

## THE CHILD'S PRAYER

Sir Muhammad Iqbal



Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), the famous Muslim philosopher and poet, was born in Sialkot, pre-partition India. He studied at Lahore, Cambridge and Munich and was also admitted to the bar at London. Back home he practised for some time but devoted most of his energy to writing. He also took an active part in the politics of the subcontinent. In 1927, he was elected to the Punjab Provincial Legislature and in 1930 became president of the Muslim League. Iqbal was considered the foremost Muslim thinker of his day. His poetry and philosophy, written in Urdu and Persian has been widely read and admired. His seminal works include *Bang-e-Dara*, *Bal-e-Jibreel*, *Armaghan-e-Hijaz*, *Zarb-i-Kaleem*, *Asrar-e-Khudi*, *Rumaze Bekhudi*, *Payam-e-Mashriq*, *Zubor -e-Anjum* and *Javed Nama* etc.



The poem is about the pious and virtuous wishes of the child. He wants to serve the nation and help the needy.

My tender hopes arise to the lips I pray:  
Kindly candle light may my life be!  
May through me world's darkness vanish away  
And every corner fill with light of day!  
May I adorn my land, to me so dear  
Even as the blossoms make the garden fair!  
As the moth goes round the shining light in zest  
So let me love the candle of knowledge best!  
To love and serve the poor my mission be;  
For the weak and those in pain my sympathy!  
Save me, my God, from all snares of evil:  
To walk the virtuous ways, grant me the will!

*Translated from Urdu by Prof. G. R. Malik*

## Glossary

adorn	ə'dɔ:n/	decorate.
kindly candle light	/'kaɪnd.lɪ/'kæn.dl/lart/	soft gentle light of a candle.
snares	sneəz	traps.
virtuous	'vɜ:tju.əs	good; pious.
zest	zest	passion.

## Understanding the poem

1. Who is the speaker in the poem and to whom is it addressed ?
2. What does the child wish to be? List his wishes in the order they are described in the poem.
3. Why does the child want to be : a) candle; b) moth; c) blossom?
4. What is the child's mission?

## Learning about the literary devices

1. Identify metaphors and similes in the following lines:

My tender hopes arise to the lips I pray:  
 Kindly candle light may my life be!  
 As the moth goes round the shining light in zest  
 So let me love the candle of knowledge best!  
 Save me, my God, from all snares of evil:

## Discussion

What are the various prayers that you make in the morning assembly at the school?  
 Discuss their meaning with your class mates.

## Suggested Reading

“Shikwa and Jawab-e-Shikwa” by Iqbal.

### Quote to remember

*Two weapons in particular are important: prayer and knowledge. Prayer binds us to the goal of heaven, and knowledge fortifies the intellect with salutary opinions; each complements and guides the other.*

Erasmus