



IQBAL'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND WHOLE-PERSON FORMATION: A FUNCTIONAL COMPARISON WITH ABAI

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Abstract. Scholarship on Muhammad Iqbal's philosophical anthropology has examined khudi, freedom, action, and the educational significance of his thought, but their internal connections and the methodological status of moving from anthropological reconstruction to contemporary educational implications require clarification. This article reconstructs Iqbal's anthropology as an interconnected logic of human becoming, tests structural comparability with Abai's anthropological model, assesses how far al-Attas's philosophy can serve as an independent pedagogical mediator, and proposes a relational model of whole-person formation in higher education. This non-empirical philosophical study combines historico-philosophical reconstruction, hermeneutic interpretation, conceptual analysis, and functional, non-genealogical comparison. It shows that tawhid, the symbolism of clay and spirit, the strengthening of khudi, discipline, ishq, freedom, responsibility, and creative action can be reconstructed as functionally connected elements of personal becoming. The hypothesis of a structural family relating Iqbal and Abai receives limited functional support without claiming historical continuity or semantic equivalence between their categories. Al-Attas's philosophy of ta'dib provides an independent pedagogical language extending this anthropological problematic into education. The model distinguishes a horizon of meaning, inner coherence, moral formation, and realisation in action. Contributions include a three-tier attribution protocol, a functional comparison, and a normative-conceptual model claiming neither universality nor empirical validation.

Keywords: Muhammad Iqbal; Abai; Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas; philosophical anthropology; khudi; ta'dib; whole-person formation; philosophy of higher education.

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ИҚБАЛДЫҢ ФИЛОСОФИЯЛЫҚ АНТРОПОЛОГИЯСЫ ЖӘНЕ ТҰТАС АДАМДЫ ҚАЛЫП-ТАСТЫРУ: АБАЙМЕН ФУНКЦИОНАЛДЫҚ САЛЫСТЫРУ

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ФИЛОСОФСКАЯ АНТРОПОЛОГИЯ ИКБАЛА И ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ЦЕЛОСТНОГО ЧЕЛОВЕКА: ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНОЕ СРАВНЕНИЕ С АБАЕМ

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Аңдатпа. Мұхаммад Иқбалдың философиялық антропологиясы жөніндегі зерттеулер khudi, еркіндік, әрекет және оның идеяларының білім берудегі маңызын кеңінен қарастырған. Алайда бұл категориялардың ішкі байланысы мен антропологиялық реконструкциядан қазіргі білім беруге қатысты тұжырымдарға көшудің әдіснамалық мәртебесі нақтылауды қажет етеді. Мақала Иқбал антропологиясын адам қалыптасуының өзара байланысқан логикасы ретінде реконструкциялайды, оның Абайдың антропологиялық моделімен құрылымдық салыстырымдылығын тексереді, әл-Аттас философиясының дербес педагогикалық дәнекер болу мүмкіндігі мен шектерін бағалайды және жоғары білім беруде тұтас адамды қалыптастырудың қатынастық моделін ұсынады. Бұл эмпирикалық емес философиялық зерттеу тарихи-философиялық реконструкцияны, герменевтикалық интерпретацияны, концептуалдық талдауды және функционалдық әрі генеалогиялық емес салыстыруды ұштастырады. Нәтижелер tawhid, балшық пен рухтың символикасын, khudi-дің нығаюын, тәртіпті, ishq, еркіндікті, жауапкершілікті және шығармашылық әрекетті тұлғалық қалыптасудың функционалдық тұрғыдан өзара байланысқан элементтері ретінде реконструкциялауға болатынын көрсетеді. Иқбал мен Абайдың антропологиялық тұжырымдамалары арасындағы құрылымдық жақындық туралы болжам олардың категориялары арасында тарихи сабақтастық немесе семантикалық тепе-теңдік бар деген тұжырымға бармай, функционалдық тұрғыдан шектеуді деңгейде расталды. Әл-Аттастың ta'dib философиясы антропологиялық проблематиканы білім беруде жалғастыратын дербес педагогикалық тіл ұсынады. Ұсынылған модель мағына көкжиегін, ішкі үйлесімділікті, адамгершілік тұрғыдан қалыптасуды және әрекеттегі жүзеге асуды ажыратады. Зерттеудің үлесі атрибuciaның үш деңгейлі хаттамасы

Аннотация. Исследования философской антропологии Мухаммада Икбала подробно рассматривают понятие khudi, свободу, действие и образовательное значение его мысли. Однако взаимосвязь этих категорий и методологический статус перехода от антропологической реконструкции к современным образовательным следствиям требуют более строгого прояснения. Настоящее неэмпирическое философское исследование реконструирует антропологию Икбала как логику человеческого становления, проверяет ее структурную сопоставимость с антропологической моделью Абая, оценивает возможность и пределы самостоятельной посреднической функции философии ал-Аттаса на педагогическом уровне и предлагает реляционную модель формирования целостного человека в высшем образовании. Работа сочетает историко-философскую реконструкцию, герменевтическую интерпретацию, концептуальный анализ и функциональное негенеалогическое сравнение. Результаты показывают, что tawhid, символика глины и духа, укрепление khudi, дисциплина, ishq, свобода, ответственность и творческое действие могут быть реконструированы как взаимосвязанные элементы становления личности. Гипотеза структурного семейства Икбала и Абая получила ограниченное функциональное подтверждение без утверждения исторической преемственности или семантического тождества их категорий. Философия ta'dib ал-Аттаса даёт самостоятельный педагогический язык для образовательного продолжения антропологической проблематики. Модель различает горизонт смысла, внутреннюю связность, нравственное формирование и деятельное осуществление. Вклад состоит в трехступенчатом протоколе атрибуции, функциональном сравнении и разработке нормативно-концептуальной модели, не претендующей на универсальность или эмпирическую валидированность.

мен функционалдық салыстырудан, сондай-ақ өзінің әмбебаптығын да, эмпирикалық тұрғыдан валидтелгенін де мәлімдемейтін нормативтік-концептуалдық модельді әзірлеуден тұрады.

Түйін сөздер: Мұхаммад Иқбал; Абай; Сайид Мұхаммад Накиб әл-Аттас; философиялық антропология; *khudi*; *ta'dib*; тұтас адамды қалыптастыру; жоғары білім философиясы.

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Introduction

Contemporary debates on the aims of higher education give sustained attention to knowledge, competencies, employability, and measurable outcomes. The question of what kind of person a student is becoming, however, receives less systematic attention (Biesta, 2009, 2015; Dall'Alba & Barnacle, 2007; Marginson, 2024; Oldac et al., 2023). The problem is not that knowledge or professional preparation has ceased to matter, but that these aims do not by themselves explain how learning becomes part of a human life: how a person relates knowledge to an order of significance, develops inner coherence, makes moral judgements, and assumes responsibility for action. From the perspective adopted here, whole-person formation requires the ontological, existential, ethical-volitional, and pedagogical dimensions of human becoming to be considered in their interrelation. It is understood not as the accumulation of desirable attributes but as realisation in action.

Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), the South Asian Muslim philosopher-poet and a major thinker of Muslim modernity, is especially relevant to this problem because his philosophy brings ontology, religious experience, moral formation, freedom, and active participation in the world into one anthropological field. The scholarship has examined Iqbal in relation to Islamic reform, Muslim modernity, postcolonial thought, Sufism, selfhood, and agency (Schimmel, 1963; Majeed, 2009; Faruque, 2021; De Diego González, 2023). Educational studies have also drawn aims and principles from *khudi*, Iqbal's category of dynamically formed and strengthened selfhood, as well as from his poetry and religious-philosophical writings (Ali & Hussien, 2017; Nauman, 2018). Yet the internal connections among *tawhid*, the principle of divine unity, clay and spirit, *khudi*, discipline, *ishq* as an integrating aspiration of love, freedom, responsibility, and creative action remain less often reconstructed as a single logic of human becoming. The study approaches these materials systematically rather than biographically: the aim is not to detach Iqbal from intellectual history, but to identify how propositions distributed across prose and poetry jointly articulate an anthropology of becoming.

A related problem concerns the transition from philosophical anthropology to education. Direct textual claims, reconstructive inferences, and contemporary pedagogical constructions are not always distinguished with sufficient rigour. The present study therefore differentiates Iqbal's own formulations, conclusions warranted by a joint reading of his texts, and an authorial explication of their contemporary educational implications. This distinction allows an implicit pedagogical orientation to be reconstructed without attributing to Iqbal a completed philosophy of education or a contemporary institutional model.

The comparison with Abai (1845–1904), the Kazakh poet-philosopher and moral thinker, introduces a further methodological question. Previous scholarship has identified religious, educational, literary, and historico-cultural convergences between the two thinkers (Mashakova, 2016), so the article claims no first juxtaposition. Abai's *tolyq adam*—his historically grounded ideal of human wholeness—is conceptually distinct both from Iqbal's *khudi* and from the contemporary Tolyq Adam educational programme, and is not treated here as a local equivalent or translation of *khudi*. The comparison therefore asks whether semantically distinct categories occupy functionally comparable positions within their respective conceptual systems, where the limits of that similarity lie, and whether those limits can be retained without asserting historical continuity, semantic equivalence, or conceptual identity.

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (b. 1931), a Malaysian Muslim philosopher and theorist of Islamic education, is introduced here as an independent pedagogical resource for conceptualising the transition from anthropology to education. His concept of *ta'dib* frames education through the formation of *adab*, the recognition and affirmation of the proper place of persons, knowledge, and things within the ordered structure of being (Wan Daud, 1998, pp. 130–133). Al-Attas's framework is neither an extension of Iqbal's teaching nor used to remedy a presumed deficiency in it, and al-Attas does not become a third co-equal member of the anthropological comparison.

In response to these problems, the article reconstructs Iqbal's anthropology as an interconnected logic of becoming, tests the hypothesis of a structural family through a functional and non-genealogical comparison with Abai, and examines the possibilities and limits of al-Attas's independent pedagogical mediation. Integral anthropology functions as an analytical criterion rather than a self-description attributed to the historical thinkers; structural family functions as a testable hypothesis rather than an established relation. The comparison is therefore tested rather than presupposed, and its outcome may confirm, qualify, or delimit the initial hypothesis. The resulting educational model is presented as normative-conceptual: it is not attributed to the historical thinkers, offered as a universal synthesis, or treated as empirically validated. The study's contribution is reconstructive, comparative-methodological, and philosophical-educational: it connects Iqbal's categories, applies a three-tier attribution protocol, and proposes an authorial relational model of whole-person formation whose institutional, pluralistic, and empirical limits are stated explicitly.

The inquiry is guided by three research questions. RQ1: How can Iqbal's philosophical anthropology be reconstructed as a single logic of human becoming, and in what sense is that logic implicitly pedagogical? RQ2: To what extent does a functional, non-genealogical comparison with Abai support and delimit the structural-family hypothesis, and what independent pedagogical mediation can al-Attas's *ta'dib* provide? RQ3: What relational, normative-conceptual model of whole-person formation in higher education follows from this reconstruction and comparison, and within what institutional, pluralistic, and empirical limits?

Theoretical Framework

Philosophical anthropology is understood here as reflection on the ontological, ethical, spiritual, and existential conditions under which a human being develops as a person. The analysis distinguishes human nature as the initial conditions of existence, essence as a normative horizon of becoming, and personal wholeness as an achieved mode of inner organisation. These are analytical distinctions, not a terminology attributed to Iqbal, Abai, or al-Attas. Ricoeur's distinction between identity as sameness (*idem*) and identity as selfhood (*ipse*), together with his account of the subject as speaking, acting, narrating, and accountable, helps describe personal continuity and responsibility without reducing the self to a fixed set of properties (Ricoeur, 1992, pp. 2–3, 116–125). Taylor's strong evaluation and moral horizon clarify how self-interpretation occurs within an order of qualitative significance (Taylor, 1985, pp. 15–19; 1989, pp. 26–28). Neither thinker functions as an external standard by which the non-Western traditions are judged.

Integral anthropology is employed as a testable analytical category. It designates an account in which an ontological or normative horizon, a personal centre, moral formation, and action acquire coherence; it does not mean an inventory or eclectic sum of faculties. The notion of a structural family similarly denotes a hypothetical likeness in the organisation of anthropological reasoning: semantically distinct categories may set comparable horizons, organise inner unity, direct moral becoming, or admit pedagogical explication. Comparison must establish both functional similarity and its limits.

The architecture of the inquiry is deliberately asymmetrical. Iqbal is the principal object of reconstruction; Abai is the comparative pole; al-Attas is tested as a mediator at the pedagogical level; and Shakarim is used selectively to clarify conscience in the Kazakh ethical tradition. The expression *tolyq adam* is reserved for Abai's historically grounded ideal. It is not interchangeable with either integral anthropology as an analytical category or the contemporary Tolyq Adam programme and authorial model discussed below.

Materials and Methods

This study is a non-empirical philosophical investigation of texts, combining historico-philosophical reconstruction, hermeneutic interpretation, conceptual analysis, and functional comparison. Its materials are philosophical texts and their scholarly interpretations. The methods are assigned to different levels of the task: reconstruction recovers

the anthropological logic of Iqbal's thought; functional comparison tests the hypothesis of a structural family with respect to Iqbal and Abai; recourse to al-Attas's philosophy of education opens the pedagogical level; and conceptual synthesis prepares the transition to educational implications.

The corpus comprises primary texts, secondary scholarship, and metatheoretical sources. For Iqbal, the principal texts are *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*—the basis for the ontological horizon, the ego, freedom, and action—and *The Secrets of the Self (Asrār-i Khudī)*, used for *khudī*, *ishq*, discipline, self-control, and divine vicegerency (*niyabat-i ilahī*); other poetic works are used selectively where they clarify a category. Al-Attas's texts serve to establish the meanings of *ta'dīb* and *adab* and his understanding of knowledge, without treating him as a third object of anthropological reconstruction. For Abai, the primary material is the *Edifying Words*, particularly Words 17 and 38. Shakarim's texts are used only to warrant the category of conscience. Ricoeur (sameness and selfhood; the subject of imputation) and Taylor (strong evaluation; the moral horizon) belong to the metatheoretical apparatus, not to the corpus under comparison. Secondary scholarship supplies context and tests interpretations but does not replace primary texts in fixing the meaning of categories.

For analytical clarity, the study distinguishes *self*, *personhood*, *subjectivity*, and *agency* as categories of analysis rather than terms the thinkers themselves consistently differentiate. *Self* refers to the inner coherence and temporal continuity of the personal centre; in Iqbal it is related to *khudī* but is not an exhaustive translation of that concept. *Personhood* denotes human existence as morally significant and responsible. *Subjectivity* refers to self-awareness, judgement, orientation within an order of significance, and participation in determining one's own becoming. *Agency* denotes the capacity to initiate action and answer for its consequences. These are interconnected aspects, not stages. Ricoeur's distinction prevents the self from being identified with a fixed set of properties and does not serve as an external measure of non-Western traditions; Taylor's concepts analyse the value-normative orientation of self-interpretation, and their educational productivity is developed later.

Reconstruction identifies connections among propositions distributed across genres and works and not always formulated by Iqbal as a unified doctrine, taking account of the difference between prose and poetry and distinguishing direct statements from conclusions reached through a joint reading. A strict sequence is maintained—Iqbal's logic first, then the comparison with Abai, and only then pedagogical and contemporary implications—which reduces the risk of subordinating the primary texts to a later model. Hermeneutic interpretation asks whether religious and poetic images (Adam, clay, spirit, the Fall, vicegerency) acquire an anthropological function within their context, rather than presupposing it, and avoids converting metaphor into literal ontological definition.

The terminological protocol is established at this level. Terms from the Arabic-Persian field—*tawhīd*, *khudī*, *ishq*, *niyabat-i ilahī*, *ta'dīb*, and *adab*—appear in normalised Latin transliteration; terms from the Kazakh field are rendered in Cyrillic, with a Latin romanisation supplied at first mention—*ақыл*, *қайрат*, *жүрек*—except for the ideal of *tolyq adam*, whose Latin form is retained throughout as the name of the concept. Each term is first defined in its own context and only then compared; translation is not treated as full equivalence. In particular, *niyabat-i ilahī* designates the third stage of the self's formation in *Asrār-i Khudī*, and the broader term *khilafah* is not substituted for it.

Claims follow a three-level discipline of attribution, applied to Iqbal, Abai, Shakarim, and al-Attas alike. At the first level—direct textual claim—formulations such as “Iqbal states” or “Iqbal describes” are used only where the primary text directly supports the proposition. At the second—reconstructive inference—formulations such as “a joint reading of these texts warrants the conclusion that” are used where the inference rests on several textual propositions without being explicitly formulated by the thinker. At the third—authorial analytical interpretation—formulations such as “in the present study this is interpreted as” identify constructions introduced here; the categories of integral anthropology, structural family, pedagogical orientation, and the contemporary authorial model belong to this level. The protocol prevents an authorial reconstruction from being presented as the historical thinker's own claim, and it keeps contemporary categories from being read back into historical texts as their own vocabulary.

The comparison is functional and non-genealogical: its units are the functions categories perform within an anthropological model, not isolated words or presumed equivalents. It proceeds along four axes—the ontological or normative horizon; the principle of inner unity; the path of moral formation; and the pedagogical dimension or the possibility of its explication. Each tradition is first reconstructed in its own language; only then are functions compared, and differences are retained as results rather than eliminated for symmetry. Three limitations hold throughout: the comparison establishes no direct historical continuity between Iqbal and Abai; it assumes no

semantic equivalence between *khudi* and *tolyq adam*, or between *ishq* and *жырек*; and al-Attas is not a third co-equal member of the matrix.

Finally, positionality must be explicit. The corpus is asymmetrical—Iqbal is examined in greater detail than Abai or al-Attas—by design rather than from any judgement of significance, and part of it is read in translation, so the manuscript identifies the editions, languages, and pagination used. The educational implications have a normative-conceptual status, not the outcome of empirical validation. Because the contemporary model of the whole person and its associated programme are connected with the professional activity of one of the authors, the historico-philosophical reconstruction is justified independently of the model, and neither the model nor the programme is used as evidence for the interpretation of Iqbal or Abai.

Use of artificial intelligence tools. During manuscript preparation and revision, OpenAI's ChatGPT and Anthropic's Claude were used as assistive tools for English-language translation and adaptation, editorial reformulation, terminological harmonisation across manuscript versions, comparison of alternative phrasings, and technical checks of structural coherence, source attribution, and citation-reference correspondence. AI outputs were not treated as scholarly evidence, independent interpretive authority, or a substitute for direct engagement with the primary and secondary sources. All suggestions used in the manuscript were critically evaluated by the authors and checked against the cited texts and the study's methodological protocol; the authors decided which suggestions to accept, revise, or reject. Final responsibility for source use, interpretive judgements, comparative claims, conclusions, wording, accuracy, and integrity rests entirely with the authors.

Results and Discussion

Iqbal's Anthropology of Becoming

Iqbal's account of *tawhid* provides the starting point for the reconstruction. Divine unity does not abolish finite multiplicity or imply substantial monism; in Iqbal's account it establishes a unity of source, meaning, and directedness (Iqbal, 2013, pp. 52–58). Within the present analysis, *tawhid* therefore functions as an ontological horizon within which reality appears as a living and meaningful order rather than an aggregate of separate facts. The human ego appears within this horizon as a distinctive unity of acts and experiences, capable of conscious relation and responsible participation in a world still in the making (Iqbal, 2013, pp. 64, 79–82). *Tawhid* thus provides the ontological horizon of wholeness, not wholeness as an already possessed state.

The symbolism of clay and spirit explains why human unity remains a task. In Iqbal's use of the Qur'anic image, clay signifies embodiment, finitude, vulnerability, and limitation; spirit opens the capacity for conscious response, judgement, and purpose (Iqbal, 2013, p. 12). These are dimensions of one existence, not independent substances or a divine fragment imprisoned in matter. Schimmel's account of Adam as an individuality at once glorious and dangerous supports this reading of spiritual existence as responsible self-relation (Schimmel, 1963, pp. 245–252). Iqbal's interpretation of the Fall likewise rejects inherited moral depravity: the narrative marks the passage from instinctive immediacy to a self-conscious existence capable of doubt, disobedience, and choice (Iqbal, 2013, pp. 67–68). Freedom thus arises within finitude, and moral goodness becomes meaningful because another choice is possible.

The principle capable of gathering these dimensions is *khudi*. It is neither an immutable soul-substance nor an aggregate of mental states, but a personal unity formed through interconnected acts, directive purpose, and sustained action (Iqbal, 2013, pp. 79–87). *Khudi* may be strengthened through discipline, purposive effort, and mastery of impulse, or weakened by passivity and dispersion. In *Asrār-i Khudī*, *ishq* is not merely an emotion but an integrating aspiration that gives intensity and direction to the self. Obedience, self-control, and divine vicegerency (*niyabat-i ilahī*) articulate the formative sequence: moral order prevents self-control from becoming arbitrary power, while vicegerency expresses mature and responsible agency (Iqbal, 1920, pp. 72–84).

This strengthening does not culminate in isolation. The finite ego participates in the life and freedom of the Ultimate Ego as a "free personal causality" while retaining private initiative (Iqbal, 2013, pp. 86–87). On this basis, nearness to God may be understood as intensifying personal determinacy and responsibility rather than dissolving the self. Faruque similarly shows that *khudi* is relational without becoming passive: it is formed in relation to God, moral order, and the world (Faruque, 2021, pp. 43–49, 263–265). Freedom is consequently not independence from every order but the capacity to respond to an open situation and answer for the result. Each purposive act creates a new situation and further possibilities (Iqbal, 2013, pp. 85–87, 99). Divine vicegerency names the mature form

of this realisation in action, not a political theory of the caliphate.

Majeed situated this active selfhood within Iqbal's response to otherworldly quietism and colonial conditions that weakened Muslim agency (Majeed, 2009, pp. 21–24). The context illuminates the urgency of action but does not exhaust its philosophical meaning. In the reconstructed sequence, action is not an external consequence of a completed self: *khudi* realises and continues to form itself through responsible participation in the world. On this reading, the self is a task rather than a datum; the resulting pedagogical orientation is developed in the following section.

Pedagogical Orientation and al-Attas's Mediation

Iqbal's anthropology itself provides a textual basis for its pedagogical orientation. In Lecture VII, Iqbal states that the ultimate aim of the ego is "not to see something, but to be something"; he then characterises the final act as vital rather than intellectual (Iqbal, 2013, pp. 156–157). Within the present reconstruction, this contrast distinguishes knowledge that transforms the person's mode of existence from knowledge that remains contemplative, and yields not an educational programme but a normative measure: education should orient knowledge and capacities towards the formation of a self-aware, disciplined, and responsible person. This orientation is implicit and requires conceptual explication rather than supplementation.

Al-Attas supplies a distinct language for this step. He enters neither as Iqbal's continuator nor as a third co-equal anthropological object. His mediating relevance lies in *ta'dib*, understood as the formation of *adab*: recognition and affirmation of the proper place of persons, knowledge, and things within the ordered structure of being (Wan Daud, 1998, pp. 130–133; Ibzharova, 2010, pp. 86–88). *Adab* is cognitive, moral, and spiritual; the *insan adabi* discerns the order of knowledge and acts responsibly within it. Education as *ta'dib* is therefore not reducible to information transfer or functional training.

Al-Attas's hierarchy distinguishes *fard 'ayn*, knowledge obligatory for each person and concerning God, the soul, and moral truth, from *fard kifayah*, knowledge required for the community (Wan Daud, 1998, p. 138; Ibzharova, 2010, p. 87). Rooted in an Islamic metaphysics of order (Al-Attas, 2001), this account makes pedagogically explicit a formative concern that remains implicit at the anthropological level in Iqbal. The mediation does not supplement Iqbal with allegedly missing anthropological content or derive al-Attas from him (Wan Daud, 1998, p. 141). *Ta'dib* is not a method for realising *khudi*.

The distinction also prevents premature assimilation to Abai. Al-Attas gives the predominant organising role to *adab* and the right ordering of knowledge; Abai assigns it to the purified *жүрек* as the organ of conscience; Iqbal locates it in the strengthening of *khudi* in relation to the Ultimate Ego. All three link knowledge and moral formation, but they do so through different conceptual centres. The value of al-Attas's philosophy is therefore mediating and comparative: it shows how an anthropological question may receive educational articulation while retaining the independence of the systems being related.

Abai and the Limits of Functional Comparison

Abai's model emerged in a different nineteenth-century Kazakh intellectual context. Following Sartaeva's warning against modernising his vocabulary and projecting contemporary schemes onto historical texts, the analysis grounds comparison in Words 17 and 38 and treats later scholarship as interpretation rather than proof (Sartaeva, 2021, pp. 84–85). No historical transmission between Abai and Iqbal is claimed.

Word 17 organises wholeness through *ақыл* (*aqyl*, reason) — *қаўрам* (*qairat*, will) — *жүрек* (*jürek*, heart). When Reason, Will, and Heart contend for primacy, Knowledge directs Reason and Will to unite with and obey the Heart, giving the latter preference when disagreement remains (Abai, 2020, pp. 421–422). This primacy is conditional: *жүрек* integrates the person as the cultivated organ of conscience, mercy, and self-respect, while an impure heart loses discrimination. The imperative "Адам бол!" ("Be a person!") consequently denotes moral responsibility rather than ritual conformity (Barlybaeva, 2011, p. 100). In Orynbekov's discussion cited by Barlybaeva, God is described as "personalised conscience" and conscience as a "subconscious god" (Barlybaeva, 2011, p. 106; authors' translation). In the present analysis, this formulation supports locating the centre of integration in the moral interior.

Word 38 provides the ontological horizon. The human being is called to reflect divine attributes—knowledge, power, will, mercy, and justice—"not in absolute fullness" (Abai, 2020, pp. 469–470). The qualification preserves relation to the divine without fusion. Yesim identifies *махаббат* as an ontological first cause preceding humanity (Yesim, 2004, pp. 12–13) and reconstructs the three loves—of the Creator, of humanity, and of justice—while

distinguishing *махаббат* from *сүю* (Yesim, 2004, p. 18). Abai connects justice, conscience, and faith while rejecting withdrawal from the world (Abai, 2020, pp. 486–489). Shakarim later systematises this conscientious axis through *ұждан*, defined through modesty, justice, and kindness (Qudaiberdiuly, 1991, pp. 71–72) and presented as the third of his “three truths” (Qudaiberdiuly, 1991, p. 77). In the present reconstruction, he clarifies Abai’s ethical line but is not a fourth comparative pole.

The comparison discloses three convergences: orientation towards the divine without ontological fusion; rejection of world-negating quietism; and a formative role for love, knowledge, and justice. Its central divergence concerns the integrating principle. In Iqbal, *khudi* is an achieved personal centre strengthened through discipline, *ishq*, and action; in Abai, the purified *жүрек* governs the concord of *ақыл* and *қайрат*. The former is predominantly an ontology of personal becoming, the latter a moral-conscientious organisation of wholeness. This difference is the principal result, not an obstacle to comparison. The resulting functional alignment and its limits are summarised across the four analytical axes (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparative Axes of Iqbal, al-Attas, and Abai

Analytical axis	Iqbal: anthropology of becoming	al-Attas: pedagogical mediation	Abai: anthropology of wholeness
Ontological horizon	<i>tawhid</i> ; <i>khudi</i> in relation to the Ultimate Ego; approach to the divine without fusion	hierarchy of being and knowledge in Islamic metaphysics; God as the source and ground of order	reflection of the attributes of God (Word 38), “not in absolute fullness”; <i>махаббат</i> as ontological first cause
Principle of inner unity	<i>khudi</i> as a centre of the self gathered through effort	<i>adab</i> as recognition of the proper place of person, knowledge, and things	the purified <i>жүрек</i> as the organ of conscience, granted primacy over <i>ақыл</i> and <i>қайрат</i> (Word 17)
Moral path of formation	self-overcoming within the becoming of <i>khudi</i> ; love (<i>ishq</i>) as directing principle	right action and the disciplined ordering of conduct through <i>adab</i>	cultivation of <i>махаббат</i> , <i>әділет</i> , and the purification of the heart; Shakarim’s systematisation of the conscientious principle
Pedagogical explication	a formative logic present by design but not unfolded into a system	the philosophy of <i>ta’dib</i> ; the hierarchy of knowledge <i>fard ‘ayn</i> / <i>fard kifayah</i>	the concord of <i>ақыл</i> , <i>қайрат</i> , <i>жүрек</i> ; the imperative «Адам бол!»; the demand for constant self-examination

Sources: Iqbal (2013, pp. 52–58, 64, 79–84, 86–87, 156–157; 1920, pp. 72–84); Abai (2020, pp. 420–422, 469–492); Wan Daud (1998, pp. 130–133, 138, 141); Ibzharova (2010, pp. 89–90).

The matrix shows why the hypothesis of a structural family receives limited functional support. Iqbal and Abai both understand the person as unfinished and wholeness as achieved through moral-spiritual formation and relation to a transcendent ground. Yet similarity exists at the level of functions, not semantic identity: *khudi* is not *tolyq adam*, *ishq* is not *жүрек*, and *tawhid* is not a direct analogue of Abai’s moral horizon. Al-Attas’s *adab* is equivalent neither to Abai’s *жүрек* nor to conscience. The three positions are not stages of one synthetic doctrine.

The result is therefore more precise than either identity or incommensurability. The models are functionally comparable in how they set a horizon, organise inner unity, direct moral formation, and open a pedagogical dimension; they remain historically independent and conceptually distinct. Al-Attas deepens only the pedagogical level of this comparison by showing how formation can be articulated through the order of knowledge and educational relations.

Educational Implications

The historical models do not contain a ready-made programme for the contemporary university. The relational model proposed here is an authorial philosophical-educational explication, not Iqbal's doctrine, a renaming of Abai's *tolyq adam*, al-Attas's system in new form, or a universal synthesis. Professional knowledge and competence remain necessary, but educational formation also concerns how the person relates knowledge to significance, sustains a personal centre, makes moral judgements, and acts responsibly.

The model distinguishes four dimensions. The horizon of meaning is the capacity to articulate the grounds on which ends and commitments are judged significant; it is not identical with Taylor's moral horizon, although Taylor supplies a metatheoretical vocabulary for it. Inner coherence is the capacity to relate knowledge, values, desires, and actions without fragmenting into disconnected roles. Moral formation develops strong evaluation, conscience, disciplined desire, and reasoned responsibility. Realisation in action names the agency through which personal formation is expressed and continued in responsible action. These dimensions translate functions disclosed by the comparison; they do not equate *khudi*, *tolyq adam*, *ishq*, *жүрек*, *adab*, or conscience.

Pedagogical mediation concerns the conditions through which the four dimensions acquire practical form. Philosophical and intercultural dialogue can articulate horizons of meaning; difficult-text interpretation and moral dilemmas develop reasoned judgement; reflective writing supports self-interpretation and coherence; socially significant projects connect agency with responsibility; mentorship and interdisciplinary work shape judgement within relations and resist fragmentation. No format is formative by itself: its value depends on the capacity and relation it develops.

Personal wholeness is not a measurable property. Legitimate assessment concerns educational manifestations—quality of argument, explanation of value grounds, coherence of reflection, responsibility for decisions, and participation in collaborative action—rather than faith, spiritual maturity, or proximity to an ideal. Reflective essays, journals, portfolios, oral defence, dilemma analysis, and critically reflected projects may register such manifestations, but diagnostic instruments cannot measure the person as a whole.

The Tolyq Adam programme is one possible context of concretisation. Because one of the authors is involved in developing both the model and the programme, this involvement is acknowledged as part of the study's positionality; neither the model nor the programme is used as evidence for the correctness of the interpretation of Iqbal or Abai. Ibzharova (2025, pp. 13, 15) provides limited evidence that individual elements can acquire practical form, not empirical validation of the model or proof of effectiveness. Implementation remains culturally and institutionally conditioned; metaphysical horizons cannot be imposed as confessional norms in a pluralistic university; independent empirical testing is required. Subject to these limits, whole-person formation is understood not as the production of a predetermined type of person, but as the creation of educational conditions in which the person learns to relate knowledge to an order of significance, attain inner coherence, make moral judgements, and act responsibly.

Conclusion

Iqbal's anthropology can be reconstructed as a logic of becoming: *tawhid* sets an ontological horizon; clay and spirit express unfinished embodied existence; *khudi* forms the personal centre; discipline and *ishq* give it form and direction; and freedom, responsibility, and creative action constitute its realisation in action. This sequence supports an implicit pedagogical orientation but not the attribution to Iqbal of a completed philosophy of education.

The comparison with Abai supports a structural family only in a limited functional sense. Both models organise human unfinishedness, moral becoming, and relation to the divine, but the integrating principles differ: Iqbal gathers coherence around *khudi*, whereas Abai gives the central harmonising role to *жүрек* within *ақыл — жүрек — қайрат*. No genealogical continuity, semantic equivalence, or synthetic doctrine follows. Al-Attas is not an extension of Iqbal's teaching; his philosophy of *ta'dib* supplies an independent pedagogical language for the order of knowledge, relations, and institutional ethos.

The authorial relational model translates these findings into the horizon of meaning, inner coherence, moral formation, and realisation in action. Its contribution lies in the interconnected reconstruction of Iqbal's categories, the separation of textual claim, reconstructive inference, and authorial explication, a functional non-genealogical comparison, and a delimited account of pedagogical mediation. Its limitations are equally constitutive: the corpus is asymmetrical and partly read in translation; poetic material is selective; the study is non-empirical; and the proposed model remains culturally situated and unvalidated.

Further work should verify key terms against original languages, expand the primary corpus, test the comparison independently, and examine particular educational principles empirically in different institutional settings. Whole-person formation is understood not as the production of a predetermined type of person, but as the creation of educational conditions in which the person learns to relate knowledge to an order of significance, attain inner coherence, make moral judgements, and act responsibly.

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Authors' contributions

Botakoz Abdrakhmanova – contribution of research and source materials; literature search and selection; participation in source analysis; critical review of the manuscript for important intellectual content.

Sholpan Ibzhарова – conceptualization of the study; development of the methodological framework; historico-philosophical reconstruction; comparative analysis and philosophical interpretation; writing of the original draft; revision and final editing; submission of the manuscript and correspondence with the journal.

Both authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for their respective contributions and for the integrity of the work.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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