IQBAL AS A POET WITH A MESSAGE TO THE MODERN WORLD

By Jaliluddin Ahmad Khan

Allama Iqbal's works are so enormous in their scope, so rich in their diversity and so profound in their implication that it is not possible to sum up his teachings in the short period of time which is here at my disposal. Allama Iqbal's writings equally defy classifications. They refuse to surrender themselves to a specific or a definite form of literary nomenclature. Iqbal is at one and the same time a poet of nature and a poet of human emotions, a poet of the self and a poet of the cosmos, a poet of the inner world of man and a poet of civilization, a national poet of Pakistan and an international and humanitarian poet, a poet of tradition and a poet of progress, a poet of the East, who nevertheless ceases not to address himself to the West, a poet of Islam and accordingly a universal poet, a philosophical poet and a poet with a political vision, a lyric poet and a poet of dramatic dialogues. It is therefore impossible to invite attention to all these aspects whithin the limits of a single paper. Consequently I shall confine my attention to Iqbal's relevance to the modern world. Iqbal's relevance to the modern world can be studied in what, for want of a better word, can be called his message. But in order to bring out the significance of this message, I shall start by treating Iqbal as an ordinary poet, as a poet, say, of nature and of human feelings. This would show that even if Iqbal did not have a message to

propagate, a lesson to teach, an attitude to develop, he still could be valued for the superb artistic skill with which he manipulates his impressions and experiences of life.

In his early as well as his later poetry we can see Iqbal's concern with Nature. But Nature in Iqbal, howsoever fascinating and realistic the description, is never studied for its own sake. It is always associated with emotional overtones or with moral and philosophical implications. Somehow the human world has the greater relevance in his poetry. He would not let the soul of man submerge and drown itself in the apprehension of Nature. Instead, he uses Nature to develop and kindle the soul of man:

Nevertheless, Nature is delineated with a perfect realistic and objective concreteness. Writing an ode on an evening which he spent near the river Necker close to Heidelberg, he says:

خاموش ہے چاندنی قمرکی شاخیں ہیں خموش ہر شجرکی وادی کے نوا فروش خاموش کہسارکے سبز پوش خاموش

فطرت بر ہوش ہو گئی ہر آغوش میں شب کر سو گئی هر کچھ ایسا سکو ت کا فسوں ھر نیکر کا خرام بھی سکوں ہر تاروں کا خموش کارواں ہر یه قافله بر درا روان هر خاموش هین کوه و دشت و دریا فطرت هے مراقبے میں گویا

This is an objective description of Nature. But a single couplet which ends the poem invites attention to the soul of the poet and brings Nature in harmony with his mood:

اے دل تو بھی خموش ھو جا

آغوش میں غم کو لیکے سو جا

Sometimes Nature is employed as a scenic background to intensify the emotional intensity of the meanings of the

philosophical and political dialogues which are to follow: as when the poem Khizr-i-Rah starts with the following lines:

> ساحل دریا یه مس اک رات تها محو نظر كوشة دل مس جهيائر اك جهان اضطراب شب سکوت افزا هوا آسو ده دریا نرم سبر تھی نظر حیراں کہ یہ دریا ھر یا تصویر آب جیسر گہوارے میں سو جاتا ہر طفل شیر خوار موج مضطر تھی کہیں گہرائیوں میں مست خواب رات کے افسوں سے طائر آشیانوں میں اسیر انجم كم ضو كرفتار طلسم ماهتاب

But very commonly, natural imagery itself is employed for an elucidation of philosophical meanings. If the early poetry of Iqbal would invite the attention of children towards a mountain and a squirrel (پیهاڑ اور گلهری) or towards a spider and a bee (مکھی) the very objects of nature seem to be loaded with an intense realisation of the philosophical meaning of existence, in a poem

like (حقيقت حسن) where one becomes aware of the necessary decay of beauty in this life. p.116-117 (Bang-i-Dara).

خدا سے حسن نے اک روز یه سوال کیا جہاں میں کیوں نه مجھے تو نے لازوال کیا ملا جواب که تصویر خانه سے دنیا شب دراز عدم کا فسانہ سے دنیا ہوئی سے رنگ تغیر سے جب نمود اسکی وہی حسیں سے حقیقت زوال سے جس کی کہیں قریب تھا ، یه گفتگو قمر نر سنی فلک یه عام ہوئی ، اختر سحر نر سنی سحر نر تارے سر سن کر سنائی شبنم کو

بھر آئے پھول کے آنسو پیام شبنم سے

فلک کی بات بتا دی زمیں کر محرم کو

کلی کا ننھا سا دل خون ہو گیا غم سے

چمن سے روتا ہوا موسم بہار گیا

شباب سيركو آيا تها ، سو گوار كيا

Sometimes Nature becomes an obvious link with the supernatural and the natural and the supernatural are visualised within a single perspective. The Sair-i-Falak is a very good illustration of the point. p. 192-193 Bang-i-Dara.

تها تخيل جو ہم سفر سيرا

آسماں پر ہوا گزر میرا

ارْتا جاتا تها اور نه تها كوئي

جاننے والا چرخ پر میرا

تارے حیرت سے دیکھتے تھے مجھے

راز سر بسته تها سفر میرا

حلقه صبح و شام سے نکلا

اس پرانے نظام سے نکلا

کیا سناؤں تمھیں ارم کیا ہے خاتم آرزوئے دیدہ و گوش شاخ طوبي! په نغمه ريز طيور بر حجابانه حور جلوه فروش ساقیان جمیل جام بدست پینے والوں میں شور نوشانوش دور جنت سے آنکھ نے دیکھا ایک تاریک خانه سرد و خموش طالع قیس و گیسوئے لیلی اس کی تاریکیوں سر دوش بدوش خنک ایسا که جس سے شرما کر

میں نے پوچھی جو کیفیت اسکی

کره زمهرير سو رويوش

حیرت انگیز تها جواب سروش

یه مقام خنک جهنم سے

نار سے ، نور سے تہی آغوش

شعلے ہوتے ہیں مستعار اس کے

جن سے لرزاں ہیں مرد عبرت کوش

اہل دنیا یہاں جو آتے ہیں

اپنے انگار ساتھ لاتے ہیں

It shall be seen, therefore, that Iqbal as a poet is a superb and skilful artist and yet all the time he remains supreme moralist. In his search for meanings in life, he becomes a great idealist, and in his concern with nature, he continues to be a positive realist. The contrast between Idealism and Realism is resolved through Islam, which as the Din-i-Fitrat is a revealed religion in accordance with the laws of Nature. The growth of self in accordance with these laws is then developed in the doctrine of خودی. It is thus through Islam that Iqbal's idealism is brought in perfect harmony with realism. He makes the real approximate itself to the ideal and the ideal to embrace and infold the real. It is here that the message of Iqbal directs itself in its several ramifications. He has been writing

amongst a people who, owing to a hundred years of slavery, have gradually allowed themselves to be influenced by an extremely painful form of inferiority complex. Iqbal, therefore, finds it necessary to emancipate the minds of Muslims from an easy surrender to foreign values. He strives to rehabilitate the confidence of Muslims in their own selves, so that they may be pre-pared for the great task of leadership that lies ahead of them.

سبق پهريره شجاعت كا صداقت كا عدالت كا

لیا جائے گا تجھ سے کام دنیا کی اماست کا

A glance at the writings of Iqbal would reassure us how great is the significance Iqbal attaches to this message. The very titles of his books would indicate the importance Iqbal gives to the quality of his message. He presents the traditional attitude of the spiritual East as a remedy for the sufferings of the materialistic West. As a counterpart to Goethe's West-Ostlischer Divan, Iqbal addresses his Payam-i-Mashriq (The message of the East) to the West. The lyrical fervour in the quality of this message embraces itself in the sacred song of the e.g. j. He knows how the East itself has been disintegrating under the colonial exploitation of the West and in order to resist the corroding influence of the West, he writes his Pas Che Bayad Kard ay Aqwam-i-Sharq (What Then Should The Eastern Nations Do?). But the full flowering of his message takes place in the way Iqbal interprets the role of Islam within the context of the present day world. Its final consummation, of course, is presented in his Armughan-i-Hijaz. But he proceeds to

this final phase through a systematic formulation of his intellectual, imaginative and aesthetic attitudes. He builds up a philosophy of the progress of human destiny within the cosmos and writes his Asrar-i-Khudi and Rumuz-i-Bekhudi. He directs the attention of the Muslims towards the realisation of the responsibility that they owe to the rest of the world. The very titleof the first Urdu book Bang-i-Dira calls to mind the picture of a caravan which has already gone before and the strayed travellers have to be directed towards their destination through the echoes of the bells ringing amongst people who have already left. It is here in this book that the poet announces (p.306-307).

خدائے لم یزل کا دست قدرت تو زباں تو ھے یقیں پیدا کر اے غافل کہ مغلوبے گماں تو ھے پرے ھے چرخ نیلی فام سے منزل مسلماں کی ستارے جس کی گرد راہ ھوں وہ کارواں تھ ھے

مكان فاني مكين آني ازل تيرا ابد تيرا

خداکا آخری پیغام هے تو جاوداں تو هے

حنا بند عروس لاله هر خون جگر تيرا

تری نسبت براهیمی هے معمار جہاں تو هے تری فطرت امیں هر سمکنات زندگانی کی

جہاں کے جوہر مضمر کا گویا امتحاں تو ھے

جہان آب و گل سے عالم جاوید کی خاطر

نبوت ساتھ جس کو لے گئی وہ ارمغاں تو ھے

یه نکته سر گذشت ملت بیضا سے هے پیدا

که اقوام زمین ایشیاکا پاسبان تو ہے

The Bal-i-Jibril would lead the Muslims on the wings of spiritual inspiration offered by the Islamic revelation;

اٹھ که خورشید کا سامان سفر تازہ کریں

نفس سوخته شام و سحر تازه كريس

It announces

سبق ملا ہے یہ معراج مصطفی سے مجھے

که عام بشیرت کی زد هی هے گردوں

The Zarb-i-Kalim will strike with the force of a Moses against the tyranny of the modern Pharaohs of mankind. All the shibboleths of modern civilization (whether they refer to education, woman alts or politics) are examined in turn, only in order to point out the confusion that is characteristics of a society which has taken too many things for granted. One by one Iqbal brings down the idols of a sophisticated culture which is already decaying and which needs to be rejuvenated by a spiritual form of art.

This spiritual form of art, therefore, becomes relevant to the modern world not only in terms of Iqbal's philosophical message, but also in terms of his political vision of a disintegrating Europe which is waiting to be led by Islam, if along with the rest of the world, it is to be directed towards a progressive humanitarian destiny:

کھرا جسے تم سمجھ رہے ہو وہ اب زرکم عیار ہوگا

The way in which the Western nations, in order to develop them-selves economically and politically, undertake vast schemes of colonial exploitation of the nations of the East and thus come into conflict among themselves is illustrated in the critical comments of Mussolini which he makes when he advances his forces against Abyssinia:

بے محل بگڑا ہے معصومان یورپ کا مزاج

میں پھٹکتا ہوں تو چھلنی کو برا لگتا ہے کیوں

هیں سبھی تہذیب کے اوزار تو چھلنی میں چھاج

These instruments of civilisation who conspire together to rob the colonies of their resources are ultimately responsible for bringing about a cultural disintegration of the peoples of the East. That is why in order to perpetuate this tyranny, the devil Iblis instructs his political children: (p.148 Zarb-i-Kalim until AAhu.)

لاکر برہمنوں کو سیاست کے پیچ میں زناریوں کو دیر کہن سے نکال دو وہ فاقہ کش کہ موت سے ڈرتا نہیں ذرا

روح محمد اس کے بدن سے نکال دو فکر عرب کو دے کے فرنگی تخیلات اسلام کو حجاز و یمن سے نکال دو افغانیوں کی غیرت دیں کا ہے یہ علاج ملاکو ان کے کوہ و دمن سے نکال دو اہل حرم سے ان کی روایات چھین لو آہو کو مرغزار ختن سے نکال دو

Iqbal shows how education has been employed by the English to weaken the force of the character that belonged to the Muslims of the past. An English Lord when he is sending his son for administration in India says:

سینے میں رھے راز ملوکا نه تو بہتر

کرتے نہیں محکوم کو تیغوں سے کبھی زیر

بیچارے کے حق میں ھے یھی سب سے بڑا ظلم

برے په اگر فاشکریں قاعدهٔ شیر

تعلیم کے تیزاب میں ڈال اسکی خودی کو

هوجائے سلائم تو جدهر چاهے اسے پهير

تاثیر میں اکسیر سر بڑھ کر ھر یہ تیزاب

سونے کا هماله هو تو مٹی کا هے اک ڈهير

Iqbal shows, how as a result of this kind of education, there has been a transformation in the standard of values of the Muslims:

تها جو ناخوب بتدريج وهي خوب هوا

کہ غلامی میں بدل جاتا ہے قوموں کا ضمیر

He, therefore, reasserts the value of the traditional Muslim culture and rehabilitates it within a society which has been fast succumbing to a slavish imitation of the West:

The art of the actor, who in his habitual role of playing other peoples' parts gradually denies the course of his own actions, is a negation of the self:

حریم تیرا، خودی غیر کی، معاذ الله

درباره زنده نه کر کاروبار لات و منات

Art, than, is not to be just an instrument for providing some particular kind of pleasure. Its purpose is to produce a strong and effective soul: p. 113.

آیاکهاں سر نالۂ نر میں سرور سر اصل اسکی نر نوازکا دل هرکه چوب نر دل کیا ھے اسکی مستی و قوت کہاں سر ھو کیوں اسکی اک نگاہ الٹتی ہے تخت کے کیوں اسکی زندگی سر هر اقوام سی حیات کیوں اسکر واردات بدلتر هیں پر به پر کیا بات ہے کہ صاحب دل کر نگاہ میں جیتی نہیں ہر سلطنت روم و شام بر جس روز دل کی رمز مغنی سمجھ گیا سمجهو تمام سرحله هائر هنر هس طر

A slavish imitation of the West therefore cannot be encouraged:

چھوڑ یورپ کے لئے رقص بدن کے خم و پیچ

روح کے رقص مین ہے ضرب کلیم الہی

Similarly when he comes to the problem of the emancipation of women, Iqbal is very direct and straight-forward in posing the problem: p. 93.

اس بحث کا کچھ فیصلہ میں کر نہین سکتا

کو حوب سمجھتا ہوں کہ یہ زہر ہے وہ قند

کیا فائدہ کچھ کہ کے بنوں اور بھی معتوب

پہلے هی خفا مجھ سے هین تہذیب کے فرازند

اس راز کو عورت کی بصیرت هی کرمے فاش

مجبور هیں معذور هیں مردان خرد مند

كيا چيز هر آرائش و قيمت سي زياده

آزادی نسوال کر زمردکا گلو بند

Iqbal is nevertheless convinced that it is not through any set conventions that the real position of womanhood can be safeguarded:

But in his resistance to the West, Iqbal is particularly keen to repudiate the political institutions of the West:

مجلس آئين و اصلاح و رعايت و خقوق

طب مغرب میں مزے میٹھے اثر خواب آوری

دیو اسبتداد جمهوری قبا میں هائے توبه

تو سمجهتا هے یه آزادی کی هے نیلم پری

When Edward VIII abdicated because he could not be allowed to marry a previously married woman, Iqbal analysed the meaning of monarchy in England:

جسکی قربانی سے اسرار ملوکیت هیں فاش

شاه هر برطانوی مندر مین اک مٹی کا بت

جسکو کرسکتے هیں جب چاهیں پجاری پاش پاش

ھے یہ مشک آمیز افیون هم غلاموں کیلئے

ساحر انگلیس مارا خواجهٔ دیگر تراش

Monarchy is only a sacred institution amongst the English people to perpetuate a foreign tyranny over the Indo-Pak Sub-Continent. In his devoted love for his country, he, therefore, brings up a complaint against his own people to allow themselves to submit to a foreign 'yoke:

معلوم کسے هند کی تقدیر که اب تک

بیچارہ کسی تاج کا تابندہ نگیں ہے

دهقاں ہے کسی قبرکا اگلا ہوا سردہ

بوسیدہ کفن جس کا ابھی زیر زمیں ھے

جاں بھی گرو غیر بدن بھی گرو غیر

افسوس که باقی نه مکان هے نه مکیں هے

یورپ کی غلامی پر رضامند هوا تو

مجھ کو تو گلہ تجھ سے ہے یورپ سے نہیں ہے

This extreme love of liberty finds itself best illustrated in the poem where even the hell is not prepared to accept the dead body of a slave so that the grave which has held him for so long comes out with a complaint:

آه ظالم تو جهان سي بندهٔ محكوم تها

میں نه سمجهی تهی که هے کیوں خاک میری سوز ناک

تیری میت سے مری تاریکیاں تاریک تر

تیری میت سے زمین کا پردہ ناموس چاک

الحذر محكوم كي ميت سے سو بار الحذر

اے سرافیل! اے خدائے کائنات اے جان پاک

We can very well imagine how with this terrible yearning for independence, Iqbal would have welcomed the actual birth of Pakistan. It was not given to him for himself to see, however, the realisation of the dream of his life. He, therefore, ends on a note of regret when in a quatrain he almost sums up all the qualities of his poetry:

کوئی دیکھے تو تیری نے نوازی

نفس هندی مقام نغمه تازی

نگه آلو دهٔ انداز افرنگ

طبیعت غزنوی قسمت ایازی

We, however, who have been blessed with the fruits of independence, should stop to ask ourselves whether at a moment when our kismet has become *ghaznawi*, is it not that our *tabiat* has become *ayazi?*