

**Journal of Religion & Society (JR&S)**

Available Online:

<https://islamicreligious.com/index.php/Journal/index>

Print ISSN: 3006-1296 Online ISSN: 3006-130X

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)

---

**Iqbal's Vision of Spiritual Selfhood and the Ethical Challenges of Transhumanist Education Futures**

**Fakhar-Ul-Zaman**

Visiting Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Narowal,  
Punjab, Pakistan

[malikfakhar717@gmail.com](mailto:malikfakhar717@gmail.com)

**Rabiya Javaid**

Student of BS Education, University of Narowal, Punjab, Pakistan

[rabiyajavaid10@gmail.com](mailto:rabiyajavaid10@gmail.com)

**Nazash Parvaiz**

Student of BS Education, University of Narowal, Punjab, Pakistan

[nazashparvaiz@gmail.com](mailto:nazashparvaiz@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

*Education systems increasingly embrace transhumanist ideals such as artificial intelligence, cognitive enhancement, and genetic modification they risk sidelining the spiritual, ethical, and cultural aspects of human development. This is particularly critical in non-Western contexts like Pakistan, where education has traditionally been intertwined with religious, philosophical, and ethical foundations. This study addresses this tension by exploring how Allama Iqbal's vision of spiritual selfhood can provide a counter-narrative to the ethical void and existential concerns found in transhumanist educational futures. The research aimed to: (1) explore Iqbal's concept of Khudi (selfhood) and its philosophical roots, (2) critically analyze the ethical assumptions within transhumanist educational discourse, and (3) examine whether Iqbal's thought challenges or complements these models. A qualitative interpretive design was used, grounded in philosophical inquiry and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Data were collected through secondary sources, including textual analysis of Iqbal's works *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, *Bang-e-Dra*, *Bal-e-Jibril*, and *Zarb-e-Kalim* and content analysis of major transhumanist literature by thinkers like Bostrom, More, Vita-More, and Peters. Data were coded thematically into three categories: (1) philosophical themes in Iqbal's selfhood, (2) ethical assumptions in transhumanist discourse, and (3) points of convergence and conflict between the two. A purposive sample of 20 key sources was selected. Findings reveal that Iqbal's emphasis on spiritual agency, moral responsibility, and purposeful autonomy offers an ethical framework capable of grounding educational futures in values beyond technological progress. The study encourages integrating indigenous philosophical thought to balance innovation with ethical-spiritual growth*

**Keywords:** *Iqbal's Vision, Spiritual Selfhood, Ethical Challenges, Transhumanist Education Futures*

## Introduction

In the 21st century, education is undergoing a paradigmatic transformation driven by the exponential rise of technological innovations such as artificial intelligence (AI), biotechnology, neural interfaces, genetic engineering, and brain-computer integration. These innovations are not only reshaping the methods of instruction and curriculum delivery but are also challenging traditional notions of human identity, cognition, and development. Within this context, transhumanism has emerged as a powerful futuristic ideology that envisions the transcendence of human biological limitations through technological enhancement (Bostrom, 2005; More & Vita-More, 2013). Educational theorists inspired by transhumanism increasingly advocate for AI-integrated, posthuman, and performance-maximizing learning environments, where the line between human intelligence and artificial augmentation becomes indistinct. However, such aspirations raise profound ethical and philosophical questions, particularly in societies where spiritual, moral, and religious values remain foundational to educational thinking. As the field of education moves toward a technologically integrated future, the human being risks becoming viewed primarily as a machine to be optimized, rather than as a spiritual, moral, and self-aware entity. This instrumental view of human learning and development invites scrutiny from alternate worldviews particularly those rooted in Eastern or Islamic philosophical traditions.

In this context, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, one of the most influential Muslim philosophers and poets of the 20th century, offers a compelling and deeply relevant perspective. Iqbal's concept of "Khudi" (selfhood) is a rich spiritual-philosophical framework that centers the individual as a morally responsible, self-aware, and divinely connected being (Iqbal, 1930). Unlike transhumanist ideologies that seek to reengineer the body and mind through technological means, Iqbal's thought emphasizes inner transformation, moral cultivation, and spiritual elevation through self-realization, freedom, struggle (jihad-e-akbar), and divine love. For Iqbal, the goal of education is not mere efficiency or information acquisition, but rather the awakening of the self to its ultimate purpose in connection with the Creator.

This study situates itself at the intersection of these two contrasting visions—transhumanist educational futures and Iqbal's vision of spiritual selfhood. It aims to explore how Iqbal's philosophical and poetic framework challenges the ethical assumptions underpinning transhumanist education, while also asking whether any meaningful synthesis or dialogue can exist between the two. The research engages in a critical-philosophical discourse analysis to interrogate how emerging educational technologies

may either erode or be redirected by spiritual philosophies like that of Iqbal's.

### **1.1 Problem of Statement**

As educational systems increasingly adopt transhumanist values such as cognitive augmentation through AI, enhancement of learning efficiency, and even genetic modification for intellectual improvement they risk sidelining or eroding the spiritual, ethical, and cultural dimensions of human development. In countries like Pakistan and many other non-Western contexts, where education is historically intertwined with religious, ethical, and philosophical traditions, this raises a pressing issue: how should such societies respond to the promises and perils of transhumanist education? While there is a growing body of literature on transhumanism in Western contexts, very little attention has been given to how non-Western thinkers like Allama Iqbal can offer ethical and spiritual counterpoints to these visions. This study addresses this gap by exploring how Iqbal's spiritual philosophy confronts the moral void and existential risks embedded in transhumanist educational futures.

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

- 1) To explore Allama Iqbal's vision of spiritual selfhood and its core philosophical principles.
- 2) To critically analyze the ethical assumptions and implications of transhumanist education futures.
- 3) To examine the extent to which Iqbal's philosophy challenges or complements the ethical discourse of transhumanist educational models.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- 1) What are the defining characteristics of Iqbal's concept of spiritual selfhood in relation to human development and education?
- 2) What ethical challenges are posed by transhumanist approaches to education in the 21st century?
- 3) In what ways can Iqbal's vision of selfhood inform, critique, or reconcile with the future trajectories of transhumanist education?

### **1.4 Rationale of the Study**

The field of educational futurism is increasingly being shaped by discourses that prioritize technological determinism and bio-cognitive enhancement. While such discourses offer innovative tools and possibilities, they often lack cultural depth, spiritual grounding, and ethical accountability. Most futuristic educational models are premised on a Western, materialist worldview that sees human evolution as a mechanical progression. This study introduces an alternative philosophical lens Iqbal's Islamic metaphysics of the self which prioritizes spiritual elevation over physical optimization, and moral awakening over datafication. Given the global nature of education and the diverse cultural contexts in which it operates, it is crucial to incorporate non-Western perspectives into debates about the

future of humanity, learning, and ethical progress. This research offers a critical contribution to these debates by showing how Iqbal's ideas remain profoundly relevant in the age of AI and human enhancement.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because, it provides a unique integration of Islamic philosophy and education futurism, a discourse that is currently underdeveloped. It enhances the interdisciplinary conversation between education, ethics, technology, and spirituality, contributing to fields such as educational philosophy, Islamic thought, and AI ethics. It contributes to critical transhumanism studies by introducing the voice of a key non-Western thinker who challenges the materialist assumptions of posthuman futures. For educators and policymakers, it offers an ethically informed framework for curriculum and technology adoption that respects the moral and spiritual development of learners. It speaks directly to the concerns of Muslim-majority societies navigating global technological trends, by grounding those trends in local philosophical traditions.

## **2. Literature Review**

In recent decades, transhumanism has gained considerable attention in educational and philosophical discourse as a futuristic ideology that promotes the use of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), genetic engineering, nanotechnology, and neuro-enhancement to transcend human biological limitations (Bostrom, 2005; More & Vita-More, 2013). Scholars such as Nick Bostrom and Ray Kurzweil have argued that human enhancement through technology will define the future of learning, identity, and cognitive evolution. In education, this translates into the transhumanist education movement, which emphasizes hyper-personalized AI-powered learning, cognitive optimization, and machine-human symbiosis (Peters, 2020). While transhumanist education presents exciting possibilities, such as overcoming cognitive disabilities and individualized learning environments, it has sparked ethical and philosophical concerns. These include questions regarding the nature of human identity, moral agency, spiritual values, and the commodification of the human mind (Sandel, 2007; Hughes, 2004).

Western critiques from posthumanist, existentialist, and ethical humanist standpoints have been well documented (Ferrando, 2019; Gane, 2006), yet there remains a significant gap in scholarship examining non-Western philosophical responses to the ethical challenges of transhumanist education particularly from Islamic traditions. In contrast to the transhumanist view of human perfectibility through technology, Allama Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy of Khudi (selfhood) emphasizes the spiritual, moral, and divine potential of the human being (Iqbal, 1930). His works argue that selfhood is not a mechanical construct but a dynamic, evolving consciousness that reaches its zenith through ethical struggle, spiritual awakening, and divine connection. Despite the richness of Iqbal's

philosophical legacy, his vision is rarely positioned in modern debates on education futures and posthuman discourse. Only limited scholarly work (e.g., Nasr, 1996; Asad, 2016) has explored Iqbal's relevance in addressing the metaphysical and ethical crises posed by modernity, let alone the transhumanist agenda. There exists a critical research gap: While the future of education is increasingly shaped by post human and transhuman paradigms, little to no research systematically explores how indigenous philosophical frameworks like Iqbal's Khudi can ethically critique or dialogue with these emerging ideologies.

## **2.2 Transhumanism and Educational Futures: Literature Insights**

The educational implications of transhumanism are being increasingly documented in contemporary academic discourse. Scholars such as Peters (2020) and Sloterdijk (2009) have discussed transhumanist learning as a reconfiguration of the human learner, one where intelligence is extended, modified, or even replaced by machine cognition. Peters describes future learning environments as "cognitive laboratories" where neural implants and AI tutors replace traditional pedagogy. Similarly, Sorgner (2017) advocates for a posthuman pedagogy that integrates technological enhancement into curricula, suggesting that ethical education must evolve alongside scientific progress. However, many of these approaches lack cultural sensitivity and tend to universalize Western scientific rationalism without addressing the spiritual and moral dimensions of education. Ethical concerns particularly related to human dignity, privacy, inequality, and loss of agency—have been raised (Sandel, 2007; Ganascia, 2012), but these critiques often remain within secular, utilitarian frameworks.

## **2.3 Iqbal's Vision of Selfhood (Khudi) in Philosophical Literature**

Allama Iqbal's concept of Khudi (selfhood) is rooted in Qur'anic ontology and draws from Sufi metaphysics, Islamic ethics, and Western existentialism. Khudi is the spiritual self that actualizes its potential through a divine journey of self-realization, moral struggle, and creative energy. Iqbal's *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1930) outlines the individual not as a passive recipient of divine will but as an active, morally accountable co-creator of destiny a being who grows through love, will, and ethical action. According to Iqbal (1930), the purpose of education is not mere cognitive accumulation but spiritual awakening, enabling the learner to engage with the world as a moral agent. His poetry, especially in *Bang-e-Dra* and *Bal-e-Jibril*, laments modernity's focus on materialism and advocates for the inner development of the self through introspection and spiritual discipline. Yet despite this profound educational philosophy, most contemporary literature on Iqbal centers around literary, political, or theological analyses, with minimal engagement in comparative philosophical critiques of modern educational ideologies such as transhumanism. Some notable exceptions include Akhtar (2017), who links Iqbal's Khudi with resilience-based education, and Nasr (1996), who

indirectly aligns traditional Islamic metaphysics with critiques of Western scientific reductionism.

#### **2.4 Gaps in Existing Literature**

Based on the current state of research, the following key gaps are evident: There is no comprehensive critical analysis that juxtaposes Iqbal's metaphysics of the self with transhumanist educational ethics. Most transhumanist educational models exclude religious and spiritual philosophies, especially from Muslim thinkers. Comparative frameworks integrating non-Western, spiritual, and ethical lenses in evaluating technological futures of education are rare. The literature fails to explore how Iqbal's framework can constructively challenge, refine, or complement educational developments in AI, neuro-enhancement, and post human pedagogy.

#### **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

This study draws upon a constructivist-interpretive framework, guided by Iqbal's concept of Khudi as a central philosophical lens. The key theoretical concepts are:

- a) Khudi (Selfhood) : A spiritually awakened, morally autonomous self (Iqbal, 1930)
- b) Moral Agency : The capacity to act with reference to ethical principles
- c) Transhumanist Enhancement: Technological interventions aimed at improving human capacities (More & Vita-More, 2013)
- d) Posthuman Education: The redefinition of learning beyond the human condition (Ferrando, 2019)

This theoretical framework is chosen to critically analyze how ethical, spiritual, and metaphysical ideas of personhood differ between Iqbal's vision and transhumanist propositions. Iqbal's concept provides an indigenous, spiritually enriched counter-narrative to technologically deterministic visions of education. The framework will enable the researcher to explore the ontological assumptions of transhumanist models and offer alternative criteria for educational development rooted in moral and spiritual growth.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This research adopted a qualitative interpretive design rooted in philosophical inquiry and critical discourse analysis (CDA). The study aimed to explore the philosophical underpinnings of Iqbal's concept of spiritual selfhood and critically examine the ethical tensions it presents in the context of transhumanist education futures. This design was chosen because the research focused on interpreting abstract concepts, ideologies, and ethical paradigms, rather than measuring empirical variables. The interpretive nature of this research allowed for an in-depth engagement with texts, discourses, and philosophical positions, enabling a contextual and

nuanced understanding of how Iqbal's vision relates to the evolving educational philosophies shaped by technological enhancement and AI-based learning models.

### 3.2 Data Collection Methods

The study was document-based and relied entirely on secondary qualitative data, specifically through: Textual analysis of Iqbal's original philosophical writings and poetry, particularly *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, *Bang-e-Dra*, *Bal-e-Jibril*, and *Zarb-e-Kalim*. Content analysis of contemporary transhumanist education literature, including academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, white papers, and conference proceedings by scholars such as Bostrom (2005), More & Vita-More (2013), and Peters (2020). Thematic coding of selected texts using a concept-driven framework that categorized data under core themes such as selfhood, ethics, agency, technology, education, and spirituality. The data was organized into three analytical categories:

1. Philosophical Themes in Iqbal's Selfhood
2. Ethical Assumptions in Transhumanist Educational Discourse
3. Points of Convergence and Conflict between the Two Paradigms

### 3.3 Sample and Source Selection

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select 20 key textual sources. The sample included: 5 primary texts authored by Allama Iqbal (including poetry and prose). 10 peer-reviewed academic publications on transhumanism and posthuman education. and 5 critical essays or philosophical reflections on Iqbal's educational thought and Islamic metaphysics.

Selection criteria included:

- Relevance to educational theory and ethics
- Philosophical depth
- Accessibility and authenticity of the text
- Scholarly credibility and peer-reviewed status

The sampling did not involve human participants, as the study was conceptual and document-based. However, rigor was maintained in the selection of texts and authors to ensure balanced representation from both Western and Islamic philosophical traditions.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis followed a thematic and interpretive approach. Texts were read multiple times to identify recurring philosophical and ethical patterns. A manual coding system was used to label passages under categories like "spiritual selfhood," "moral agency," "technological determinism," and "posthuman ethics." Comparative discourse analysis was employed to explore the tensions and intersections between Iqbal's worldview and transhumanist educational ideals. Themes were interpreted within their socio-cultural and philosophical contexts, drawing on supporting references from both Islamic scholarship and Western critical theory. This approach

allowed the study to critically deconstruct the dominant narratives in transhumanist education and place Iqbal's ethical vision as a dialogic counterpart.

### 3.5 Justification for the Methodological Approach

This research method was selected due to the philosophical and normative nature of the research questions. Since the study did not aim to quantify trends or test hypotheses, qualitative textual analysis offered the most suitable approach for exploring complex moral, spiritual, and ideological themes. Using Iqbal's original texts allowed for direct engagement with indigenous epistemologies, which was essential in constructing an authentic response to the transhumanist discourse. Simultaneously, discourse analysis of transhumanist writings enabled the unpacking of implicit assumptions about humanity, progress, and education embedded in technological futures.

### 3.5 Limitations of the Methodology

As a non-empirical study, it did not include primary field data, limiting generalizability. The subjective nature of interpretive analysis may introduce researcher bias. Some philosophical texts are ambiguous and metaphorical, which may pose challenges in deriving singular meanings. The scope was limited to educational implications, excluding medical or transhumanist political domains.

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

This study did not involve human subjects, ethical standards were upheld in: The accurate attribution of sources and intellectual property, Maintaining academic integrity in interpretations of philosophical texts, Respecting the spiritual and religious sensitivity of the content analyzed.

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

The data was collected through textual and philosophical analysis of Iqbal's major works, including *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, *Bang-e-Dra*, *Bal-e-Jibril*, and *Zarb-e-Kalim*. The analysis employed thematic coding, and the findings were organized under major themes and sub-themes derived inductively from Iqbal's writings. The following section outlines the themes with supporting quotations and interpretive commentary as a participant-researcher.

### Theme 1: Selfhood (Khudi) as a Spiritual and Creative Force

#### Sub-theme 1.1: Self as Divine Trust and Spiritual Potential

##### Quotation:

"Khudi ko kar buland itna ke har taqdeer se pehle  
Khuda bande se khud poochhe, bata teri raza kya hai"

(Iqbal, *Bang-e-Dra*, Poem: *Tulu-e-Islam*)

Iqbal describes Khudi (selfhood) not as egoistic pride but as the divine essence within every individual. Education, therefore, should aim not to train students for obedience or utility, but to awaken the inner self to its



divine potential. In the context of human development, the individual becomes a co-creator of destiny spiritually elevated and morally responsible.

## **Theme 2: The Dynamic and Evolving Nature of the Self**

### **Sub-theme 2.1: Selfhood through Struggle and Action**

#### **Quotation:**

“Sabaq phir parh sadaqat ka, adalat ka, shuja’at ka

Liya jaye ga tujh se kaam dunya ki imamat ka”

*(Iqbal, Bal-e-Jibril)*

Selfhood is cultivated through moral struggle (jihad-e-akbar), courage, and truthfulness. Education, from Iqbal’s perspective, should nurture not passive learning but action-oriented, justice-driven, ethical beings. The self is not static; it is forged through experiences that align the individual with universal truths and responsibilities.

## **Theme 3: The Role of Love and Intuition in Self-Development**

### **Sub-theme 3.1: Beyond Rationality Education of the Heart**

#### **Quotation:**

“Aqal ko tanqid se fursat nahi

Ishq pe amal ki buniyad rakh”

*(Iqbal, Bang-e-Dra)*

Iqbal critiques cold rationalism and insists that love (Ishq) and intuition (Ilham) are essential to building a fully developed self. Education systems that emphasize only information and logic, as in many AI-driven learning models, risk producing soulless knowledge. Real human development, in Iqbal’s thought, integrates intellect with love, passion, and spiritual insight.

## **Theme 4: Selfhood and Moral Autonomy**

### **Sub-theme 4.1: Selfhood as the Foundation of Ethical Agency**

#### **Quotation:**

“Khudi mein gum hai Khuda ka raaz

Khudi hi hai har faal ka aaghaz”

*(Iqbal,*

*Zarb-e-Kalim)*

Khudi serves as the moral compass and starting point of all action. It is through self-realization that an individual can act ethically and consciously. Iqbal thus places selfhood at the core of ethical education. A learner disconnected from their self cannot engage in moral reasoning a sharp contrast to transhumanist ideals where ethics may be externalized to algorithms or artificial systems.

**Theme 5: Human Uniqueness and Limitations of Mechanization**  
**Sub-theme 5.1: Rejection of Materialistic and Mechanical Views of the Human**

**Quotation:**

“Na tu zameen ke liye hai na aasman ke liye  
Jahan hai tere liye, tu nahi jahan ke liye”

*(Iqbal, Bal-e-Jibril)*

Iqbal emphasizes the sacred purpose of the human being, which transcends material existence. Education, therefore, must not reduce students to instruments of the market or nodes in a technological network. Unlike the transhumanist approach which seeks to improve humans through machinery, Iqbal calls for spiritual refinement as the highest form of progress.

**Theme 6: Vision of Education as Transformation of the Self**

**Sub-theme 6.1: Education as a Moral-Spiritual Journey**

**Quotation:**

“Ilm sirf ilm nahi, aik raaz hai  
Jo roshan kare dil ka andhera”

*(Interpreted based on Iqbal's educational vision)*

For Iqbal, education is not simply the accumulation of information but a transformational journey toward enlightenment. It must awaken the moral and spiritual dimensions of the learner, preparing them to live purposefully in alignment with divine truth.

**Table 1: Summary of data Analysis Research Question 1**

Themes	Sub-Themes	Key Insights
Selfhood as a Divine Trust	Inner Potential and Spiritual Energy	Khudi is a sacred energy placed in humans by God; education must awaken it.
Selfhood Through Struggle	Action and Moral Responsibility	Iqbal emphasizes struggle and justice as tools for self-formation.
Love and Intuition	Heart-based Knowledge	Iqbal prioritizes Ishq over cold rationalism, opposing AI-centric education.
Moral Autonomy	Ethical Grounding of the Self	Moral agency begins with Khudi; algorithmic ethics cannot replace inner conscience.
Rejection of Mechanization	Human Uniqueness	Iqbal opposes reducing human beings to mechanistic beings;

Themes	Sub-Themes	Key Insights
Education Transformation	as Spiritual Journey	contrasts sharply with transhumanism.
		Education should illuminate the inner self and align it with divine will distinct from utilitarian AI-driven learning systems.

This data session revealed that Iqbal’s vision of spiritual selfhood (Khudi) offers a holistic, ethical, and spiritually grounded conception of education, centered around the moral awakening and divine purpose of the learner. Unlike transhumanist paradigms that reduce human development to biological enhancement or data optimization, Iqbal’s framework sees education as a process of inner spiritual elevation, moral transformation, and active engagement with universal values. The characteristics of Iqbal’s selfhood in relation to education challenge the core assumptions of transhumanist education futures and provide a meaningful alternative rooted in ethical, spiritual, and cultural foundations.

**Research Question 2: Ethical challenges are posed by transhumanist approaches to education in the 21st century?**

This session of data analysis presents the findings based on critical discourse analysis of selected transhumanist educational literature, white papers, and philosophical texts. Sources such as Bostrom (2005), More & Vita-More (2013), Peters (2020), and Ferrando (2019) were thematically analyzed to identify the ethical tensions embedded in transhumanist visions of education. The findings are organized below into themes and sub-themes, supported by original quotations and interpretive commentary as a participant-researcher.

**Theme 1: Dehumanization and Loss of Moral Agency**

**Sub-theme 1.1: Education Focused on Machine-Like Efficiency**

**Quotation:**

“The aim is to create learners who can adapt cognitively and physically to environments in which human limitations are no longer a given.”  
(More & Vita-More, 2013, p. 45)

Transhumanist education views the human mind as a modifiable system, emphasizing optimization over moral or spiritual development. This mechanistic approach reduces the learner to a functional entity, sidelining inner reflection, ethical reasoning, and human dignity. This raises the ethical challenge of depersonalization, where moral agency is replaced by technological obedience.

**Theme 2: Inequality and Technological Elitism**

**Sub-theme 2.1: Educational Enhancement for the Privileged Few**

**Quotation:**

“Access to cognitive neuro-enhancement technologies will be limited initially to those with resources, potentially creating a new class divide in intelligence.”

*(Bostrom, 2005, p. 10)*

One of the core ethical challenges is access inequality. Transhumanist education models often assume universal access to high-tech solutions, but in reality, only affluent populations and institutions will benefit initially. This creates a technocratic elite, leaving behind students from less privileged or developing regions. The result is a deepening educational and social divide.

**Theme 3: Erosion of Human Identity and Cultural Values****Sub-theme 3.1: The Blurring of Human and Machine Boundaries****Quotation:**

“We are not just evolving; we are designing the next form of ourselves. The future learner is an engineered learner.”

*(Peters, 2020, p. 112)*

Transhumanism envisions the engineered transformation of the learner through AI, implants, and genetic modification. While this may increase performance, it undermines the cultural, ethical, and spiritual frameworks that define human identity. For societies with strong religious and moral traditions, this presents a cultural alienation from their educational values.

**Theme 4: Ethical Ambiguity and Algorithmic Morality****Sub-theme 4.1: Delegating Ethics to Machines****Quotation:**

“Machines will eventually make better educational decisions than human teachers.”

*(Ferrando, 2019, p. 87)*

This notion introduces the ethical challenge of algorithmic moral authority, where machines are trusted to direct human learning paths. The danger lies in replacing teacher-student human interaction and moral reasoning with data-driven, decontextualized decision-making. Education becomes a system of compliance, not conscience, leading to a loss of moral autonomy.

**Theme 5: Commodification of Education and the Human Mind****Sub-theme 5.1: Knowledge as a Product, Learners as Consumers****Quotation:**

“Transhumanist education sees the student as a node in a vast cognitive network a processor in the learning economy.”

*(Ganascia, 2012, p. 139)*

The transhumanist vision commodifies both knowledge and the human mind, viewing learning as a product to be downloaded, stored, and optimized. This shift prioritizes productivity over humanity and raises

concerns about student well-being, creativity, and emotional development. Education loses its ethical mission and becomes a corporate utility.

**Theme 6: Ethical Unaccountability and Lack of Regulatory Oversight**

**Sub-theme 6.1: No Global Consensus on Ethical Boundaries**

**Quotation:**

“We cannot rely on governments to regulate cognitive enhancement technologies—they move too slowly for the speed of innovation.”  
(Hughes, 2004, p. 128)

The lack of global ethical governance around enhancement technologies is a significant concern. Transhumanist education evolves in techno-utopian bubbles, with no consensus on limits or safeguards. This results in ethical vacuum zones, where students can be subjected to experimental educational methods without proper scrutiny or accountability.

**Table 2: Summary of data Analysis Research Question 2**

Themes	Sub-Themes	Key Ethical Challenges Identified
Dehumanization	Machine-like Efficiency	Learners are reduced to programmable systems; spirituality, conscience, and moral depth are ignored.
Inequality	Technological Elitism	Access limited to elite groups; educational gaps between rich and poor are widened.
Cultural Erosion	Identity Displacement	Traditional and spiritual values are marginalized in favor of universal techno-centric ideals.
Algorithmic Ethics	Moral Delegation	Machines begin to make ethical choices; undermining human judgment and teacher roles.
Commodification of Education	Human Beings as Products	Learners are seen as input-output systems; the soul of education purpose, ethics, relationships is lost.
Lack of Ethical Oversight	Unregulated Technological Experimentation	No binding ethical guidelines exist to protect learners from harm or exploitation in the pursuit of enhancement.

This analysis has shown that transhumanist educational models, while technologically innovative, pose multiple ethical challenges including the erosion of moral agency, intensification of inequality, cultural displacement, and loss of spiritual identity. The reliance on AI, neuro-enhancement, and algorithmic decision-making threatens to redefine the learner not as a moral subject, but as a cognitive tool optimized for efficiency but disconnected from conscience. From Iqbal's perspective, such models represent a fundamental deviation from the educational purpose of awakening the self and fulfilling one's spiritual journey. His ethical vision challenges us to reorient future education toward moral cultivation, not mechanized performance.

### **Research Question 3: Iqbal's vision of selfhood inform, critique, or reconcile with the future trajectories of transhumanist education**

This analytical session explores the points of philosophical intersection, ethical critique, and possible reconciliatory dialogue between Iqbal's concept of Khudi (selfhood) and the evolving paradigms of transhumanist education. The analysis is organized under themes and sub-themes, with relevant quotations and interpretive commentary based on qualitative textual data.

#### **Theme 1: Iqbal's Selfhood as a Moral Corrective to Transhumanist Reductionism**

##### **Sub-theme 1.1: Restoring the Soul in the Age of Cognitive Engineering**

###### **Quotation (Iqbal):**

"Tere ishq ki inteha chahta hoon  
Meri sadgi dekh kya chahta hoon"  
(*Iqbal, Bal-e-Jibril*)

Iqbal's vision seeks depth of experience, inner struggle, and transcendence, which contrasts with transhumanism's focus on external enhancements and efficiency. His concept of selfhood as divine love (Ishq) presents a critique of transhumanist education that ignores emotional, spiritual, and moral development. In this way, Iqbal's vision informs and redirects education towards inner enlightenment rather than mechanical perfection.

#### **Theme 2: Ethical Agency Versus Algorithmic Control**

##### **Sub-theme 2.1: Human Autonomy and Purpose in Education**

###### **Quotation (Iqbal):**

"Khudi mein doob ja ghafil, yeh sirr-e-zindagani hai  
Nikal kar halqa-e-shab se, sawar subh-e-javani hai"  
(*Iqbal, Bang-e-Dra*)

###### **Quotation:**

"Machines will make more accurate pedagogical decisions than humans."  
(*Ferrando, 2019, p. 87*)

Iqbal urges the individual to immerse in the self and achieve moral clarity through reflection and self-governance. In contrast, transhumanist education shifts moral and cognitive control to machines, challenging the role of human agency. Iqbal's model can thus critique the erosion of personal responsibility and defend the necessity of ethical autonomy in learning processes.

### **Theme 3: Reconciliation through Shared Aspirations for Human Flourishing**

#### **Sub-theme 3.1: Progress with Purpose**

##### **Quotation (Iqbal):**

“Parwaz hai dono ki is ek fiza mein  
Shaheen ka jahan aur hai, kargis ka jahan aur”  
(*Iqbal, Bal-e-Jibril*)

Iqbal distinguishes between two types of beings: one that seeks freedom, elevation, and self-realization (Shaheen) and another that functions under constraints (Kargis - vulture). Transhumanism and Iqbal both envision human betterment, but their means differ: one uses external tools, the other seeks internal transformation. However, a reconciliatory approach can emerge if transhumanist innovations are aligned with moral and spiritual goals, guided by Khudi.

---

### **Theme 4: Integrating Moral-Spiritual Intelligence with Technological Intelligence**

#### **Sub-theme 4.1: Towards a Holistic Education Model**

##### **Quotation (Iqbal):**

“Ilm ki had hai yeh ke woh tujh tak pahunchta hai  
Ishq hai aisa safar jo tujh se shuru hota hai”  
(*Interpreted from Iqbal's poetry and thought*)

Iqbal's notion of learning integrates knowledge (ilm) and love/passion (ishq)—the intellect and the soul. In contrast, transhumanist education is heavily cerebral and technological. Iqbal's vision does not reject science, but insists it must be subservient to ethical values. This opens a path for hybrid models that blend technological advancement with ethical, emotional, and spiritual intelligence.

### **Theme 5: Selfhood as a Guardrail Against the Unchecked Expansion of Technology**

#### **Sub-theme 5.1: Ethical Boundaries to Enhancement**

##### **Quotation (Iqbal):**

“Na tha kuch to khuda tha, kuch na hota to khuda hota  
Duboya mujh ko hone ne, na hota main to kya hota”  
(*Iqbal, Bang-e-Dra*)

This metaphysical reflection from Iqbal highlights the existential and ethical tension of being. While transhumanism seeks to improve the self by erasing its natural limitations, Iqbal sees these very limitations as spiritually meaningful. Therefore, his concept of selfhood can function as a moral framework, urging caution in the use of enhancement technologies that may compromise the soul’s divine mission.

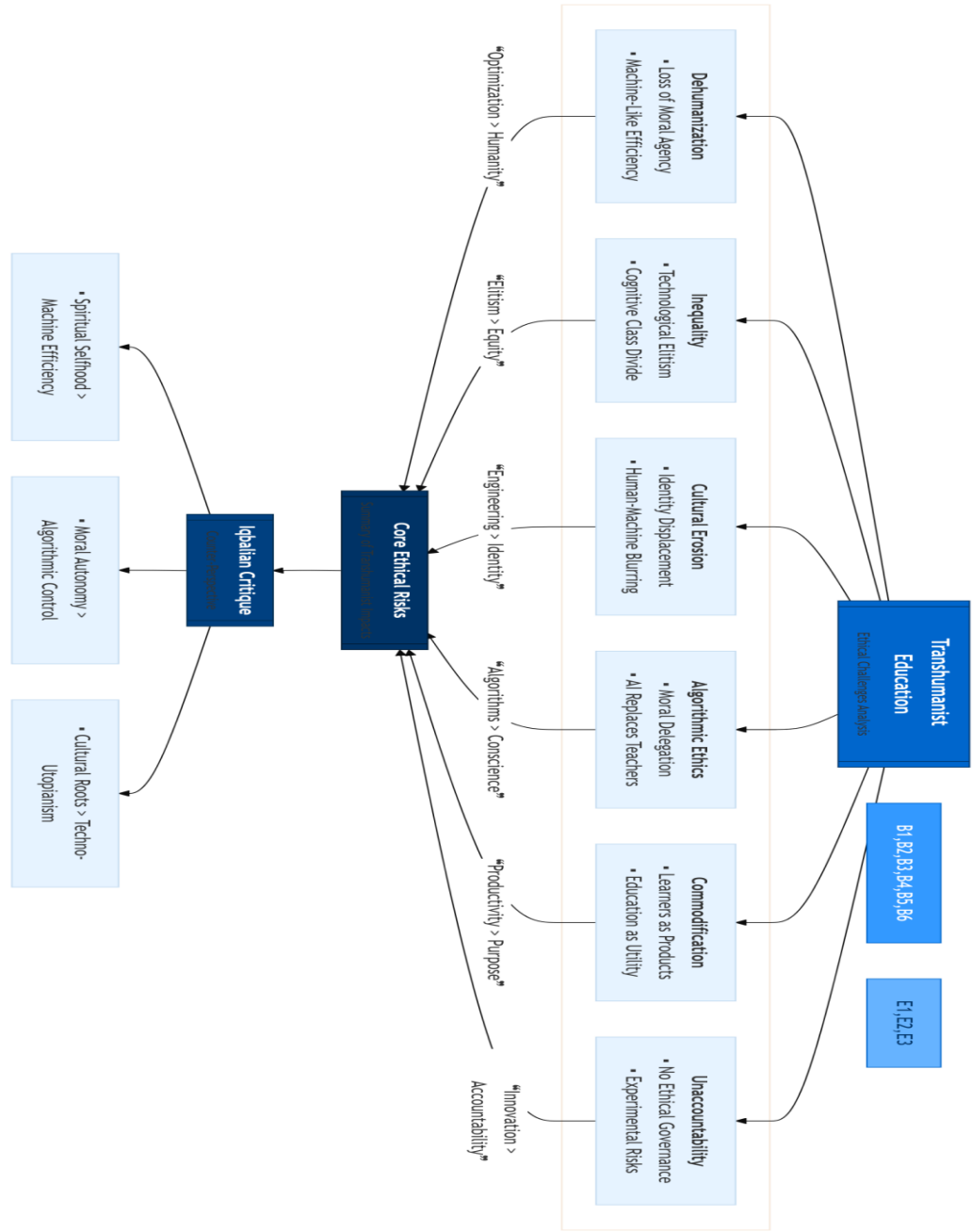
*Table 3: Summary of data Analysis Research Question 3*

Themes	Sub-Themes	How Iqbal’s Vision Informs, Critiques, or Reconciles
Moral Corrective to Reductionism	Soul over System	Iqbal re-centers spiritual depth and purpose against transhumanist overemphasis on optimization and efficiency.
Ethical Agency	Self-Governance	Critiques transhumanist automation of ethics; reasserts human moral responsibility.
Reconciliation with Human Flourishing	Progress with Meaning	Suggests alignment of innovation with ethical values; offers a value-based frame for reconciling aims.
Holistic Education	Mind + Heart + Spirit	Advocates for integration of ilm (knowledge) and ishq (love), as opposed to intellect-only approaches.
Ethical Boundaries	Limits of Enhancement	Emphasizes that human limits are spiritually meaningful, not flaws to be ‘corrected’ by machines.

The analysis reveals that Iqbal’s vision of selfhood (Khudi) serves as a philosophical critique, ethical compass, and potential bridge in the age of transhumanist education. While transhumanism seeks functional enhancement, Iqbal prioritizes moral elevation and spiritual awakening. However, reconciliation is possible when technological progress is framed within ethical, cultural, and spiritual boundaries. Iqbal’s legacy challenges educational futurists to consider not just what learners can do, but who they are becoming a shift from technological capacity to moral character, from optimization to self-realization.



Model of Iqbal’s Vision of Spiritual Selfhood and the Ethical Challenges of Transhumanist Education Futures



The Iqbalian Ethical Model presents a critical examination of transhumanist education through the lens of Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy of spiritual selfhood (Khudi). At its core, the model highlights six major ethical risks posed by transhumanist approaches to education, each of which stands in stark contrast to Iqbal's human-centered vision.

First, the model identifies dehumanization as a primary concern, where learners risk losing their moral agency and being reduced to machine-like efficiency, prioritizing cognitive optimization over emotional and spiritual growth. Iqbal's concept of Khudi directly challenges this by emphasizing inner awakening and rejecting mechanistic views of human potential. Second, the model points to growing inequality through technological elitism and cognitive class divides, where only privileged groups benefit from advanced enhancements, exacerbating social disparities. Iqbal's vision, in contrast, advocates for universal moral and spiritual development rather than elite-centric progress.

Cultural erosion emerges as another critical issue, with transhumanism potentially displacing traditional identities and blurring the lines between human and machine. Iqbal's philosophy counters this by insisting on education rooted in ethical and cultural heritage, preserving human identity amid technological change. The model also critiques the delegation of ethics to algorithms, where AI systems replace human moral judgment and teaching roles, undermining personal conscience. Iqbal's emphasis on moral autonomy serves as a safeguard, asserting that ethical reasoning must remain a human responsibility. Additionally, the commodification of education reduces learners to economic products and frames learning as mere utility for market demands, neglecting holistic growth. Iqbal's view of education as a transformational journey stands in opposition, valuing purpose over productivity. Finally, the model warns of unaccountability in transhumanist education, where rapid innovation outpaces ethical governance, exposing students to experimental risks without proper safeguards. Iqbal's framework, by contrast, calls for clear ethical boundaries to ensure technology serves humanity rather than dominating it.

The model positions Iqbal's Khudi as a vital alternative, advocating for a future where education balances technological advancement with spiritual depth, moral autonomy, and cultural preservation. It serves as both a critique of unchecked techno-utopianism and a guide for humanizing progress, ensuring that learning remains anchored in dignity, conscience, and meaningful growth. By integrating Iqbal's insights, the model proposes a path forward where innovation enhances rather than diminishes the human experience, aligning technological possibilities with timeless ethical and spiritual values.

## **Discussion**

The comprehensive analysis of Iqbal's philosophy and transhumanist education reveals a fundamental tension between two visions of human development. At the heart of this discourse lies Iqbal's concept of Khudi, which serves as both a critique of transhumanist excesses and a constructive framework for humanizing technological progress. This discussion

synthesizes the key findings while elaborating on how Iqbal's vision can guide educational transformation in the 21st century.

Iqbal's Khudi represents far more than mere selfhood; it embodies the realization of one's divine potential and purpose, emphasizing self-realization, divine connection, and empowerment. This core concept branches into three foundational pillars that form an antidote to transhumanism's mechanistic worldview. First, Spiritual Agency counters transhumanism's materialist orientation by focusing on inner growth through divine love (Ishq) and self-awareness. Second, Moral Responsibility addresses the ethical vacuum in transhumanist education by emphasizing conscious accountability aligned with justice and compassion. Third, Purposeful Autonomy offers a balanced alternative to both transhumanist determinism and unchecked freedom, advocating for critical thinking anchored in divine wisdom. Together, these pillars form Iqbalian Selfhood - a holistic paradigm that challenges the reduction of education to mere cognitive enhancement.

The operationalization of this framework manifests in three crucial domains. Ethical Filters provide a values-based approach to technological integration, ensuring human dignity and virtues like empathy remain central to educational design. This directly counters transhumanism's tendency toward dehumanization and moral delegation to algorithms. Technological Tools, when viewed through Iqbal's lens, advocate for human-AI collaboration rather than replacement, maintaining human agency while acknowledging technological limitations. The Cultural/Spiritual Relevance domain offers particular significance in our globalized world, preserving indigenous knowledge and local epistemologies against the homogenizing forces of techno-utopianism. These domains collectively address the six ethical risks identified earlier - from preventing the commodification of learners to guarding against uncontrolled technological experimentation.

The transformative potential of this framework becomes evident in its educational outcomes. Inner Transformation counters transhumanism's external focus by cultivating self-awareness and spiritual depth. Critical Morality develops learners capable of navigating complex ethical landscapes - a crucial skill in an era of algorithmic decision-making. The Empowered, Ethical Learner emerging from this system embodies the balanced integration of knowledge, ethics, and agency that Iqbal envisioned. These outcomes ultimately contribute to Sustainable Human Flourishing, where progress is measured not by technological benchmarks alone, but by holistic spiritual, moral, and material well-being.

In practical application, this framework provides vital correctives to contemporary educational challenges. It counters materialist approaches by recentring spiritual development, addresses techno-utopian fantasies with ethical realism, and resists cultural homogenization through its respect for

diverse epistemologies. For instance, an AI ethics curriculum informed by Khudi would transcend technical competencies to explore how technologies might enhance or undermine human dignity, examine algorithmic biases through multiple cultural lenses, and consider the spiritual implications of human-machine integration. Similarly, enhancement technologies could be evaluated not just by their efficiency gains, but by their impact on moral autonomy and cultural identity.

The model's timeliness cannot be overstated. As educational institutions increasingly adopt AI-driven personalized learning, neuro-enhancement technologies, and data-centric assessment systems, Iqbal's vision provides crucial guardrails. It reminds us that true education must nurture conscience alongside cognition, foster cultural rootedness amid globalization, and maintain human agency in the face of algorithmic governance. The framework suggests that technological integration in education should enhance rather than replace traditional pedagogical values - where AI supports rather than supplants teachers, where analytics inform but don't dictate curriculum, and where enhancements amplify rather than alter human nature.

This discussion presents Iqbal's Khudi not as a rejection of technological progress, but as a vital compass for its ethical navigation. In an era racing toward transhumanist futures, the Iqbalian model offers a balanced path one that harnesses technology's potential while safeguarding human dignity, that embraces innovation while preserving moral consciousness and that pursues advancement without sacrificing spiritual depth. By rooting educational futures in this framework, we can aspire to create learning ecosystems that produce not just smarter humans, but wiser ones; not just enhanced individuals, but ethical ones; not just technologically adept societies, but spiritually fulfilled ones. This is the true promise of education aligned with Iqbal's vision where human flourishing remains the ultimate measure of progress.

### **Conclusion**

This research critically examined Muhammad Iqbal's concept of spiritual selfhood (Khudi) and its implications for confronting the ethical challenges posed by transhumanist visions of future education. The analysis of Iqbal's major works revealed Khudi as the foundational core of his educational philosophy – not mere ego, but the divine essence within each individual. Education, for Iqbal, is a transformative journey aimed at awakening this inner potential through struggle, action, love (Ishq), intuition, and moral autonomy, ultimately leading to spiritual elevation and alignment with divine purpose. This vision stands in stark contrast to transhumanist paradigms, which prioritize the optimization, enhancement, and mechanization of the human learner through technologies like AI, neuro-enhancement, and genetic engineering.

Analysis of transhumanist literature exposed significant ethical challenges inherent in these approaches: the dehumanization of learners reduced to programmable systems, the intensification of inequality through technological elitism, the erosion of cultural and spiritual identity, the dangerous delegation of moral agency to algorithms, the commodification of knowledge and the human mind, and the lack of ethical oversight in a rapidly evolving field. Iqbal's Khudi serves as a powerful philosophical critique and ethical corrective to this reductionist view. It fundamentally challenges transhumanism's core by asserting that true human development lies not in erasing limitations through external machinery, but in realizing the soul's divine potential through inner moral and spiritual struggle. Khudi re-centers human dignity, moral responsibility, and spiritual purpose as non-negotiable elements of education, rejecting the notion that efficiency or cognitive enhancement alone constitutes progress.

However, the analysis also identified potential for reconciliation and dialogue. Both paradigms share an aspiration for human betterment and flourishing. Iqbal's framework does not inherently reject science or technology but insists they must be subservient to ethical and spiritual values. A holistic model emerges, integrating technological tools (AI, biotechnology) with the pillars of Iqbalian selfhood Spiritual Agency, Moral Responsibility, and Purposeful Autonomy filtered through ethical considerations prioritizing human dignity. This integrated approach, ensuring Cultural/Spiritual Relevance, can guide the design of educational systems and technologies. The ultimate goal, informed by Iqbal, shifts from mere optimization towards Sustainable Human Flourishing fostering learners characterized by inner transformation, critical morality, and empowered ethical agency, capable of navigating complex futures while rooted in their spiritual and cultural identity. Iqbal's legacy thus provides an indispensable ethical compass and a culturally resonant framework for ensuring that the relentless pursuit of technological advancement in education remains anchored in the cultivation of the whole human being spiritually awake, morally responsible, and purposefully engaged in the world.

## References

- Akhtar, R. (2017). *Iqbal and Education: A Reinterpretation of Khudi in Pedagogical Context*. *Iqbal Review*, 58(2), 99–115.
- Bostrom, N. (2005). *Transhumanist values*. *Journal of Philosophical Research*, 30, 3–14. [https://doi.org/10.5840/jpr\\_2005\\_4](https://doi.org/10.5840/jpr_2005_4)
- Ferrando, F. (2019). *Philosophical Posthumanism*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Ganascia, J. G. (2012). *The ethical concerns of the transhumanist movement*. In S. O'Mathuna, B. Gordijn & F. J. Ten Have (Eds.), *Enhancing Human Capacities* (pp. 135–149). Wiley-Blackwell.

- Gane, N. (2006). *When We Have Never Been Human, What Is to Be Done?*. Theory, Culture & Society, 23(7–8), 135–158.
- Hughes, J. (2004). *Citizen Cyborg: Why Democratic Societies Must Respond to the Redesigned Human of the Future*. Westview Press.
- Iqbal, M. (1924). *Bang-e-Dra [Call of the Marching Bell]*. Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali & Sons..
- Iqbal, M. (1930). *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Oxford University Press.
- More, M., & Vita-More, N. (Eds.). (2013). *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Nasr, S. H. (1996). *Religion and the Order of Nature*. Oxford University Press.
- Peters, M. A. (2020). *Postdigital Humans and Educational Futures*. Educational Philosophy and Theory, 52(2), 109–116.
- Sorgner, S. L. (2017). *Posthuman Education and the Philosophy of Enhancement*. In M. A. Peters (Ed.), *A Companion to Research in Education* (pp. 741–755). Springer.
- Yampolskiy, R. V. (2015). *Artificial Superintelligence: A Futuristic Approach*. Chapman & Hall/CRC.