtai, 2019, translated by the author)

Allama Iqbal's conception of Afghan selfhood (*khudi*) arose from his intuitive and visionary reading of Afghan history and character. He perceived this nation with unusual depth and anticipated that its eventual victories would restore Afghan dignity and independence. The later collapse of communism, the defeat of the Soviet invasion, and subsequent setbacks experienced by NATO and secularist projects can be read as historical events that, in retrospect, resonate with Iqbal's almost prophetic insight into the Afghan spirit. For him, such developments would have appeared as confirmations of his inspired understanding and his analytical engagement with Afghanistan's past.

Iqbal's reflections on Afghans are notably profound. Although he spoke primarily on behalf of the broader Muslim *Ummah* and consistently championed transnational Islamic solidarity, he felt compelled—because of certain distinctive virtues—to single out the Afghan Muslim nation for particular admiration. After addressing the *Ummah* as a whole, he devotes a significant part of his commentary to Afghanistan, expressing deep respect for its history and unique moral and spiritual qualities.

In his Urdu poem *Mehrab Gul Afghan*, Iqbal identifies several defining traits of the Afghan nation. For reasons of brevity, only two translated couplets are cited here:

He stands as the guardian of the purposes of Nature—

Whether a man of the desert or a dweller of the mountains.

(Iqbal, n.d., translated by the author)

Iqbal states that the protection and preservation of the purposes of *fitrah* (innate disposition) are undertaken by two types of people: the dwellers of the deserts and the dwellers of the mountains. By “purposes of *fitrah*,” he refers to the fundamental objectives of Islam.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, as narrated by Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) in *Sahih al-Bukhari*:

(Here the continuation of the hadith would be inserted, for example, the well-known narration that every child is born upon *fitrah* and that the parents then shape the child's religious identity.)

In this context, Iqbal suggests that certain communities—symbolized by desert and mountain dwellers—act as custodians of divine and natural purposes. By preserving the moral, spiritual, and social values of Islam, they safeguard the integrity of the *fitrah* on which human beings have been created.

Al-Bukhari relates in his *Sahih*, on the authority of Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “Every child is born upon *fitrah* (innate disposition), but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian. Just as animals give birth to their kind—do you see any defect among them?” Likewise, *Sahih Muslim* records: “There is no child except that he is born upon *fitrah*.” The Prophet then recited: “The *fitrah* of Allah upon which He has created mankind—there is no altering the creation of Allah; that is the upright religion.”

Iqbal's reflections on the guardianship of *fitrah* are grounded in this theological foundation: humans are created in their essential nature aligned with Islam, and this

innate disposition must be safeguarded. In his view, Afghans appear particularly well suited to uphold and protect this primordial human nature.

Iqbal's poem *Mihrab Gul Afghan* was rendered into Pashto verse by the late Syed Taqweem-ul-Haq Kakakhel. In this work, Iqbal articulates his vision of the Afghan future, stressing that their destiny is bound up with that of Asia and, more specifically, the Muslim world. "Mihrab Gul Afghan" is a symbolic figure, representing any Afghan endowed with spiritual strength, piety, courage, insight, humility, aspiration for Islamic governance, *khudi* (selfhood), and an elevated imaginative and intellectual outlook.

Some scholars claim that by "the people of the desert" Iqbal means the Arabs, and by "the people of the mountains" he refers to the Afghans. Yet, his other poems suggest that he often treats both desert and mountain dwellers as Afghans. For instance, in one Persian poem he writes:

A nation wandering through mountains and plains,
Within whose veins and blood the vigor of lions surges.
Wise, iron-bodied, and radiant of brow,
With eyes sharp-sighted like hunting falcons.
From its vitality arises the vitality of the homeland,
Even its ten-year-old child stands as a warrior.

(Chughtai, 2019, translated by the author)

This long poem can only be partially cited here, but even a few couplets are enough to show Iqbal's view of the Afghans. He uses elevated and striking metaphors, describing the mountain people as having the blood of lions in their veins and suggesting that even a ten-year-old child among them could lead an army. He presents Afghanistan as the "heart" of Asia, formed from its soil and water: when this heart is at peace, Asia is at peace; when it is disturbed, the continent is unsettled. Mr. Habibi writes: "The history of civilization in Afghanistan dates back to ancient times, beginning with the Vedic period, around 1400 BCE, and continuing thereafter into the Avestan period, around 1200 BCE. During this period, the Aryan people in Balkh gradually transitioned from a nomadic and pastoral way of life to settled urban life and civilization" (Habibi, 1999: 43).

At the same time, Iqbal identifies a major weakness: the lack of central organization, likening Afghan affairs to prayers performed without an imam. Even in summary, his poetry yields a wide range of meanings, but overall he portrays the Afghans as the guardians of Asia, without whom the continent would have fallen under foreign domination.

History appears to support this view. The Afghans fiercely resisted Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, the Mughals, and the British. After British rule, when Asia faced the threat of communism, Afghan resistance again played a decisive role. Later, NATO, led by the United States, entered the region seeking strategic control of Asia through Afghanistan, but, according to this perspective, Afghan sacrifices once more shielded the continent from external domination.

Iqbal's asserts that the life of the East depends upon the life of the Afghans"), is particularly significant and calls for comprehensive scholarly investigation by researchers and historians. Elsewhere, in his deep analysis of the characteristics of the Afghans, he remarks:

One is absorbed in prostration, while the other remains standing;
Their affairs resemble a prayer performed without an imam.

(Chughtai, 2019, translated by the author)

Alongside his praise of the Afghans, Iqbal stresses that the presence of an imam—strong and legitimate leadership—is vital for national cohesion and effective governance. History shows that whenever Afghans have been divided, they have become vulnerable to foreign intrigue and invasion. By contrast, when united under a single imam, they have achieved decisive victories and played a major role in safeguarding the wider Muslim community. An example of this can be seen in:

O heedless Afghan!

Rumi has changed, Shami has changed, India has changed;
You too, O son of the mountains, recognize your own selfhood.

(Iqbal, 1935, pp. 13–14)

O heedless Afghan!

Seasons are favorable, water is abundant, and the soil is fertile;
If you do not cultivate your field, what kind of farmer are you?
Recognize your own selfhood.

(Iqbal, 1935, pp. 13–14)

From these examples, Allama Iqbal's understanding of the Afghan people becomes clear. In his Urdu poem "O Neglectful Afghan," he addresses Afghans directly throughout, recalling their historical glory and past empires. He reminds the modern, dormant Afghan that he is the heir to a great civilizational legacy and urges him to abandon negligence, cultivate self-awareness, and develop a strong sense of national consciousness. The following poem is about Afghans, as Iqbal says:

The tomb of that clear-sighted sovereign
From whose inner vision a nation took form;
The vault of his grave is regarded as heaven's sanctuary,
And from its radiance the face of the sun is illumined.
Like a conquering, battle-breaking commander,
He struck coin in the realm of speech itself.
He bestowed upon a nation the taste for inquiry,
While celestial beings chant glorification upon his dust.
Through the generosity of heart and hand that he possessed,
He conquered kingdoms yet relinquished them without attachment.
A man of subtle perception, mystic insight, and the sword,
His pure spirit has entered my poetic discourse.

(Iqbal, 2003, translated by the author)

In this poem and related works, Allama Iqbal offers a nuanced appraisal of Ahmad Shah Abdali, depicting him as a great conqueror and a hero of Islam. Alongside his courage, military skill, and strategic acumen, Iqbal emphasizes Abdali's perceptive and spiritually enlightened character. These dimensions, together with other notable virtues, form the core of Iqbal's praise. For Iqbal, knowledge, courage, and asceticism are the defining qualities of Muslim leadership and the essential conditions for genuine success. Regarding the late Ahmad Shah Baba, he states that, through his efforts, a nation was established. He describes him as a man endowed with a generous and noble heart and a capable hand, qualities that gave him great influence and authority. With determination, he overcame

powerful kingdoms and established the Afghan Empire. This represents a reference to a historical reality and examines Afghan characteristics as manifested in Ahmad Shah Baba in his role as the ruler and leader of the Afghans. In this way, the psychological perspective of the Afghan people is clearly and effectively illustrated.

On the same basis, particular attention is given to Sayyid Jamal al-Din Afghan (may he rest in peace), the renowned Afghan intellectual and exemplary freedom fighter who taught the world the principles of the struggle for freedom and awakening. He is widely recognized for his intellectual influence and tireless struggle, and his intellectual contributions and activism have been highly regarded. Lahori was deeply influenced by this prominent figure and composed numerous poems in his honor. In the following section, a short poem by Lahori is selected for analysis.

Iqbal's poem about Sayed Jamludding Afghan:

Even stone and clay are animated by his discourse.

There remains still a world hidden within our breast,

A world still awaiting its awakening.

A world without distinction of blood and color,

Whose night is brighter than the dawn of the West.

(Chughtai, 2019, translated by the author)

In a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, Allama Iqbal offers a distinctive assessment of Syed Jamaluddin Afghan. He describes Jamaluddin as a unique figure and notes that some of the most advanced Muslims of the modern era in religious thought and practice emerged from Afghanistan. Jamaluddin, he writes, mastered the major languages of the Islamic world and was renowned for his eloquence. His restless spirit led him across Muslim lands, where he influenced leading intellectuals and future political figures in Iran, Egypt, and Turkey. Among those shaped by him were prominent scholars such as Mufti Muhammad Abduh and later political leaders like Egypt's Saad Zaghloul. Although Jamaluddin wrote relatively little, Iqbal emphasizes the depth of his spoken word, through which he cultivated "little Jamaluddins" among his close associates (Miyakhail, 2017, p. 52). Iqbal's admiration is further evident in a long poem – translated into Pashto by Hamza Baba (mercy be upon him) – which also reflects his high regard for Syed Jamaluddin Afghan.

Iqbal's poem for Khushal Baba

Blessed is that poet who knows the Afghan spiri

One who sees clearly and speaks without fear.

The sage of the Afghan nation,

The physician of the Afghan condition.

He saw the secret of the nation and declared it fearlessly,

Speaking truth with a playful, candid frankness

If the free Afghan finds a camel,

Even with a Buraq, provisions, and a loaded caravan,

His low ambition from that laden caravan

Is satisfied merely with the bell of a camel.

(Chughtai, 2019, translated by the author)

In this poem, Allama Iqbal offers a concise yet comprehensive assessment of Khushal Baba's intellectual and moral outlook. He portrays Khushal as a fearless spokesman for his people, articulating their condition and aspirations without hesitation or fear. Because of

the guidance Khushal provided to the Afghans, Iqbal characterizes him as a sage of the Afghan nation whose actions are marked by wisdom and principled leadership. Khushal's wit, courage, and freedom from intimidation are highlighted as central features of both his character and his thought.

In another context, following the defeat of British rule in Afghanistan and the accession of Ghazi Amanullah Khan, Iqbal dedicated his poetic collection *Payam-i-Mashriq* to the new ruler. By presenting this work to Amanullah, he symbolically aligned Afghanistan's political independence with a broader intellectual and spiritual renewal in the Muslim East.

In our religion, true sovereignty lies in service,
It is the justice of 'Umar and the ascetic poverty of 'Alī.
Amid the tumult of worldly and religious affairs,
Withdraw for a moment into solitude with your own heart.
Whoever sits even briefly in ambush within himself,
No prey can escape from his snare.

(Chughtai, 2019, translated by the author)

In these verses, Allama Iqbal reminds Ghazi Amanullah Khan that, in Islam, genuine leadership is defined by service to the Muslim community. He urges the ruler to model himself on the justice of Umar al-Farooq (RA) and the piety and integrity of Hazrat Ali (RA), arguing that these are the essential virtues of responsible governance. Iqbal further emphasizes that, alongside active statecraft, a Muslim leader must cultivate moments of solitude and self-reflection; through such contemplation, one comes to know oneself and is less likely to deviate from one's mission. Even beneath royal robes and the crown of authority, the ruler, he insists, should practice humility and ascetic discipline, remain spiritually vigilant, and sustain a constant awareness of and devotion to Allah.

Maintain both the sovereignty of the sword and the humility of the dervish;

Both are pearls drawn from the ocean of "Lā ilāha."

Poverty (faqr) and kingship are gifts of the Prophet,

They are manifestations of the essence of Muṣṭafā.

(Rajabzadeh, 2007, translated by the author)

Iqbal argues that the true essence of sovereignty in Islam lies in uniting force and ascetic discipline, both grounded in the creed of *lā ilāha illā Allāh*. For the believer who recognizes no deity but Allah, the "sword" symbolizes the duty to resist tyranny, while "poverty" or asceticism represents moral self-restraint even in positions of power. Iqbal presents this combination as part of the prophetic inheritance of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), whose legacy encompasses both *sajdah* (prostration) and *qiyām* (steadfast devotion). It is this fusion of inner renunciation, struggle, and hopeful endurance with the very substance of one's life that, for Iqbal, constitutes genuine dignity and honor.

Endure your soul with continual hardship and patience;

Strive in the cultivation of the noble Afghan spirit.

So that you may become among the truthful of this community,

And for religion, become a source of strength and capital.

(Chughtai, 2019, Vol. 1, p. 468, translated by the author)

Iqbal (may Allah have mercy on him) calls on Amanullah Khan to devote himself to the full development of the Afghan nation and to harness its strength in service of the wider Muslim community. He envisions the Afghans as a proud and honorable people who, if

properly cultivated, can become a pivotal force for the renewal and salvation of the Muslim Ummah.

Iqbal's poem for Nader Shah continues this broader reflection on Afghan leadership and its role in the destiny of the Islamic world.

Nadir Shah, the Afghan ruler who lived as a dervish,

May Allah's mercy be upon his pure soul.

The nation's affairs were strengthened by his wisdom,

And his sword was the guardian of the true religion.

(Chughtai, 2019, translated by the author)

Afghan Psychological Aspects in Iqbal's Poetry

Allama Iqbal's poetry on Afghan historical figures, the Afghan nation, and Afghanistan reveals a sustained and nuanced psychological vision of the Afghans. He was acutely aware of their heroic and ancient past and discerned in their very appearance signs of leadership and potential for the salvation of the Muslim Ummah. For Iqbal, Afghans – shaped by mountains and deserts – are especially capable of preserving the demands of *fitrah* (innate disposition), which he understands as closely aligned with the aims of Islam.

Iqbal thus presents the Afghans as a “savior nation” of Asia, endowed with military leadership, guidance, courage, spiritual resilience, and an eagle-like temperament. Each of these traits is psychologically rich and applicable both to individual Afghan character and to the social psychology of the nation. In particular, he likens Afghans to the eagle and identifies four central attributes: high flight, broad vision, asceticism, and solitude (Miyakhil, 1401: 58). High flight symbolizes striving for lofty goals; broad vision signifies foresight and expansive thinking; asceticism suggests leadership free of self-interest – the eagle builds no nest for itself; and solitude evokes deep reflection, creativity, and self-confidence. Iqbal interprets the eagle's solitary flight as a sign of courage and contemplative strength, qualities he sees embodied in the Afghan people and celebrates in a highly elevated poetic style.

Conclusion

This study has examined Afghan-oriented psychological dimensions in the poetry and thought of Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal Lahori. The analysis shows that Iqbal repeatedly characterizes Afghans as eagle-natured, possessing high aspiration, broad vision, ascetic discipline, and a capacity for fruitful solitude. He also identifies strong spiritual and mystical tendencies among Afghans, viewing their land as a space of realization for the spiritually elect (*Ahl-e-dil*, *Ahl-e-Allah*). Iqbal's treatment of key Afghan figures – such as Ahmad Shah Baba, Syed Jamaluddin Afghan, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, Khushal Baba, Maulana Balkhi, Amanullah Khan, and Nader Shah – demonstrates profound admiration and a belief in Afghanistan's historical and spiritual vocation. In works like *Mihrab Gul Afghan*, he symbolically defines the Afghan nation as the bearer of its highest qualities. Central to this vision is Iqbal's counsel that Afghans should realize their *khudi* (selfhood) and preserve unity and solidarity. Under the leadership of a genuine *Imam*, he suggests, they could address the wider crises of the Muslim Ummah and contribute decisively to the liberation of Asia's Muslims. These Afghan-focused psychological insights in Iqbal's oeuvre constitute a significant field of inquiry for the broader Muslim community – and especially for Afghans – and warrant continued scholarly attention and dissemination.

In Iqbal's own words, this reflects the culmination of the study: "Afghans remain, the mountains remain; Judgment belongs to Allah, sovereignty belongs to Allah." (Chughtai, 1398, translated by the author)

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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