

# A Postcolonial Critical Analysis Of Muhammad Iqbal's Poem The "Story Of The Diamond And The Coal"

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## Abstract

This paper is a critical analysis of one of Muhammad Iqbal's poems from his collection *The Secret Of The Self* (1920) translated by Reynold A. Nicholson titled the "Story of the Diamond and the Coal". It is an analysis of the dialogue between a diamond and a coal as depicted in the poem. This analysis looks at the relationship of these two matters to human beings and their use and importance to human beings. The story of the diamond and the coal is a poem that uses a diamond and a coal as metaphors that represent human life and human character. The picture that is depicted by the author is that human beings must struggle to elevate themselves in status in this world. The theme is that life is a struggle. It is the story of the evolution of human character from bad to good as depicted in the poem. It depicts the dream or vision of a person who wants to be as beautiful as a diamond, and as strong as it is even if he/she must go through various trials. The philosophy is of devotion and sacrifice towards God (Allah) and mankind. The philosophy is that persons need to be of use to mankind like a piece of coal only then can he/she achieve dignity and will be recognized by kings. Another philosophy that Iqbal puts forth is of equality. The poem puts forth the idea that black people are not despicable. The example given is the Hajaratul Aswad stone which is placed in the corner of the Kaaba. Pilgrims will kiss this stone when doing Tawaf due to its historical importance in remembrance of the prophets and their families. The value of a human being in the eyes of society and God (Allah) is argued vis-a-vis this poem. It can be concluded that when a human being reaches the status of a higher dignity in life and he/she can serve kings, he/she is also highly valued in the eyes of God (Allah). The poet through the poem also argues that the dignity of a human being after struggling in life even if he/she is not as beautiful as a diamond will be higher than an individual who becomes an ornament to kings because of religion and God. The moral philosophy is that serving God is better than serving human beings. The sacrifice of a human who is likened to a piece of coal and the spiritual evolution he/she goes through is valued more by God (Allah) than the beauty of a diamond that is valued by kings.

**Keywords:** Muhammad Iqbal, poem, diamond, coal, moral philosophy