IQBAL DAY IN U.K.

THE WISDOM OF MUHAMMAD IQBAL

— Some Considerations of form and Content

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Of writings about Muhammad Iqbal there seems to be no end. So at the present time, in April, 1967, it is extremely difficult to make any fresh contribution to the study of his genius. His works have been translated into many languages, Eastern and Western. Every aspect of his thought and philosophy would appear to have been explained and expanded — so much so that, while some see him as the latest in a long line of distinguished Islamic philosophers, others see him as a link between the philosophical schools of East and West — or even as an Eastern interpreter of modern Western science and technology. His literary merits, too, have been much discussed ; but it is probably true to say that the general tendency has been to pay much greater attention to his thought than to his poetical worth. In searching for some aspect of his work to consider today, it occurred to me that Iqbal's place in the great tradition of the poetry of Islamic nations — particularly that of the Arabs, Persians and Pakistanis — has not perhaps received its due share of attention. Iqbal is in the long line of Classical Islamic poets (and I do not use the term

"Islamic" here in a narrowly religious sense). Indeed, he is perhaps the last great Classical Islamic poet. He has more of the Classical spirit than say, Hali, though both are preoccupied with the problems of religious, cultural, and national regeneration in the Indo-Pak Sub-continent. The scholar familiar with the poetical classics of Arabic and Persian has the feeling, after reading Iqbal, that he is very much in the same tradition. Indeed, the last way to think of Iqbal is as a Pakistani poet. Rather does he speak for Islam universal, and for the common ground between Islam and other major world religions such as Christianity.

All too few critics of Iqbal have considered him as a poet in the long Islamic tradition. There were fairly well-defined canons of criticism for Classical Arabic poetry, and in the main they were subsequently applied to the Classical poetry of Persian and Urdu. They can best be illustrated from the introduction to the *Kitab al-shi'r wa l-shu'ara'* (Book of Poetry and Poets) by Ibn Qutayba, who lived in the 9th Century A. C. (3rd Century A. He says: "I have reflected on poetry, and come to the conclusion that it is of four sorts. One sort is beautiful in expression and excellent in meaning . . . Another sort is beautiful and charming in expression, then when you examine it, you find there is no meaning of value . . . Another sort is excellent in meaning, but its expression is inadequate . . . Another sort is deficient in both its meaning and its expression." This may seem, at first sight, a rather facile and trite categorisation of the truism that in poetry both meaning and language matter — a truism doubtless applicable to poetry in every language. But it should be considered in the light of the

traditional forms and techniques of Arabic poetry, which have been adopted by other Islamic peoples. It must be borne in mind that Islamic people's poetry has been based almost exclusively on the quantitative verse or *bayt* divided into two halves, each of which is called a *misra.* Each *bayt* had to be complete in itself, embodying a single thought, whose effect in both sound and sense could be considered as a single unit. A poem was likened to a necklace, each verse being a pearl of jewel. Even the most weighty of early Classical Arabic poems — the *qasida* or ode- seldom exceeded a hundred lines in length. *Hamasa* (chivalry) poems were considerably shorter, as were later forms such as *ghazal* or lyric. Poems tended to be entities by virtue of the occasion inspiring them, rather than by any unchangeable logical order of the verses. The critic tended to judge a poem as a series of verses, bestowing the highest praise on the poem, the greatest proportion of whose verses were jewels in both matter and manner. Thus Abu l'Atahiyya (748-828 A.c.) was criticised by the grammarian al-Asma'i in the following terms : "His lines are like the public square in front of the king's palace, whereon fall pearls, and gold, and dust, and potsherds, and fruit kernels." Yet Abu l'Atahiyya's best poems — the *zuhdiyyat* or ascetic poems — appeal very strongly to European poetical taste, because they take a simple theme, and follow it through logically and pithily, in simple language free of artificiality. The fact is that, by accepted Islamic poetical canons, Wordsworth's poetry would rate very low — much lower than Shelley's — whereas to most English tastes these two poets are rated almost equal. Iqbal could never have

been the leader of a revolution in poetical technique, because he was traditional in manner, though original in matter.

Thus, according to the Islamic tradition, in the ideal poem, every verse would be a quoteable pearl, embodying a thought apt to the subject and situation, expressed in language made attractive and telling by all available lexical and rhetorical resources, yet not farfetched or exaggerated. But because continuity was often lacking and the verse was a unit, verses might be interchanged, or even removed or interpolated, without any noticeable prejudice to the train of thought. The educated could, and did, quote a verse *(bayt)* or even a hemistitch *(misra')* in any situation of ordinary life where it seemed applicable. The thought or meaning need not necessarily be elevated or philosophical. Thus the following verse by the "Shakespeare of the Arabs," al-Mutanabbi, about his patron Sayf al-Daula, is excellent in both matter and manner:

Wa-rubba muridin darrahu darra nafsahu

Wa-hadin ilaihi l-jaysha anda wa-ma hada.

Many a man who desired to injure him has injured himself, and many a one leading an army against him has benefited him and been himself misled.

This verse expressed the military superiority of Sayf al-Daula all the more effectively for using the rhetorical devices of *jinas* and *izdiwaj*. When, however, the thought expressed was of universal application, and could be quoted rather as proverbs are quoted in many diverse situations, it was termed *hikma* (plural *hikam)*. The

word means "wisdom," or perhaps, in English slang, "hitting the nail on the head". This type of poetry is sometimes called *gnomic,* and it is quite common in many languages — in Welsh, for instance. In Arabic, an example is the first verse of al-Mutanabbi's elegy on the mother of Sayf al-Daula :

Nu'iddu l-mashrafiyyata wa-l-'awali

wa-taqtuluna l-manuna bila qitali.

We make ready swords and lances, and death slays us without a battle.[4]

Arabic poetry had two severe restrictions, which were to be removed in Persian and Urdu. Firstly, it was not designed for religious or philosophical subjects — despite the *zuhdiyyat* of writers like Abu I-'Atahiyya — being largely occupied with personalities, concerned with a special moment in time, and overwhelmingly dependent on patronage. It is, perhaps, significant that the short lyric *(ghazal)* on love and wine became the vehicle of mystical religious poetry. Secondly, Arabic poetry did not easily lend itself to larger forms, such as the epic, owing to the mono-rhyme system which prevailed. The social environment probably also meant that neither the reciter-poet nor his hearers had staying-power. Any large work would have to be disjointed and episodic : and it is probably no accident that Arabic fiction was largely anecdotal, and that a large work like the *Thousand and One Nights* was merely a string of anecdotes or short stories. It is

[4] A. J. Arberry, *Poems of al-Mutanabbi,* Camb ridge, 1967, p. 56.

true that Arabic writers of the Silver Age did produce some long didactic poems ; a famous example is the rhymed grammatical treatise by Ibn Malik (1203-1273 A.c.), which was called the *Alfiyya* because it was about a thousand lines long. In such poems, poets took some common metre, such as *rajaz,* and rhymed the two *misra's* of each *bayt,* changing the rhyme from verse to verse. (In the *qasida* or ode it had been customary to rhyme the two hemistitches of the first verse, and thereafter to maintain the rhyme merely at the end of the verse.) A rhymed couplet poem of this type became known as a *mathnawi* or in Persian, *du bayti.* It seems likely that this from originated in Persian rather than Arabic.

The Persians took over Arabic poetical canons. But they also felt the urge to compose historical and religio-philosophical poems of epic proportions. While in poems of medium length — longer than *qasidas* but shorter than epics — various stanza patterns were used, as in Arabic popular poetry termed *muwashshahat;ruba'i,mukhammas,* and *musaddas,* for instance : for epic, *mathnawi* was the favoured verse-form. The *mathnawi* — *as* already stated--is in rhymed couplets. For comparison purposes, it is worth reminding readers that in English epic poetry by Milton and others, blank verse is used. Unfetterd by rhyme, blank verse is made even more flexible by the acceptability of sentences running over from one line to the next. Rhymed couplets used by writers like Pope, though effective in satire, never achieved the same strength in English, though they were extremely successful in other languages such as French. Occasionally English poems were

composed in stanzas — like Spenser's "Faerie Queene" and Byron's "Don Juan."

Persian epic poetry may be divided into two categories — the heroic-historical like Firdausi's *Shahnamah;* and the religio-philosophical, which at first sight often seems secular, especially to Europeans. The second type is exemplified by 'Attar's *Mantiq al-Tayr,* and of course by the greatest of all, the *Mathnawi* of Rumi (1207-1273), to whom Iqbal so often refers. Rumi's book is a long, sprawling work, divided into six books, which are in turn divided into series of sections, mostly of an anecdotal-allegorical nature. *Mantiq al-Tayr* is divided into episode-sections, again allegorical. The allegory in both works is, as in many other Persian epics, religious and mystical. They both illustrate the fact that though the epic was an esteemed form in Persian, no closely-knit epic structure emerged. In general, interest is focused on the parts rather than the whole — the whole can be appreciated merely as an agglomeration of the parts. Urdu poets like Iqbal had to face up to this problem of cohesion in the poetical epic. Some would say that he begged the question by using Persian as the medium of his epics. However that may be, the result of this lack of obvious cohesion in the Persian epic was that its high-lights were the *hikma* verse divided into two hemistitches with internal rhyme. Arberry assesses the effect of the *mathnawi* rhyme very ingeniously.[5] He rightly asserts that, by ridding poetry of the restrictive Arabic mono-rhyme, it made the poetical epic possible.

[5] A. J. Arberry, *Tales from the Masnavi,* London, 1961, pp. 18-19.

He goes on to say : "Rhyme, then. . . may be said to have resumed its original function as a characteristic of elevated or emphatic prose utterance. (Here he quotes as an example the English proverb, *A stitch in time saves nine)*[6]…. It invests the statement with a kind of magical authority; but, being readily contrived in Arabic and Persian, which abound in rhyme, in those languages it carries very little rhetorical weight. It is not a conscious 'poetical' device." This is a penetrating remark, revealing Arberry's deep insight into Islamic culture. But if it implies that there is no inherent monotony in thousands of *mathnawi* couplets one after the other, I venture to suggest that it contains an element of "special pleading". The tyranny of the verse unit is still there, because the tradition derived from Arabic demanded that each verse should be a meaning-unit as well as a metrical unit. The *mathnawi* poem is therefore disjointed rather than continuous: in musical terms, it is *staccato* rather than *legato.* At the same time this facilitates the inclusion of verses empodytng gnomic wisdom — hikma — succinct philosophizing — epigrams — or whatever term one chooses to use. And the maintenance of verse-separateness, and its use as a vehicle for succinct philosophising, is an important constant feature of the poetry of Islamic peoples. At the same time, as Arberry senses and implies, Rumi was able to mitigate the monotony of the *mathnawi* form by his anecdotal method, and by his avoidance of artificial language, especially in his *hikma* lines. The latter point is illustrated by the following verse:

[6] Cf. Urdu. *Ek akela, do ka mela.* (One is solitary, two are company.)

'aqil an bashad kih girad 'ibrat az

marg-i-yaran dar bila-yi-muhtaraz.

The wise man is he that in (the hour of) shunned tribulation takes warning from the death of his friends.[7]

The following is an example of metaphorical *hikma* in simple language :

sahl shiri dan kih safha bishkunad

shir anast an kih khwud-ra bishkunad.

Deem of small acount the (champion) lion that breaks the ranks (of the enemy) : the (true) lion is he that breaks (conquers) himself.

All this may appear, at first sight, to have only marginal relevance to Iqbal's poetry. But it represents the heart of the problem facing any Islamic poet who wished to eschew the light-weight lyricism of the *ghazal* and compose lengthy and serious poems on philosophical or religious themes. And this was undoubtedly Iqbal's aim. It is undoubtedly true that, from pre-Islamic times, when the Arab poet was the spokesman of his tribe, the poet in Islamic nations had a respected role in society — a role which not even the later sycophancy prevalent in the courts of the Islamic Empire could altogether hide. In the Middle East,

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[7] Book I, verse 3114. Text and translation are taken from R. A. Nicholson's *The Mathnavi of Jalaluddin Rumi,* Gibb Memorial Series, New Series, IV, 1, and IV, 2, London, 1926,

in the Arab awakening of the last century, the poet was a cross between a teacher and a prophet. To Iqbal, the poet's function was to stir and stimulate his readers : the poet had some of the attributes of the prophet. "Nations," he said, "are born in the hearts of poets."[8] At the same time, while not a Sufi poet, he was inimical to facile and simple poetry. He once wrote : "Matthew Arnold is a very precise poet. I like, however, an element of vagueness in poetry, since the vague seems profound to the emotion."[9] Though undoubtedly seeing himself as a teacher of his fellow Indian Muslims, he had little in common with the direct didacticism and plain speaking of the Aligarh movement, epitomised by Hali. "The old poetic diction with its cloying touches, soon to be revived by Iqbal, has been discarded," says Sadiq[10] speaking of Hali. Iqbal had to find forms and means of expression suiting his temperament and his purpose. It is, perhaps, not surprising that he chose to write his weightiest works in Persian. At the same time, the poet's function as an inspirer of his people demanded that he produce *hikma* verses embodying important truth — gnomic verse, in fact, which would be remembered and quoted by the reader or hearer, and which in the tradition of the poetry, was moulded in the unit of the verse of two hemistitches. Not for Iqbal, then, the experiments of *azad sha'iri* (free verse) and metrical innovations.

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[8] Javid Iqbal, *Stray Reflections,* Lahore, 1961, p. 125.
[9] Ibid., p. 106.
[10] Muhammad Sadiq, *A History of Urdu Literature,* O.U.P., 1964, p. 267.

Iqbal's early poetry, later collected in *Bang-i-Dara,* consists of short poems in varied forms and metres. Some are *ghazal,* some *musaddas* (for example *Shakwa* and *Jawab-i-Shakwa).* Some are taken from European writers like Longfellow and Emerson, some are written specially for children. Iqbal had not yet felt the urge to embody his ideas in a long poem of epic or near-epic proportions. When he did, the result was *Asrar-i-Khudi* (19I5), to which a companion piece *Rumuzi-Bekhudi* was later added. This work, as Schimmel says,[11] "was written in the style and metre (and, she might have added, language) of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi's famous *mathnawi,* and according to a family tradition, the great mystic had appeared to Iqbal in a vision, urging him to write this poem in order to promulgate the new way of life. Rumi appears in this and all the following poetical works of Iqbal as his spiritual guide." *Asrar-i-Khudi* abounds in gnomic verse which linger in the memory. It is not, perhaps, Iqbal's greatest work, and resemblances with Rumi should not be over-stressed. Though divided into a prologue and eighteen parts, its total length is considerably less than the average book of Rumi's work. Again it is more directly philosophical. It does not conceal spiritual significance under external secularity. When it appeared, however, it was clearly the work of a totally new and original poetical-philosphical genius. It may well be that Iqbal realised that in the *mathnawi,* excessive length was a disadvantage : it may be that his distilled thought was repelled by the idea of prolixity. It may also be that contemporary trends were against inordinately long

[11] A. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing,* Leiden, 1963, p. 42.

poems. The *Mathnawi-i-Sihr-ul-Bayan* of Mir Hasan (I727-1786), with 4,442 lines, is somewhat longer than *Asrar-i-Khudi.* The *Khawar Namah* (1649) of Kamal Khan Rustami of Bijapur contains 24,000 verses, nearly as many as Rumi.

If *Asrar-i-Khudi* was a tautly constructed *mathnawi,* Iqbal's next major work, *Payam-i-Mashriq* (I923) was basically a varied Persian *Diwan,* united merely by the author's thought patterns — a *diwan* written in answer to Goethe's *West-oestliche Divan.* Here Iqbal was in his element, ranging over Western and Eastern ideas, untrammelled by limits of form. The opening poem, *The Tulip of Sinai,* which has been translated by Arberry,[12] consists of 193 *ruba'iyyat* (quatrains), and it is full of memorable lines. The following, for example, begins like Abu I-'Atahiyya :

Sikandar raft u-shamshir u-'alam raft

Kharaj-i-shahr wa ganj-i-kan-u-yam raft

umam-ra az Shahan payanda-tar dan,

na-mi-bini kih Iran mand wa Jam raft?

(Arberry's translation)':[13]

Gone is Iskandar with his sword and throne,

His tribute and his treasure, all is gone;

Know then, that folk endure beyond their kings:

[12] A. J. Arberry. *The Tulip of Sinai,* London, 1947
[13] Ibid., p. 27

Though Jam is dead, yet Persia liveth on.

Compare this with Abu I-'Atahiyya:

Ma lava la natafakkar ? Aina Kisra, aina Quaisar ?

What ails us that we do not ponder ? Where is Chosroes, where is Caesar?

Iqbal gives a new turn to the old idea that even great men have a limited life-span, and are levelled to the dust like everyone else, by adding that nations outlive their rulers. (Arberry's "folk," as a translation of "umam" — peoples, nations, is doubtless dictated by metrical considerations, but it does not quite give the sense). Such an idea would have been foreign to Abu I-'Atahiyya. The following puts one in mind of 'Umar-i-Khayyam:

bi-Yazdan ruz-i-mahshar Barhman guft

farugh-i-zindagi tab-i-sharar bud.

wa-laikin gar na-ranji ba to guyim

sanam az admi payinda-tar bud.

(Arberry's translation).[14]

The Brahman spoke on Resurrection's day

To God: "Life's lustre is a spark at play:

But if I may so speak without offence.

[14] Ibid., p. 2

The Idol lasted more than Adam's clay."

Passing over *Zabur-i-' Ajam* (I927), to which Professor Arberry paid high tribute, and which he translated as *Persian Psalms* (Lahore, I948), we now come to Iqbal's greatest large-scale philosophical poem, undoubtedly his finest work, the *Javid Namah.* This also is a *mathnawi.* In this poem, the poet, accompanied by Rumi, visits the various planets, and meets historical personalities, who in their dialogues elucidate eternal truths. So far as style is concerned, *Javid Namah* belongs to the very first rank of Persian verse. It is unsurpassed in grandeur of expression, in beauty of diction, and in richness of illustration. A regards theme, the poem deals with the everlasting conflict of the soul, and by telling the story of human struggle against sin, shows mankind the path to glory and peace.

In this poem, the potential monotony of the *mathnawi* form is relieved by the introduction of tyrical interludes, and by the somewhat dramatic form, with sections of dialogues of varying lengths. It may be that in this, Iqbal was influenced by Goethe's *Faust* — *especially* Part II — with which he was, of course, familiar. Certainly the characters who take part in the dialogues are varied in the extreme : Rumi — Zoroaster Jamal al-Din al-Afghani — Lord Kitchener — A Sudanese Dervish — the Seer from Mars — Hallaj — Ghalib -- Satan, and so on. The author himself figures as Living Stream (Zinda Rud). An incongruous group, no doubt ; but then, so are the characters, earthly and heavenly, in Goethe's *Faust.* When one comes to know

the *Javid Namah,* one realises that, despite first appearances, it is a triumph in form as well as in content and language, and that the form suits both the theme and the author's genius. In this work — of which there are now, fortunately, two

English translations[15] — Iqbal solved, in his own way, the problem of Islamic epic form.

In *Javid Namah* we have whole necklaces of pearls of wisdom, from which almost endless quotations could be made, all of them based on the couplet unit. The following are merely examples :

(1)Banda-yi-haqq bi niyaz az har maqam

ne ghulam u-ra nah u kas ra ghulam.

The man of God transcends all rank and class.

Being no man's master, no man's slave.[16]

(1) Madhhab-i-'asr-i-nau ayine nigar
hasil-i-tandhib-i-la-dini nigar

zandagi-ra-shar'-u-ayin ast 'ishq

asl-i-tandhib ast din, din ast 'ishq.

Look at the creed of this newfangled age

The fruit of disbelief. Love is the law

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[15] By Shaikh Mahmud Ahmad as *The Pilgrimage of Eternity,* Lahore, 1961, and more recently by Arberry.

[16] Shaikh Mahmud Ahmad, op. cit., p. 61.

And principle of life; a culture soul

Is faith, and faith is love.[17]

(2) *bi-admi na-rasidi, Khuda chih mi-juyi ?*
What search for God will profit thee?

When thou failed reaching man?[18]

These, like a large proportion of the verses in this work, are truly gnomic poetry — hikma, wisdom, in the highest sense of the word. Moreover, they are not wisdom only to Muslims, or to Orientals, but to men of every creed and race. This is one of Iqbal's great achievements — that he bridged the gap between East and West, and gave utterance to the common ground in the great religious and philosophical systems of the world.

Iqbal's poetical career is like a sandwich. The weighty Persian poems divide the Urdu poetry of his early and later writings. *Bal-i-Jibril* dates from I936, and *Zarb-i-Kalim* from I937. He is, indeed, a unique figure in modern Islamic literature. Though at times expressing modesty over his command of both Persian and Urdu, he preferred to write major epics in Persian, a foreign language, while employing Urdu in the traditional short forms such as *ghazal* and the medium-length *ruba'i* (though of course he wrote these in Persian also). Unfortunately some early Panjabi poetry seems to be lost. Many, like Arberry, have highly esteemed his command of Persian, others have been slightly less enthusiastic. Some regret

[17] Ibid., 103-104.
[18] Ibid., 177.

that he did not write exclusively in Urdu. V. G. Kiernan says[19] : "By comparison, the Urdu poems, addressed to a real and familar audience near at hand, have the merit of being direct and spontaneous utterances on tangible subjects ; and it is probably the case that nearly all the leading ideas of the 'serious' Persian works are expressed more briefly, and sometimes more effectively, in the Urdu." Whether this is true or not, it is rather paradoxical that, while Iqbal is regarded as a major figure in Urdu literature, it is more often his Persian works which are quoted as evidence of his genius.

I have already quoted Sadiq's dictum about Iqbal's old-fashioned diction — and Sadiq, making this assertion in a history of Urdu literature, is speaking of Iqbal's Urdu works. The real truth, however, lies mid-away between Sadiq and Kiernan. There is a wide range of treatment in the Urdu poems. Yet in the main, he does appear to have turned his back on those stylistic changes in Urdu which were a byproduct of the Aligarh movement. When one compares Iqbal with Hali, it is like comparing Shelley, Keats, or Coleridge with Wordsworth. The following quatrain by Hali. with its homely proverbial philosophising, does not have the Iqbal stamp :

jo log hain nikiynn men mashhur bahut

hain nikiyun par apni nah maghrur bahut

[19] In *Poems from Iqbal,* translated by V. G. Kiernan (Wisdom of the East Series), London, 1955, Preface p. xiii.

niki hi khwud ik badi hai gar ho nah khalus

niki se badi nahin hai kuchh dur bahut.

Those people who are very famous for their virtue

Are not over-proud of their virtue.

Virtue itself is a vice if it is not pure.

There is no great gap between vice and virtue.

Yet Iqbal *could* write simply in his Urdu verse, as the following examples show:

(1) From *Bang-i-Dara:*[20]
Apni millat par qiyas aqwam-i-maghrib se nah kar

khas hai tarkib men qaum-i-rasul-i-hashimi.

Do not judge your own nation by the standards of the peoples of the West.

The people of the Hashemite Prophet are distinct in make-up.

(2) From *Bal-i-Jibril:*
shahid-i-mahabbat nah kafir nah ghazi

mahabbat ki rasmen nah turki nah tazi.

The martyrs of love are not Muslim nor Paymin,

The manners of love are not Arab nor Turk.[21]

[20] In the poem *Madhhab,* p. 279 of the Urdu text.

Some of the best Urdu poems are by no means simple. There is, for example, marvellous music in the poem about the mosque of Cordoba, especially in the opening where the word *silsila* occurs at the end of five out of first eight lines. This gives an effect of which any Arab, Persian or

Urdu poet would be proud, and many parallels for it could be found going back as far as pre-Islamic Arabic poetry.

In this paper I have been concerned as much with the means used by Iqbal to put over his wisdom as by the wisdom itself. But I cannot end without stressing the universal appeal of his wisdom. His oft-repeated message on the importance of love, "faith is love" *(din ast ishq),* Sufi in origin, is also at the heart of Christianity. His belief in the development of the individual, and in action liberated by love, appeals as much to the West as the East.

I now return to the ideas of Ibn Qutayba with which I opened this paper. According to his dictum, the best poetry must excel in both meaning and expression. How far does Iqbal's poetry come up to this standard ? There is no doubt that he expresed noble meaning in beautiful language. It cannot be denied that the language and imagery used — especially in his Persian poetry — seem today to be somewhat old-fashioned, being derived from Classical Persian metaphysical poetry. In his verse form, too, he was conservative, using the traditional *mathnawi* verse of two hemistitches as the vehicle for his gnomic utterances. However, in

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[21] Kiernan, op. cit., p. 54.

the *Javid Namah* he was able to clothe the *mathnawi* form with great flexibility, and produced an epic orginal in every sense.

Postscript

I am only too well aware that this paper is somewhat strange in form, ranging from Classical Arabic literature, through Persian to Urdu. My justification is that I am myself primarily interested in Iqbal as a poet, not as a national figure, or even as a philosopher. And I agree with Sadiq[22] that "it is astonishing how little has been written about the formal aspect of Iqbal's poetry." If I have made some small contribution towards filling this gap, I shall he well satisfied.

[22] op. cit., p. 372.