

THE POETIC ART OF IQBAL

By

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Little attention seems to have been paid to the form of Iqbal's poetry. This is perhaps due to the fact that Iqbal himself always looked down upon and even went to the extent of denying the very existence of the "colour and smell of poetry" (رنگ و بوئے شاعری) in his verse. This attitude is not surprising, for it is entirely in the spirit of the Holy Qur'an wherein too there is the essence of the highest poetry along with the condemnation of the mere poets. This again is the way of all thinker-poets of the world, that is, the way of all those national poets who came at a time when the poetry of their nation had degenerated into mere sweet expression. Wordsworth, for example, leaves the world of "eye and ear" and craves for the joy of elevated thought. But this does not mean that they cease to be sensuous artists, makers of pictures and creators of music or the builders of the divine harmony of voice and verse. In fact it is sensuous particularity, the *sine qua non* of a poet, which is the basis of their personality and their mental make-up. What they mean by playing down this gift is that they do not want to rest at it, but want to employ it in the service of that highest art in which beauty and truth become one. Like them Iqbal has his full share of the "senses" and his basic effort seems to be to make the fullest use of them, but the images he evokes and the music he makes take us to the realm of thought. The total result is the so-called "intellectual fervence" which is the hall-mark of the verse of Rumi, 'Urfi, Goethe, Browning, and Ghalib. Enough has been done to expound his reformist zeal and his philosophical earnestness and thus to prove him a thinker first and a poet afterwards. But the fact remains that in his poem *Hour-o-Sha'ir* (Houris and the Poet) when the houri characterises him as a poet the most important point that she emphasises is:

By thy music thou createst such an enchanting world
As makes the Paradise appear a mere magic show.

The creation of a beautiful world through beautiful music is the primary function of Iqbal and whatever else he accomplishes he does by fulfilling this first purpose of an artist in verse.

Iqbal, the philosopher, was the outcome of conscious effort and persistent study, but Iqbal, the poet, was born. His earliest poems show the rich life of the senses that he was endowed with. In *Ek Arzoo* (A wish) we note the keenness of his ear in the melody of the following couplet that reproduces the noises of Nature:

لذت سرود کی ہو چڑیوں کے چہچہوں میں

چشمے کی شورشوں میں باجا سا بج رہا ہو

There be the pleasure for music in the warbling of birds,
The rushing of brooks be sounding like the organ.
or the clearness of his eye in the pictorial effects of the following:

صف باندھے دونوں جانب بوتے ہرے ہرے ہوں

ندی کا صاف پانی تصویر لے رہا ہو

ہو دل فریب ایسا کہسار کا نظارہ

پانی بھی موج بن کر اٹھ اٹھ کرے دیکھتا ہو

Green bushes be arranged in rows on both sides,
The clear water of the brook reflecting the picture,
The scene of the hill side be so enchanting,

That the waves be rising up to behold them.
or the particular eye for colour:

مہندی لگائے سورج جب شام کی دلہن کو

سرخی لٹے سنہری ہر پھول کی قبا ہو

When the sun colours the bride of evening in red,

The gown of every flower gain a gold-red hue.

In *Jugnoo* (The Glow-worm) one of the best poems in this line, he piles up delicate similes:

جنگو کی روشنی ہے کاشانہ چمن میں

یا شمع جل رہی ہے پھولوں کی انجمن میں؟

آیا ہے آسماں سے اڑ کر کوئی ستارہ

یا جان پڑ گئی ہے مہتاب کی کرن میں؟

تکمہ کوئی گرا ہے مہتاب کی قبا کا؟

ذره ہے یا نما یا سورج کے پیرہن میں؟

Is there the glow-worm in the expanse of the meadow?

Or is there a candle in the company of flowers ?

Has a star flown down from the sky?

Or a ray of the moon has become alive?

Is it a loop from the gown of the moon?

Or a particle shining from the apparel of the sun?

and then he comes to a remarkable metaphor which is one of the most wonderful translations of natural impressions in Urdu language:

چھوٹے سے چاند میں ہے ظلمت بھی روشنی بھی

نکلا کبھی گھن سے آیا کبھی گھن میں

In the little moon there is light as well as darkness

Now it comes out of eclipse and again goes into an eclipse. For sustained pictorial effect accompanied by suitable music expressing tender feeling few poems in Urdu can beat *Sitara* (The Star):

قمر کا خوف؟ کہ ہے خطرہ سحر تجھ کو

مآل حسن کی کیا مل گئی خبر تجھ کو؟

زمین سے دور دیا آسماں نے گھر تجھ کو

مثال ماہ اڑھائی قبائے زر تجھ کو

غصب ہے پھر تری ننھی سی جان ڈرتی ہے

تمام رات تری کانپتے گذرتی ہے

چمکنے والے مسافر! عجب یہ بستی ہے

جو اوج ایک کا ہے دوسرے کی پستی ہے

اجل ہے لاکھوں ستاروں کی اک ولادت مہر

فنا کی نیند مئے زندگی کی مستی ہے

سکون محال ہے قدرت کے کارخانے میں

ثبات ایک تغیر کو ہے زمانے میں!

Art thou afraid of the moon or of the morn?

Hast thou become aware of the end of beauty?

The sky gave thee a home far from the earth.

Like the crescent it covered thee in dress of gold.

Even then thine little heart is afraid!

The whole night thou passeth in trembling.

O shining traveller ! this is a land strange,

What is one person's rise is fall for another.

The rise of the sun is the death of a thousand stars,

The sleep of death is caused by the intoxication of life.

Rest is impossible in the scheme of Nature;

Change alone is unchanging in the world.

Iqbal is basically a poet and as a poet he belongs to that category whose luminaries are Spencer, Keats, Tennyson, and Mir Anis. But unlike these poets his development is not towards greater and greater beauty of pictorial and musical effects. He goes beyond the beauty of form and "thought" and gives significance to the pictures he makes and the music he composes. Iqbal is essentially a lyric poet, in the great lyric tradition for which Persian and Urdu poetry stands out as distinguished from the poetry of European nations. Not only is his bent inwards, but also his verses have the spontaneity, the energy, the heat of passion, the quickness of movement which we find in the best lyrical poets of the world. This lyrical force gets attached to Islam as a nation — producing force and to Allah for Whom the nation lives. The most well-known and the most typical of Iqbal's early poems are *Shikwah* and *Jawab-i-Shikwah* (The Protest and the Reply). They are twin beauties like Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, but in them we do not have a Puritan virtuoso brooding on his own tastes; there is a poetically gifted Muslim who considers himself the representative of a people with remarkable tradition and with special connections with God whose love he calls to question. Iqbal's mood in these poems is entirely original. It is a mood, no doubt, the mood of a poet, but the poet has already become a thinker, a questioner of the ways of God towards the Muslims. He is something of the later Milton in the person of Sam^son calling the Divine Dispensation into question. But he is more a frustrated lover of Allah Whose great favours on him and his people have somehow come to a stop. The religious people could not at first sympathise with this mood, but now its sincerity and its power have won the heart of every Urdu-knowing Muslim, high or low, religious or un-religious. Remarkable is the power which sustains the long poem joining every stanza, every verse, every word in a continuum of images and music such as Urdu poetry had not known before. Such complete wholes without the slightest hint of a break are not to be found in our Urdu poetry. It is not possible to take out stanzas without breaking the continuity which is essential to its effects. Yet one stanza from *Shikwah* (the

Protest) may be torn off to show something of how the images and the music exist and flow along with the powerful stream of passion:

محفل کون و مکان میں سحر و شام پھرے

مئے توحید کو لے کر صفت جام پھرے

کوہ میں دشت م میں لے کر ترا پیغام پھرے

اور معلوم ہے تجھ کو کبھی ناکام پھرے؟

دشت تو دشت ہیں دریا بھی نہ چھوڑے ہم نے

بحر ظلمات میں دوڑا دئے گھوڑے ہم نے!

In the expanse of time and space day and night we wandered,
The wine of Unity in hand like a cup we wandered;
Through hills and plains with Thy message we wandered,
Knowest Thou that we ever returned unsuccessful?
Deserts, what to say of, we did not leave even the deep waters,
In to the Black Sea we headlong plunged our horses.

The picture of the Muslim wandering day and night with the cup of *Towheed* in hand, through hills and deserts, always successful, plunging into the dark seas when no land was left to be conquered, is impressed with unique force by the sound value of the words used. The six-line stanza gains a new power in his hand. In Urdu it had been a favourite form of the *marthiya* writers whom-it helped in drawing pictures of happenings in Kerbala: the first four lines rhyming in one way gave the details of the picture, while the last couplet gave a touch that illuminated the whole picture. Hali employed it in his famous *Mussaddas*. Hali's musical gifts were not high. In Iqbal's use of

the stanza we see how Hali's material has been given a new power by the combination of the technique of the *marthiya* writers and the miraculous force of an original genius. The closing couplet of the stanza quoted above produces a sublime sound which takes the ear of the reader to the breathless scene which his eye perceives of Muslim conquerors jumping into the Black Sea in search of new lands to conquer. In the first flush our attention does not go towards Iqbal's art as it does towards the art of the poets who are pure artists, for Iqbal's art lies more in power than in technique. But the power has the technique behind it and is so much in harmony with it that the two are one, as they always are one in, the best pieces of art.

In *Jawab-i-Shikmah* the mood has undergone a change. Here it is Allah Himself Who is speaking. But it is Allah in Iqbal. The frustrated Iqbal of *Shikmah* has changed into a self-critical individual. The first expresses the divine indignation of the lover, the second turns the divine indignation on the lover. The pictures flash with the same power. The picture of disturbance caused by the voice of the poet reaching the sky is wonderfully impressive and highly significant. It is Miltonic in its heavenly realism and remains unique in Urdu poetry:

پیر گردوں نے کہا سن کے کہیں ہے کوئی!

بولے سیارے سر عرش بریں ہے کوئی!

چاند کہتا تھا، نہیں اہل زمین ہے کوئی!

کہکشاں کہتی تھی پوشیدہ یہیں ہے کوئی!

کچھ جو سمجھا مرے شکوے کو تو رضواں سمجھا!

مجھ کو جنت سے نکالا ہوا انسان سمجھا!

The old Sky hearing it said "There's someone somewhere;"
The Planets opined: "There's someone on the top of the sky;"
The Moon declared "No, it is some native of the Earth"
The Milky way whispered: "It is someone hidden here"
If any one guessed rightly about my complaint, it was Rizwan;
He took me for the Man who was thrown out of Paradise.

This stanza will serve to illustrate how the images and the rhythms have acquired a thought-content. The *Peer-i-Gardoon* is a stock image in Urdu poetry, but the question that Iqbal puts in his mouth makes him a new person of whom the more we think the more are we taken into the old and the modern conceptions of the Firmament. The picture of the Planets takes us to modern Astronomy, and so does the utterance of the Moon indicating that the moon is after all a satellite of the Earth. The picture of the Milky Way points to its scientific structure as well as to the idea behind the common Muslim myth that when the Prophet was journeying towards heaven the stars came close together to touch his feet. The closing couplet reaches the point, for here the Lord of Paradise is reminded of the story of Adam who was driven out of Paradise. Iqbal, as son of the erring Adam is the complainant — that is also an error, a persistence in error. But there is the Compassionate and Merciful Preserver to rectify the error and send down Peace. The art of the *Jawab-i-Shikwah* lies in the gradual settlement of the mind of the poet to divine peace through self-criticism. In this poem there is also that direct criticism of the ways of the people which we find in Hali's *Mussaddas* as in this stanza:

علم حاضر بھی پڑھا زائر لندن بھی ہوئے

مثل انجم افق قوم پہ روشن بھی ہوئے

برے عمل تھے ہی جزاں، دیں سے بدظن بھی ہوئے

صفت طائر گم کردہ نشیمن بھی ہوئے

حال انکا مئے نو اور زبوں کرتی ہے

شب مہ سایہ کی ظلمت کو فزوں کرتی ہے

The Young gained knowledge of the present and even went on pilgrimage to London,
Like stars they shone on the horizon of the nation,
They were lacking in good action, they also became averse to Faith,
They became like the bird that had lost its nest,
The new wine makes their condition worse still,
As the moonlit night increases the blackness of the shade.

But we at once realise the brilliance and the supremacy of Iqbal's art as against that of Hali. Here the bare statement of fact in the first line is followed by a colourful expression of the same in the second line, and similarly the third and the fifth lines correspond to the fourth and the sixth. The *mussaddas* form is loose and calls forth a good deal of repetition. Iqbal controlled this tendency of the form not only by the use of appropriate similes visualising the statements he made, but also by building a pattern of bare statements and corresponding images that with the dance of the verse and the jingle of the rhymes produce an effect in which the images, the melody, the structure work together to bring about a miraculous birth, the courtly dance of the *marthiya* writers coming to be harmonised with the movement and the music of the Spheres.

However, he later used this stanza rarely, because the bent of his genius is more towards Miltonic condensation than Spenserian looseness, more towards the brevity of Ghalib than towards the sweet repetition of Mir Anis.

He is more of a thinker poet than pure poet, and he creates an elaborate stanza pattern of his own by combining the couplet with the ghazal form to be the more suitable medium for his individual expression. The couplet has had a unique place in the poetry of the world. There appears to be much truth in the assertion of the European neo-classicists that the couplet is the most suitable form for poetry. One can dwell at length on the variety of uses to which it has been put from the time of the Greeks to the present day. In Persian and Urdu it has been used for narrative by Nizami and Mir Hasan, for epic by Firdawsi and for philosophical and moral poetry by Rumi. Iqbal turns mostly to the last with whose genius he has a good deal in common. But in Urdu and Persian, specially for lyrical purposes, the *ghazal* form has held the most firm ground. The beginning with a couplet and the repetition of the like rhyme in every other line, Italian to *ghazal* a prosodic form of rare musical powers. Iqbal took the *ghazal* form up at the time when it was going into disfavour and, by adding a powerful couplet with absolutely different rhymes at the end, built a pattern which shows its unique effect in poems like *Khizr-i-Rab* (Khizr, the Guide) and *Tulu-'i-Islam* (Rise of Islam) and later in *Mai-i-Baqi* (The Eternal Wine) and in so many other poems. In *Tulu-'i-Islam* it is regular sixteen line stanza like this:

یہی مقصود فطرت ہے یہی رمز مسلمانی

اخوت کی جہانگیری محبت کی فراوانی

بتان رنگ و خوں کو توڑ کر ملت میں گم ہو جا

نہ تورانی رہے باقی نہ ایرانی نہ افغانی

میان شاخساراں صحبت مرغ چمن کبتک

ترے بازو ہے پرواز شاہین کہستانی
گماں آباد ہستی میں یقین مرد مسلمان کا
بیاباں کی شب تاریک میں قندیل رہبانی
مٹایا قصر و کسرے کے استبداد کو جس نے
وہ کیا تھا؟ زور حیدر، فقر بوذر، صدق سلمانی
ہوئے احرار ملت جاہد پیما کس تجمل سے
تماشائی شگاف در سے ہیں صدیوں کے زندانی
ثبات زندگی ایمان محکم سے ہے دنیا میں
کہ المانی سے بھی پائندہ تر نکلا ہے تورانی
جب اس انگارہ خاکی میں ہوتا ہے یقین پیدا
تو کر لیتا ہے یہ ب ال و پر رو الامیں پیدا

(This is the purpose of Nature, this the secret of being a Muslim,
Fraternity reigning supreme, love overflowing.

Break asunder the idols of colour and race and be lost in the unity of
nation.

Let there remain no difference between Turanian, Iranian, or Afghani.

How long will you waste your time in the Garden with the singing birds,
Your arms have the power of flight of the Eagle,
The Faith of a Muslim in the midst of a populous self
Is like the lamp of a hermit in the darkness of the desert.
What finished the tyranny of Qaisar and Qisra,
Was the strength of Haider, asceticism of Bu-Zar, and truthfulness of
Salman.

How the leaders of the Community trod their patient way,
The decadent men are seeing through the hole or their door-ways
The Eternity of life comes out of strong faith in this world,
For the Turanian has proved himself more powerful than the German.
When this man with fire gets a faith within,

It grows the feathers and wings of Gabriel.

Here the first fourteen lines make a *musalsal* (connected) *ghazal* of seven *shi'rs*, the various ideas of which are given in each *shi'r*. It becomes a verse-paragraph, announcing the topic in the first couplet, reiterating it in the following *shi'rs* and ending with the most powerful idea put in the last couplet with its unique emphasis. The welding of colour with thought attains a power entirely individual to the poet. The voice of Iqbal now comes with its own, original, powerful, inspired utterance. The most outstanding quality of this voice is inspiration. The last couplet of the piece quoted above, with its image of a live-coal getting impregnated with a Faith and by it acquiring the wings of Gabriel, is the voice of Gabriel himself never before heard so powerfully through the medium of the Urdu language. It reads like one of Milton's verse-paragraphs dictated by the Heavenly Muse, an eruption of substantial lava poured forth with bewildering violence carrying with it a continuum of images and a persisting rumble of thrilling noise. Milton had to choose blank verse as his medium, for in English as even Chaucer had complained "rhyme hath such scarcity", but Urdu and Persian are specially rich in rhyming words and the *ghazal form* with the couplet came to be the most natural medium for translating the same Miltonic force which Iqbal wanted to communicate to his people to justify the ways of Allah to the degenerate Muslims of India.

The verse of Iqbal has inherent kinship with the verse of the inspired writers of the world. But it is most akin to Milton's verse like which it never loses its heat and hardly ever flags. Milton's casually thrown out sentence that poetry is "simple, sensuous, passionate", made so much of by Hali in his ignorance, does not characterise the unique style which we cannot define otherwise than by calling it Miltonic. It is a heightened, a learned, a highly latinised style, a good deal remote from the common language. It has been said that Milton might have forgotten the English language. It has also been maintained that Iqbal did not know Urdu and that he is primarily a poet of Indianised Persian. Modern nationalist fanatics insist on purism in language. But people who see mankind as one feel how the interconnected groups of languages mixing together provide suitable colours for the use of unique individuals. They see that modern languages like English and Urdu are too pedestrian in their purity and cannot attain the highest flights without the due support of Latin in one case and Persian in the other. In Urdu we see how the use of Lucknow Urdu idiom by Mir Anis has rendered the sublime heroes of Kerbala merely pathetic. Ghalib, the cracking of whose pen was the music of the angel, was the one Urdu poet who showed consistently the effect of Persianisation in raising Urdu poetry to sublime heights. Ghalib's eulogium to Hazrat 'Ali is the norm of the style which with individual changes we find in Iqbal's Urdu poems. But what is more, a day came when he shifted entirely from Urdu to Persian. The reason for this he gives in *Asrar-o-Rumuz*:

Although Hindi is sugar in its taste,

The way of Persian language is sweeter.

My thought got fascinated by its light,

My pen became a branch of the tree of Taurus.

Persian is equal to the Height of Thought

Goes into the nature of my thought.

It is the height of his thought that prompted him to employ Persian. In one of his ruba'is Iqbal calls himself the sky-soaring Iqbal, and this sky-soaring could not show its full flight and could not reach its due height without the wings of the Persian language in which all sort of high-soaring had had its bright day and compared with which Urdu has only the example of a Ghalib to offer.

The style of Iqbal's Urdu verse is Miltonic because of the presence in it of something like what Keats, giving up the imitation of Milton in despair, called Latin inversions. Persian vocabulary, Persian epithets, Persian combinations, even Persian structure distinguish Iqbal's style as they do the style of Ghalib. This style is at its best in *Bal-i-Jibril* (The Wings of Gabriel). In *Zarb-i-Kalim* (The Stroke of Moses) we have his simpler, more direct, classically restrained manner which reminds us of Goethe. But however much akin he may be to Goethe in other respects, his is not that divine doggerel verse which is the miracle of *Faust*. Mephistopheles begins with the excuse:

Verzeih, ich kann nicht hohe Wrote machen,

(Pardon, I cannot make high language.)

But with this low idiom he can make such miracles as:

Saton ist schon Lang in Fabelbuch geschrieben;

allein die Menschen sind nichts besser Bran,

den Bosen sind die los, die Bosen sind geblieben.

(He is already been written in Fable books,

In spite of that Human beings have not become better,

The Evil one is lost, Evils prevail.)

Iblis speaks really *bohe Worte*:

From my courage there is Love of Growth in the handful of dust.

My tricks are the warp and woof of the cloth of Mind and Reason.

Thou beholdest the fight of good and evil from the Coast,

Who is facing the blast of the tempest, You or I?

Khizr is bewildered and Ilyas is bewildered,

My disturbances range over seas and rivers and brooks

If ever you be alone with Allah ask Him,

Whose blood has made the story of Adam colourful?

I am pricking in the heart of God like a thorn

Thou art all the time singing his halleluiah.

This takes us to the Fourth Book of *ParadiseLost* where Satan, standing face to face with Gabriel, bursts out thus:

Gabriel, thou hadst in Heav'n th'esteem of Wise,

And such I held thee, but this question askt

Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain

Who would not, finding way, break loose from hell,

Though thither doomed? Thou wouldst thyself, no doubt

And boldly venture to whatever place

Farthest from pain, where thou mightest hope to change
Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
Dole with delight, which in this place I sought;
To thee no reason; who knowest only good,
But evil hast not tried: and wilt object
His will who bound us ? let him surer bar
His iron gates, if he intends our stay
In that dark durance:

Both Iqbal and Milton employ the same devices, stock epithets, original Persianised epithets, verisimilitudes, litotes, etc., — to produce those concentrated effects which grow greater and greater the more we think about them.

In spite of the deep-rooted influence of Latin on English there is a farther cry between English and Latin than there is between Urdu and Persian. It is far more difficult for an English-knowing person to master the inflexions and conjugations and declensions of Latin than it is for an Urdu-knowing man to acquire the extremely simple structure of Persian. Moreover, in spite of the efforts of so many Urdu poets to bring Urdu to the level of common Hindi, Urdu has remained a far more highly Persianised language than English could ever be latinised. Thus there has come to be hardly any difference between Iqbal's Urdu and his Persian, the more so because he scrupulously avoids those dead metaphors which are called idioms of a language. His Persian and his Urdu differ only because of the presence of certain words peculiar to one language or the other. For example his *Masjid-i-Qurtuba* (The Mosque of Cardova) is an Urdu poem, but we look at it and note that more than 50 % lines are absolutely Persian, and of the remaining

only 5 % may be called pure Urdu and the rest have one or two Urdu words, pronouns, prepositions, etc. It follows that the part which constitutes the poetic expression is the same in all the poems of Iqbal, whether Urdu or Persian. This expression constitutes his style. This has the stamp of his personality. In this lies the art of his verse. This expression has not been given proper attention. People hailing from the areas with which Urdu has come to be associated slur over his Urdu, and people belonging to the area in which he himself was born and lived hesitate in putting forward his claim as a master of that language. In any case people refuse to recognise him as a maker of language. One therefore hears such absurd statements about him as "he is a great poet as far as thought is concerned", as if thought can exist without expression or a poet can at all be great unless he brings about that union of thought and language which is the be-all and end-all of all literary activity: Anyway, the fact is to be emphasised that Iqbal is a maker of language, a master in a unique and individual way of the language and the ways of expression of a people. His is the standard language of the high class Muslims of Upper India. This language with slight variations could be either Urdu or Persian, but in temper and character it was a language which was the highest common factor between the language of the Qur'an, the Persian poets and the Urdu poets. Iqbal's language is above the language of various localities in India, even above the national language of Iran, It is a language which can be understood and enjoyed by "fit audience though few" of the entire Muslim world.

Now, Iqbal's work as a poet-artist lies in exploiting the possibilities of this high-class language to the full. It may be said that he gives a unique weight of thought to this language. But it would be better to say that the words of this language with their infinite associations are used to squeeze the enchanting poetic essence out of a body of thought long accepted by the Muslim thinkers, another body of thought brought from European thinkers, and lastly a body of systematised thought of a keen student of philosophy

and a man gifted with imagination of the highest type so much so that he could say:

خرد آموز مرا درس حکیمان فرنگ

سینه افروز مرا صحبت صاحب نظران

(Wisdom increased in me the study of the sages of the West, My heart was set afire by the company of the seers.)

Poets have been philosophers from time immemorial, but it was from the time of Goethe that the poet and the philosopher began to share common ground. Metaphysics of the idealist type made Kant a dreamer and Goethe a philosopher. Coleridge and Wordsworth prided themselves on being philosophers. But in spite of their philosophic earnestness they remained poets first and last. Philosophy made their dreams sound and solid, acceptable to the intelligent, but their dreams remained delightful dreams and they remained dreamers all the same. Their language remained the language of dreamers, but it also acquired a power which made its dream-quality enthrallingly real, forcefully reasonable, entirely convincing. Iqbal belongs to the galaxy of such poets and his verse has all the artistic qualities of what may be called intellectual poetry. His poetry does not stop at giving us beautiful pictures by rhetorical devices and beautiful sounds by the prosodic resources, but in it the pictures and the sounds get equated with thought and serve to build up a philosophical whole. It is in the equation of images with concepts and then of the completed picture with conceptions that Iqbal's kinship with thinker-poets lies. We take the first part of *Taskbeer-i-Fitrat* (Conquest of Nature) from *Payam-i-Mashriq* (Message of the East) to show how his art works:

Love cried "The one with blood red heart is born,

Beauty trembled that one with seeing eye is born.

Nature grew wild that from the dust of passive world

Self-maker, self-breaker, self-seer is born.

The news went from the sky to the place of Creation,

Fear O secluded ones ! the breaker of seclusion is born.

Desire, unconscious of self in the lap of life,

Opened the eye and a new world war born.

Life said "I had been burning in the dust for ever

Till from this old dome a door opened out.

Here six abstract qualities, Love, Beauty, Nature, Insight., Desire, and Life have been converted into poetic entities and each makes a characteristic utterance. The utterances evoke images of the various aspects of Man. A world rises before our imagination in which the figure of Man relative to the other figures surrounding him is discerned. So far it is the work of the sensuous poet. But each one of the images is also a concept and the view of man each gives is also a concept. The whole picture brings before us the conception of man. The words strike by their wonderful appropriateness and lie at the foundation of the dream as well as the conception. Besides there is suggestion of a mighty disturbance: crying, trembling, getting bewildered, opening the eyes, etc., — bringing to the mind the throes of an important birth. The run of the verse and the repetition of the double rhyme too bring before us these throes. The poem thus remains a poem in all respects, its irresistible power carries the reader aloft into the highest heaven of philosophy. One can deduce Iqbal's conception of Man from this piece, sort out Iqbal's own contribution to this conception, and end with giving Iqbal a place among philosophers. This is the typical way in which all philosophical poetry works. But this does not mean that one should forget the trees because of the forest. Iqbal's verse takes us to his philosophy, but it is the

verse that is the philosophy and without it the philosophy could not have its existence. The way in which the existence is accomplished, is the eternal way of art to be found in all poetry.

The art of Iqbal thus is the art of all thinker-poets. But his art has qualities of its own connected not only with his personal temperament, not only with his original view of life, but also with his peculiar way of handling words. He does not seem to care about words, but his words take care of themselves. He works by the sheer force of personality which generates high-power current which in turn gives new life to words, new colour to stock images, and brings into birth new images entirely unknown, unpremeditated. Take this:

یقین محکم، عمل پیہم، محبت فاتح عالم

جہاد زندگانی میں ہیں یہ مردوں کی شمشیریں

(Strong faith, persistent effort, love conquering the world, In the struggle for life these are the swords of Men.

No word here is new, no epithet original, but the way they are coming, gives indication of a very high power along with them. Strong Faith (*yaqin-i-mubkam*) inspires a new faith in Faith and gives new strength to faith. The three things spoken of, Faith, Action and Love, do not remain the things we have known so long. They have been made to signify entirely new things of Iqbal's own creation. The battle of life has been going on from time immemorial, but the battle of life of which Iqbal speaks is his own, a battle of which we had never heard before reading his verse. Poetry consists in giving new life to words. A great poet not only gives new life to words but also gives them a new life which is entirely his own. This is what Iqbal does. The stamp of his life is clearly printed on every one of his verses. For example:

سما سکتا نہیں پنہائے فطرت میں مرا سودا

غلطا تھا اے چنوں! شاید ترا اندازہ صحرا

(My madness cannot be held in the expanse of Nature,
Perhaps thy estimate of desert was wrong O my frenzy!)

The epithet in *pabna'-i-fitrat* is entirely Iqbal's. All the Urdu and Persian poets have been speaking of madness but Iqbal's *sauda* is something absolutely his own. Other poets have found satisfaction in a desert but for Iqbal the desert is nothing but a mirage. It becomes comes a new desert, for it appears to be too limited in space for Iqbal's 0 madness and the madness too becomes unique, for the expanse of the vast desert is too little for it. A new vision, indefinable in prose but clearly perceptible in verse, rises before the mind of the reader. It is always so with Iqbal's verses. It is spontaneous in effect — perhaps the most spontaneous in Urdu after Ghalib. But its effect grows with reading. One can read a verse, for a whole day, for days together, forget and return to it at some other moment and find it giving a yet new meaning. Iqbal's verses have a power to leap out of our memory at the right moment in our life. They come home to our bosom and business. Except Ghalib perhaps none of our poets has such a miraculous power of quotability. In Iqbal's verses there is no delicacy, no fineness of touch, no polish, nothing of the sort we connect with refinement of language or sweetness of expression. The verse is rough as life itself, but it has the power of life, the inexhaustible interest, the infinity of meaning, the irresistible impelling force, the magic that changes the world into something new, the mesmeric power that makes the reader fall in a trance and go on repeating endlessly what the poet has given. He tells us:

نوع دیگر ہیں جہاں دیگر شود

ایں زمین و آسمان دیگر شود

Look from a new point of view, the world becomes new, This earth and this sky become new.

His verses "take off" and with them we are taken up into the highest heaven from where the world appears to be new, the heaven and the earth become absolutely new things for us. His verse acts like an electric shock,

suppress all power within us and immediately after that makes us rise again breathing new life that he gives us. From the critical point of view this is a new aspect of what Aristotle has called *katharsis*. Our soul is set afire and then it re-emerges like the Phoenix out of its ashes.

It is not the meaning and association of words only that create this magic. The music of words and the verses, the melody of words, the rhythm of lines, the strain produced, by the stanza pattern, also have their part. Poetry is distinguished from prose specially by its music. The poet is born with a music in the soul. Urdu critics have only a conventional sense of verse music and can perceive it only in the use of certain set type of words and certain particular meters. The music of our great poets has hardly been written about. It appears to be hardly known that the music of a great poet is the pulse of the life of his age and of the people and the geographical conditions in which he lives. A great poet's music is the music of the *Zeitgeist*. Iqbal's music is the music of the age of railway trains, motor cars, and even aeroplanes. In his early poems there is the music of the Ravi river:

سکوت شام میں محو سرود ہے راوی

نہ پوچھ مجھ سے سے جو ہے کیفیت میرے دل کی

پیام سجدہ کا یہ زیر و بم برا مجھ کو

جہاں تمام سواد حرم ہوا مجھ کو

سرکنارہ آب رواں کھڑا ہوں میں

خبر نہیں مجھے لیکن کہاں کھڑا ہوں میں

(In the quiet of the even the Ravi is lost in making music,
Do not ask me what is the state of my heart.
This is the rise and fall of the message for prostration
The whole world has become a holy land for me.
I am standing on the bank of the moving river,
Yet I do not know where I am standing.)

But soon Iqbal had heard the music of the seven seas and had journeyed over the continents. He was the citizen of the world and the music of the twentieth century, with its divine discordance and yet baffling divine harmony carried along with breath-taking speed, has passed into his verse. No doubt the tempo varies from poem to poem. But the most outstanding quality of this music is swiftness of speed. It is always speed, speed upward, speed forward, speed around. At places there is suggestion of a swift dance at one place, the swiftness remaining all the same:

They made a circle round my grave lamenting,
The lovely ones, the bright, the rose-bodied, the silver clothed.
In the garden the caravan of flowers lifted the load,
From where have come these bloody hearted lovers.
O ye who searcheth in school manners, sense and taste,
No one buys wine from the shop of glass makers.
The study of the wise men of the West gave me Reason,
My heart was set afire by the company of the seers of the East.
Raise that cry which is the outcome of your earth and water.
O bewildered one! leave the noise of others out of account.
None knows that I too have a price;
I am the treasure which is not recognised by the blind.

Iqbal himself characterised his music as the ringing of the caravan bell. The music of the caravan is best expressed in the following shi'r of Sa'di.

اے ساریبان آہستہ راں کہ آرام جانم می رود

واں دل کہ باخود داشتتم بادلستانم می رود

O camel driver ! drive slow, for the ease of my heart is travelling, The

heart which I had with me is going with the beloved.

The caravan of Iqbal's age is the railway train, and if we compare the music of the above *shrr* of Sa'di with any of the *shrrs* of Iqbal, we shall see the difference in the slow pace of fourteenth century Iran and the swift progress of the India of the twentieth century. In Iqbal's collection of *rubai's* we find an art entirely different. One of the typical Urdu *Ruba'is* is:

دلوں کو مرکز مہر و وفا کر

حریم کبریا سے آشنا کر

جسے نان جوین بخشى ہے تو نے

اسے بازوئے حیدر بھی عطا کر

Make the hearts the center of love and faith,
Acquaint them with the House of the Lord.
He to whom thou has given the bread of barley,
Give him the powerful arm of Haider too.
And here is one of the best of his Persian *rubai's*:

عجم از نغمہ ہائے من جوان شد

ز سوادیم متاع او گراں شد

ہجگو مے بود رہ گم کردہ در دشت

ز آواز درایم کاروان شد

'Ajam became young with my music,
With my madness its power increased.

A crowd of men lost in the desert

On hearing of my bell came to join with the caravan.

These *ruba'is* appear to be points where the swift moving spirit of Iqbal's verse comes to a stop for a few moments in order to take a fresh start. Iqbal is in them undeniably, but he is contemplative. In his *ghazals* we find the best example of his characteristic art in a short compass. The shortness of *ghazal* is no check on the continuum of his imagery nor the swiftness of his music, as can be seen from the following:

متاع بے بہا ہے درد و سوز آرزو مندی

مقام بندگی دے کر نہ لوں شان خداوندی

ترے آزاد بندوں کی نہ یہ دنیا نہ وہ دنیا

یہاں مرنے کی پابندی وہاں جینے کی پابندی

جہاں اکسیر ہے آوارہ کوئے محبت کو

میری آتش کو بھڑکاتی ہے تیری دیر پیوندی

گذر اوقات کر لیتا ہے یہ کوہ و بیابان م میں

کہ شاہیں کے لیے ذلت ہے کار آشیاں بندی

یہ فیضان نظر تھا یا کہ مکتب کی کرامت تھی

سکھائے کس نے اسماعیل کو آداب فرزندى

زيارت گاه اہل عزم و ہمت ہے لحد ميں

کہ خاک راہ کو ميں نے بتائے راز الوندى

ميں مشاطگى کى کيا ضرورت حسن معنى کو

کہ فطت خود بخود کرتى ہے لالے کى حنا بندى

Countless treasure is the pain and burn of desire,
I would not exchange the place of worshippers for that of the
worshipped.

For thy free creatures there is neither this world nor that,
Here there is obligation of death, there of ever-living.
Veil is elixir for the wanderers in love.

Your attention delayed increases my fire.

He can spend his days in hills and deserts,

For the Eagle it is disgraceful to build a nest.

Was it due to the effect of art or the result of schooling,

Who taught Ishmael the manners of a true son?

My grave is visited by men of will and courage,

Because I told the high secrets to the dust of the road.

There is no need of adornment with beauty of meaning for me,

For Nature by herself colours the flowers.

The last shi'r initiates us into the secret of his art which comes into existence by the sheer force of Nature. In the last analysis we find his verse to be more a product of Nature than of Art. Conservative critics may say about him what Ben Jonson said about Shakespeare, "He lacked art". But as now after about four hundred years, we see that, by being just natural and above all conventions, Shakespeare is regarded as the best representative not

only of the art of the Elizabethan age but also of the art of all time, so Iqbal, by rejecting conformity to established art of the Urdu poets and submitting himself irresistibly to the dictates of the natural gifts with which he was endowed, bids fair to be the best artist of this century and one of the model artists of all times.

In Iqbal's verse we also find that higher art which consists in the creation of personalities and symbolic existences. Iqbal was well - versed in Western philosophy and the opinion goes round that it was the Western philosophy that influenced him, while in the poetic art he kept scrupulously to the Islamic tradition. If we look intently at his art we see that he had learnt from the great European poets how to bring forth "creations", "characters" or "symbols" with proper management of verse. We can see this from the verses Iqbal puts in the mouth of Satan at various places. Iqbal knew well the accents of Shakespeare's *Iago*, of Milton's *Satan*, of Moliere's *Tartufe* and of Goethe's *Mephistopheles*, but his *Iblis* has his own voice. Iqbal's *Iblis* first appears in the poem *Jibril and Iblis* where he has the sublime accents of Milton's Satan. He next appears in *Iblis ki Majlis-i-Shoora* (Council House of Satan): here obviously Iqbal has the second and the tenth books of *Paradise Lost* in his mind, but the verses that he puts in the mouth of his *Iblis* are nearer modern declamation of a politician disturbed by a revolt in his country. *Iblis*, however, gains his distinct individuality and characteristic accent in *Javid Nama*. He is a tragic hero, a sublime picture of sorrow. His speech shows his greatness through a gravity of tone and solidity of pace:

در عمل جز من چه برخوردار بود

آنچنان بر کار ہا پیچیدہ ام

فرصت آ دینہ را کم دیدہ ام

None has been more active than me?
I have managed matters in such a way
That I never left aught for delay.

Further on he speaks about himself. He is alone and working like a lonely hero:

نے مرا افرشتہ نے چاکرے

وحی من بے منت پیغمبرے

Nor have I an angel nor a servant,
Nor is my message communicated with the mediation of a Prophet.
His greatest sin is also sublime:

I refused submission to ignorant man,
And thus created the music of the good and the evil, right and wrong.
He is not an atheist:

If I say God is not, it could be foolish
For, after having seen Him I cannot deny his existence.
His connection with Adam is also unique:

When I got attached to the pain of Adam,
I did not become tyrannical for him.
Flames arose from the opening of his secret,
By compulsion he became self-willed.
I showed my force full well,
I gave you the pleasure of freedom of choice.
Like Mephistopheles he hates teasing Man.:

You free me from my fire,
Open the knot of my work, Adam!
He advises Adam:

در جہاں باہمتم ردانہ ذی

غم گسار من ز من بیگانه زی

In the world live with courage,
O my fellow-sufferer! live without me.
Iqbal asks him if Iblis cannot get peace and he replies:

بر لبم از وصل می ناید سخن

وصل اگر خواهیم نه او ماند نه سخن

I do not at all speak of meeting him again,
On my lips about meeting no word comes.
If we join in accord He will remain nor I.

Above all Iqbal's Satan is a figure of Remorse. His song addressed to God is drowned in regret and has the cadences of the laments of which Urdu poetry from Mir downwards is alas too full. Remorse still continues to be the characteristic of those Muslims of India who are proud of their culture and look with regret on its glory in the past. The *Nala-i-Iblis* (the Lament of Satan) is its best expression in verse:

O God of the right as well as wrong!
I have been spoiled by the company of Adam.
Never did he refuse to obey my orders'
Closed his eyes from himself and never found himself.

His dust does not know the pleasure of "pride",

Nor the light of God.

The victim himself asks the hunter "take me"

O save me from the obedient slave.

O free me from such a prey,

Remember my obedience of ages,
From him my present courage is baulked.

Ah me! ah me! ah me!

His Nature is soft and his will weak,
He cannot bear one stroke from me.

I want a man with insight,

A stronger enemy.

Toy of clay and water take away from me,
It is not fit for old man to play like children.
The son of Man is just a handful of straw,
The handful of dust requires one spark from me.

If in this world there was nothing but straw,
What was the use of giving me so much fire.
Breaking a piece of glass was easy,
Breaking a stone is real work.

I am so tired of conquest,
That I have come to Thee for help.

Give me a man who denies me,
Direct me to such a man.

A man who twists my neck,
From his eyes I begin to tremble.

He who asks me to go away,
Before whom I may have nothing to say.

O God ! one living man, lover of truth,
Perhaps I may gain pleasure in being defeated.

The simplicity of these couplets shows us the Satan within us, one whom we have cherished for long and whom we have come to regard as our valuable possession. But towards the end of the song the couplets rise from the gloom of desperation and the Satan in us also seems to be searching some True Man who will end his remorse.

In *Javid Nama* we get Iqbal's maturest art. The great poem with its cosmic visions, its perspective of Eternity, is written in Rumi's couplets, but within the couplets there is infinite variety of effects, and besides them there are the *ghazals* that gush forth at suitable moments in the progress of the poem. Long poems with organised and organic artistic unity have been very rare in our Oriental literature. For the scheme of his poem Iqbal goes to Dante's *Commedia Divina* and builds the poem in the form of a cosmic drama. The opening is the Prayer to God in the manner of all oriental works. But then follow two prologues, one in heaven and the other on Earth, as in Goethe's *Faust*. In the second prologue Rumi appears as Iqbal's guide just as Virgil appeared as the guide of Dante. Iqbal's poem is based on *Paradiso* part of the *Commedia* but in place of the ten spheres of Dante we have only seven in Iqbal. Besides the significance and the symbols of each sphere are also different in Iqbal who is more thoroughly acquainted with modern cosmology and also takes into account all that has happened from the thirteenth to the twentieth century. The scope of Iqbal's work appears to be smaller but is really larger. Iqbal does not vitalise only Roman Catholic Christianity but has place for all the great religions of the world. In the sphere of the Moon, a Hindu Saint, Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, and Muhammed all are represented. After the Hindu saint there appears an Angel and sings one of the most beautiful *ghazals* ever written. This *ghazal* presents Iqbal's lyrical powers at their best. All his philosophy is here vitalised by his characteristic expression and a divine music which makes it certainly the music of the Angel:

ترمم که تو می اورق بسراب اندر

زادی به حجاب اندر میری به حجاب اندر

چون سرمه رازی را از دیده فرو شستم

تقدیر امم دیدم پنہاں بہ کتاب اندر
بر کشت و خیاباں مچ بر کوه بیاباں مچ
برقے کہ نخود پیحد میرد بہ سحاب اندر
با مغز بیابان بودم بر جستم و کم دیدم
مردے کہ مقاماتش ناید بحساب اندر
بے درد جہانگیری آن قرب میسر نیست
گلشن بگریبان کش اے بو بگلاب اندر
اے زاد ظاہر ہیں گیرم کہ خودی فانہست
لیکن تو نمی بینی طوفان بہ حباب اندر
آن صورت دلاویزے از زخمہ مطرب نیست
محجور جناں حورے نالد بہ رباب اندر

I'm afraid thou art sailing thy boat in a mirage,
Thou wert born in secret and die in secret.
When the dust of Razi I washed away from my eyes,
I saw the Fate of the nations hidden in the Book,
Thunder over fields and deserts and hills and stacks,

The lightning which flashes over itself finishes in smoke.
I had been to the Westerners and searched but found not
A man whose value may be measureless.
Without the desire for gaming the world you cannot realise God
O smell hidden in the flower get the garden in thy domain.
O hypoentreal Mullah! I take it that Self is Mortal,
But thou dost not see the storm in the bubble.
This beautiful music is not due to the touch of the musician,
The houri who lost Paradise is wailing in the *rabab*.

The last *shir* gives us the cause of the intense spiritual music that can be felt in the metre and the rhymes of the *ghazal*. Iqbal is an instrument and inside him is a houri that is raising this cry because she had been banished from the Paradise. Where else can we get the vision of true poetry in theory as well as in practice! Quite a number of *ghazals* leap up in this divine lyrical drama. Rumi and Ghalib and Tahira and others sing their own *ghazals*, the various heavenly beings sing Iqbal's *Ghazals* and in them the spirit of Iqbal, is embodied in the same way as Milton's is in the songs of the Attendant Spirit in *Comus*. In this long poem they harmonise with the general highly musical atmosphere and yet provide variety from the regular grave-toned, thought-embodiment couplets that dominate. The first sphere is perhaps the most fascinating because of the Five Spirits that concern the Five Religions. From the point of view of thought-content we have here the best view ever offered of Religion as such and along with it we see the appropriateness of the symbolic figures that have been invoked. For example, who could be the best spokesman of Christianity but Tolstoy and who could be the most adverse critic of Islam but Abu Jahl and the speeches of these appeal to the intellect as well as to the emotions and build up one of the most rare cosmic visions.

The Second sphere deals with the makers of the Islamic conception of the State and may be called political. The third and the fourth deal with ancient figures or those who made errors in their efforts. The fifth brings in poets Hallaj, Tahira, Ghalib, etc., who are brought up in the rear by Iblis himself. In this the *ghazals* make the atmosphere entirely poetical and the dialogue too are about poetry and its value. In the sixth evil spirits under the

influence of Saturn are shown. The last begins with Nietzsche and leads upto the vision of Paradise. The epilogue is addressed to the poet's son who is taken as the symbol of the rising generation. On the whole the poem is a summary of Iqbal's philosophy and an index of the triumph of his artistic powers. The exposition of the significance of the various figures and their speeches will require a book. Here we dwell a little on the extreme variety of the effects produced by the variations of the couplet. Iqbal is here guided by Rumi not only in his journey to heaven but also in his progress towards the perfection of the poetic art. The short, sharp, tripping, hauntingly musical, simply dressed, and infinitely forceful couplet of the *Mathnawi* has been entirely handed over to Iqbal who makes it completely his own. We have already seen the effect of the couplets which Iblis speaks. Here we may quote a set of a different type.

کار ما غیر از امید و بیم نیست

پر کسے را ہمت تسلیم نیست

اے کہ گوئی بودنی ابن بود شود

کار با پابند آئن بود شد

معنی تقدیر کم فہمیدہ

بے خودی را نی خدا را دیدہ

مرد مومن با خدا دارد نیاز

با تو ما سازیم تو با ما بساز

عزم او خلاق تقدیر حق است

روز پیجه تیرا او تیر حق است

Our business is not but fear and hope;
Everyone cannot have the courage to submit.
O thou who sayest this was to be and so it happened
Matters are governed by circumstances and so come to pass.
Thou dost not know the meaning of Fate
Neither you saw God nor Self.
The Believer has contact with God;
"I agree with thee, thou agree with me."
His determination is the creator of the Destined Fall,
On the day of battle his arrow is the arrow of God.

Here we see how philosophical realism passes into sublimity by the time we reach the last couplet. In the poem these couplets occur just after some quoted from Rumi and we see how far the pupil has assimilated the art of the master in his own individual way. The master's simplicity has been coupled with the complexity of the modern age and the moral of Iqbal's achievement may be read in the following couplets from the speech of Tahira:

جلوه او بنگر اندر شهر و دشت

تا نه پنداری که از عالم گذشت

در ضمیر عصر خود پوشیده است

اندرین خلوت چسان گنجیده است

His presence see in city and desert,
That thou mayest not feel that he is gone,
He is hidden in the conscience of his own age,
In this narrow loveliness how can he be?

Iqbal is undoubtedly our century's greatest artist in verse. He is not an experimenter, but a culminator, in the words of T.S. Eliot, "the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously."