

IQBAL AND THE QUR'AN

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Many laudable attempts have been made to trace the mainspring of Iqbal's thought and to elucidate the concepts which are his own. Consequently all the European philosophers and thinkers in general and Hegel, Bergson and Nietzsche in particular have been pressed into service to support the viewpoint of the critics who assert that one or the other of the Western philosophers inspired our poet or influenced him deeply. Some of these enthusiasts go so far as to claim that Iqbal's ideal of the "true believer" is but an Eastern version of the Superman of Nietzsche. They also put forward the theory that Iqbal's admiration for the Eagle is, in fact, a developed form of the worship of brute force which occupies a central position in Nietzsche's philosophy of life. Iqbal's deep knowledge of and his extensive studies in the European philosophy have given a semblance of truth to these fantastic theories of his critics, as there is no denying the fact that what we read, not only affects our modes of thought, but also moulds our total personality.

However, the most surprising thing about this plethora of studies on Iqbal is that he has not been studied in depth as an interpreter of the teachings of the Qur'an, although the Holy Book is the prime source of his philosophical thought and poetic inspiration. In fact, he has lit the torch of his thought at this very beacon of light and the bulk of his poetic utterances is a mere footnote on the text of the Scripture. Repeatedly, resonantly and even reprovably he reminds us of this origin of his muse. Sometimes he warns us:

میری نوائے پریشان کو
شاغری نہ سمجھ
کہ میں ہوں محرمِ رازِ درونِ
میخانہ¹⁰

[Don't take these tumultuous outpourings of my heart as mere exercises in poetic composition,

For I know all that takes place in the heart of the universe.]

Now and then he strikes a plaintive note and says:

مرے ہم صغیر اسے بھی اثر
بہار سمجھے!
انہیں کیا خبر کہ کیا ہے یہ
نوائے غاشقانہ!¹¹

[My fellow-poets mistook my effusions to be the outcome of a balmy day in spring season. They know but little as to the real nature of my love-song.]

¹⁰ Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt-i Iqbal Urdū), p. 51/343.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 15/307.

Once .he makes the following pointed reference to the purpose of his poetic compositions:

راز حرم سے شاید اقبال با
خبر ہے
ہیں اس کی گفتگو کے انداز
محرمانہ¹²

[Perhaps Iqbal is in the know of the destiny of the Muslims of the world:
The way he talks gives him out as one who knows.]

He also declares in all sincerity and earnestness:

نعمہ کجا و من کجا ساز
سخن بہانہ ایست
سوے قطار می کشم ناقہ بے
رہام¹³

[I have little urge and less aptitude to play the lyrist.

¹² Ibid., p. 55/355.

¹³ Zabūr-i ‘Ajam (Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Fārsī), p. 551447.

My lyrics are just a pretext to draw the straggling dromedary to its fold.]

But we have paid scant heed to these proclamations and protestations of Iqbal. That is why even now we do not know it for certain that the muse of this poet of Indian origin is Arabian in its inspiration. But the fact speaks for itself that whatever he says, or sings of, is based on the insight he has acquired from a thorough study of the Qur'an.

If we cast a cursory glance at the titles of his volumes and at the new phraseology which he himself has coined and popularised or which he has invested with new meanings, it becomes crystal clear that most of his poetic utterances are dyed in or imbued with Quranic teachings. "The Blow Struck by Moses" (barb-i Kalīm). "Persian Psalms" (Zabūr-i 'Ajam) and "Gabriel's Wing" (Bāl-i Fibril) are the titles which only a discerning and dedicated reader of the Qur'an could think of as titles for collections of his verses. The title "The Blow Struck by Moses" is so rich in its allusive associations, particularly in the context of the period of the first publication of the book, that it could not have occurred to one who had no intimate acquaintance with the Scripture.

Every great poet makes the discovery for himself that old vocabulary is inadequate to express his new experiences, novel ideas and individual susceptibilities. So he coins new words and phrases or invests old ones with new connotations and employs them as symbols of his modern sensibility. A study of these newly-coined words and phrases and original symbols helps us to a better and deeper understanding of his emotional incentives, mental processes and basic tendencies. Iqbal borrows copiously and freely from the Quranic terminology and the Quranic stories in coining his own words, phrases, similes and symbols.. "The Lamp of Muhammad," "the spark of the Father of Flame," "the trumpet of Isrāfīl," "Lāt-o Manāt," the two principal idols of Pagan Arabs,' "the rod of Moses," "arise by the leave of God," "Moses and Pharaoh and Sīnā'ī," "a member of the brotherhood of those who never despair," "the verse of the Universe," "the Book of Destiny,"

“the Pen,” “the spell of Sāmīrī,” “the idols of Azar,” “the sayer of 'show-thyself-to-me’,” are a few phrases of Iqbal’s coinage. As he uses them repeatedly, forcefully and consistently, it is evident that he has so thoroughly imbibed the teachings and the vocabulary of the Qur’ān that he unconsciously turns to its words and stories to express himself.

He uses Quranic phrases as rhymes and often adopts them as titles of his poems. A simile of rare beauty and rich significance from one of his well-known pieces fully reflects this attribute of his poetic composition. Defining a true believer he says:

فطرت کا سرود ازلی اس
 کے شب و روز
 اہنگ میں یکتا صفت
 سورہہ رحمن¹⁴

[His nights and days are spent in perfect unison with the music of Nature, eternal and serene:

They are unique in their resonance like Sarah Rahmān.]

The Quranic verse “Allah bears witness that there is no God but He”¹⁵ is a hemistich of the fifth poem of *Darb-i Kalīm*¹⁶ entitled *La llāha ill-Allah* (“There is no God but Allah”) is aglow with that spirit of monotheism and iconoclasm which is the essence of the Quranic teachings. In it he dubs the world as a house of idols, speaks of an iconoclast as Abraham and characterizes the modern world as an era looking for its own Abraham. All these images are purely Quranic, and the goal to which the poet calls us and

¹⁴ *Darb-i Kalīm* (Kulliyāt) p. 60(522).

¹⁵ iii. 17.

¹⁶ *Darb-i Kalīm* (Kulliyāt), p. 15/477.

the destination to which he wants us to direct our steps, are Quranic, too. In the third couplet of the poem he uses the phrase “goods and chattels of deception” precisely in the same sense in which it is used in the following verse of the Qur’an: “For the life of this world is but chattels and goods of deception.”¹⁷ Similarly, the fourth couplet of the poem:

یه مال و دولتِ دنیا یه
 رشته و پیوند
 بتان و هم و گمان! لا اله الا
 الله

[All the riches and treasures of the world, all the bonds of blood and social relationships, Are creations of whims and fancies.

There is no God but Allah] is based on a clear perception of the Quranic warning:

“Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting, and multiplying (in rivalry; among yourselves, riches and children.”¹⁸

In its form and substance no less than in its approach, the poem entitled “The Earth Belongs to God” is a commentary on the following verses of Sarah Wagi’ah:

“See ye the seed that ye sow in the ground? Is it ye that cause it to grow, or are we the cause?”¹⁹

¹⁷ Iii.184.

¹⁸ Ivii. 20.

¹⁹ Ivi. 63.64.

“See ye the water ye drink? Do ye bring it down (in rain) from the cloud or do we?”²⁰

Not only the interrogative form of these verses is retained in the following couplets of Iqbal’s poem, but also the same line of argument is taken up:

پالتا ہے بیج کو مٹی کی تاریکی میں
کون؟

کون دریاؤں کی موجوں سے اٹھاتا ہے
سحاب؟

کون لایا کھینچ کر پچھم سے باد سازگار
خاک یہ کس کی ہے؟ کس کا ہے یہ نورِ
اَفْتاب؟

کس نے بھر دی موتیوں سے خوشہء
گندم کی جیب
موسموں کو کس نے سکھلای ہے
خوئے انقلاب؟²¹

²⁰ Ivi. 68-69

²¹ Bāl-ī Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p, 119/411.

[Who is it that nourishes the seed in the darkness of the soil ? Who is it that raises thick clouds from the waves of the river? Who is it that ordered the favourable wind to blow from the west? Who is it that owns the earth and is master of the light and heat of the sun?

Who is it that has filled the are of wheat with pearls of grain? Who is it that has taught the seasons to rotate in such an orderly fashion?]

This identity of form and substance between the Quranic text and Iqbal's verses is neither accidental nor deliberate; it is just spontaneous and inevitable. It shows how deeply absorbed the poet was in the. study of the Scripture, as a result of which what he studied was transmuted into his personal observations, and what he observed was transformed into his inner sensibilities, which, in their turn, be-came his yardstick for measuring each and everything.

The ingredients which are the making of the "true believer," the elements which are the warp and woof of his very being, the duties which have been enjoined upon him, can all be traced back to the. following verse of the Qur'an:

"Muhammad is the apostle of Allah ; and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, (but) compassionate among them-selves,"²²

When we read the following couplets in the light of the above verse, we at once realise that their inspirational and galvanizing quality flows directly from it:

ہو حلقہء یاراں تو بریشم کی

²² xlvi. 29.

طرح نرم
رزمِ حق و باطل ہو تو فولاد ہے
مومن²³

[In the company of his friends (the true believer) is soft like silk, But in the fight between the just and the unjust he is hard like steel.]

جس سے جگرِ لاہ میں ٹھنڈک ہو
وہ شبِ نیمہ!
دریاءوں کے دل جس سے دہل جائیں
وہ طوفان!²⁴

[He is as refreshing as dewdrops which bring coolness and comfort to the heart of a tulip.

He is also as fierce as a storm which strikes terror into the very heart of a river.]

²³ Darb-i Kalīm (Kulliyāt), p. 45/507

²⁴ Ibid., p. 60/522.

اگر ہو جنگ تو شیران
عاب سے بڑھ کر
اگر ہو صلح تو رہنا عزال
تاتاری!²⁵

[When war breaks out, he is fiercer than the wildest lion;

When peace reigns supreme, he is graceful like a gazelle of Tartary.]

مصاف زندگی میں سیرت فولاد پیدا کر
شبستان محبت میں حریر و پرنیاں ہو جا
گزر جا بن کے سیل تند رو کوہ و بیابان
سے
گلستان راہ میں اے تو جوئے نعمہ
خوان ہو جا²⁶

[Acquire the hardness of steel in the battlefield of life,

But in the bower of love be soft like gauzes and muslins.]

²⁵ Ibid., p. 171/633.

²⁶ Bāng-i Darā (Kulliyāt), 274.

Rush over mountains and through wastelands like an irresistible storm,
But when you come to a garden, go through it like a meandering stream.]

The last line of verse 85 of Sūrah Ban[Isrā'il (xvii.) is as follows:

“Of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you (O men) !”

Iqbal remembers it when he confesses he has but limited knowledge:

تو ہے محیط بیکراں، میں ہوں
ذرا سی اَب جو²⁷

[You (O God) are a boundless sea whereas I am but a rivulet.]

In Sūrah Sānt (xxxii.) we are given a piece of dialogue between Abraham and Ishmael in which the former tells the latter:

“O my son! I see in vision that I offer thee in sacrifice. Now see what is thy view.”²⁸

The son makes the following reply to his father:

“O my father! do as thou art commanded: thou wilt find me, if God so wills, one practicing patience and constancy.”²⁹

Iqbal presents the essence of this dialogue, its moral contents and spiritual implications in the following couplet:

²⁷ Bāl-ī Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 7.

²⁸ xxxvii. 102.

²⁹ xxxvii. 102.

یہ فیضان نظر تھا یا کہ مکتب کی
 کرامت تھی
 سکھاءے کس نے اسمغیل کو
 اَداب فرزندى؟³⁰

[Was it his close contact with a great soul-or was it a miracle wrought in a school?

What was it that taught the code of filial duty to Ishmael?]

The Qur'an stresses the point over and over again that disobedience, insurgence and flouting the laws of God result in self-destruction for men. Whenever a community disregards the limits set by the Divine Law, it is tyrannized over by a despot or wiped out of existence by disasters. Iqbal puts forth this great truth in the following words:

کرتی ہے ملوکیت اثار
 جنوں پیدا
 اللہ کے نشتر ہیں تیمور
 و چنگیز!³¹

[Monarchy makes people lose their sanity and run wild

Tīmūr and Genghiz are but surgical operations performed by God on ailing, insane humanity.]

³⁰ Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyat), p. 14/306,

³¹ Ibid., p. 26/318.

In some religions of the world we do find the concept of a supreme power, but this power appears to be inactive, as if, after the creation of the universe, its work were over, and now it were wholly detached, uninterested and even powerless, no matter what happened to its creation. The Qur'an negatives this concept. In Sarah Rahmān (Iv.) God speaks of Himself in these words:

“Of Him seeks (its need) every creature in the heavens and on earth: every day in (new) splendour does He (shine).”³²

In the verse of Sara Bagarah (ii.) in which two of the attributes of God —”the Self-Subsisting, the Eternal”—are mentioned, it is also Said of Him that: “No slumber can seize Him, nor sleep.”³³ This concept of never-resting, ever-creative God is clothed by Iqbal in the following couplet:

یہ کائنات ابھی نا تمام ہے
 شاید
 کہ اَ رہی ہے دما دم صدائے
 کن فیکوں!³⁴

[Perhaps the universe is not a completed act as yet.

That is why the Divine command of “Be” and the hum of the resultant activity are still resounding throughout the creation.]

The Qur'an has exploded the theory that the universe has come into being by itself and that there is no set purpose or plan behind it. The following verse is very emphatic in this regard:

³² . liv. 27.

³³ ii.255.

³⁴ Bāl-i Jibril (Kulliyāt), p. 28/320.

“Not without purpose did We create heaven and earth and all between.”³⁵

According to the Qur’an, the world is not an idle show organised for mere sport and sheer amusement of a god who is now wholly forgetful of it as it no longer interests him. God says in Sūrah Anbiyā’ (xxi.):

“Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between.”³⁶

Iqbal has based his philosophy of Ego on these very texts. If we do not believe that the creation of the universe has a definite purpose and that human life has a basic significance, the discussion of education and training of human Ego, its evolution and sublimation becomes irrelevant and meaningless. These beliefs are, in fact, the cornerstones without which the edifice of Iqbal’s philosophy of Ego cannot be raised. That is why he gives us the gist of the foregoing verses of the Qur’an in these words:

تو ہما کا ہے شکاری ابھی ابتدا ہے
تیری
نہیں مصلحت سے خالی یہ جہان
مرغ و ماہی³⁷

³⁵ xxxviii. 27.

³⁶ xxi. 16.

³⁷ Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 45/330.

[You are destined to attain to great heights; this is just a humble beginning for you O man!

This world of fowl and fish is not without a basic plan and purpose.]

As is explained in the following verse of the Qur'ān, this basic purpose is to test who is the doer of good deeds among men:

“He who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed.”³⁸

As Iqbal puts it, the purpose of the creation of the universe is the evolution of human Ego, man's conquest of all that is in heaven and on earth, his sharing the creative activity of God and gradual emergence of that power in him which enables him to conceive of a better world, and with the help of which he transforms what is into what it ought to be.

بے ذوق نہیں اگرچہ
فطرت
جو اس سے نہ ہو سکا وہ
تو
39 کر

[Though Nature has her own sensibilities, Thou shouldst do what she has failed to do.]

³⁸ lxvii. 2.

³⁹ Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 89/351.

In his “Sāqī Nāmāh” Iqbal calls the world the first milestone in the long march of the evolution of human Ego and says that every-thing in the universe is awaiting man’s innovation in thought and action. Then paraphrasing the scriptural text he declares:

یہ ہے مقصدِ گردشِ
روزگار
کہ تیری خودی تجھ
پہ ہو اَشکار⁴⁰

[The succession of night and day has only this purpose behind it, That thou shouldst realize all the hidden potentialities of thy Ego.]

In our humdrum life this purpose is often sacrificed at the altar of our bodily needs. We mistake our fellowmen to be our Providence and we bow down our heads in submission to them. A single gesture of theirs fills us with fear of starvation and terror of death and a slight softening of their facial expressions holds out high hopes of a happy and prosperous career for us. Thus the tormenting devil—the worry of earning our livelihood and supporting our family—crushes our independent spirit and reduces us to walking corpses. It is to guard against these very baseless apprehensions that the Qur’ān explicitly declares that the strings of our livelihood are in the hands of God and God alone: “For God doth provide for those whom He

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 129/421.

will, without measure.”⁴¹ So we should be afraid of no one and look up to no one other than God for increase in our food and sustenance. The following verse of the Qur’ān reminds us of this great truth

“O men! call to mind the grace of God unto you. Is there a creator, other than God, to give you sustenance from heaven or earth? There is no God but He: how, then, are you deluded away from the truth?”⁴²

Iqbal translates the verse in the following couplets of his:

اپنے رازق کو نہ پہچانے تو
محتاج ملوک
اور پہچانے تو ہیں تیرے
گدا دار او جم
دل کی آزادی شہنشاہی،
شکم سامان موت
فیصلہ تیرا ترے ہاتھوں میں
ہے دل یا شکم؟⁴³

[Thou art a mendicant of kings so long as thou dost not know who provides thee with food;

If thou knowest Him, Darius and Jamshīd turn up as mendicants at thy door.

⁴¹ xxiv. 38.

⁴² xxxv. 3.

⁴³ Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyat), p. 33/324.

Independence of spirit is true kingship, whereas pampering thy own belly is a death sentence for thee.

Now it is up to thee to decide whether thou wantest to preserve independence of spirit or to pamper thy own belly.]

When Iqbal declares that

سروری زیبا فقط اس ذات ہے
ہمتا کو ہے
حکم راں ہے اک وہی باقی
بتان اَزری⁴⁴

[True sovereignty belongs to Him and Him alone Who has no equals; He alone is the true sovereign while others parading themselves as gods are no better than idols made of clay] he is, in fact, paraphrasing the following Quranic verse: “The command rests with none but God.”⁴⁵

The most cogent argument of the Qur’ān against ascribing partners to God and worshipping false gods is that those who do so wrong themselves. Their refusal to bow down their head in submission to Him sends them with a begging bowl in their hands from door to door and their despair of His favour lays them prostrate before a thousand tin-gods. Thus their Ego is destroyed: they cannot exploit to the full their potential powers which are a gift of God to them. A man can acquire knowledge of his inner “self” only when he is just to himself and guards his Ego. If he does so, the truth dawns upon him that in his own right he, too, is as worthy of adoration as a holy shrine. That is why the believers have been given the warning: “And be not

⁴⁴ Bāng-i Dark (Kulliyāt), p. 261.

⁴⁵ vi. 57.

like those who forgot God ; and He made them forget their own souls.”⁴⁶
Iqbal repeats the same warning in these words:

اپنے من میں ڈوب کر پا جا
سراعِ زندگی
تو اگر میرا نہیں بتتا ، نہ
بن ، اپنا تو بن!⁴⁷

[Dive deep into thy own heart and discover therein the true purpose of life.

It matters little whether thou art true to me or not, but the all-important thing is that thou shouldst be true to thyself.]

It is impossible to understand the mysteries of life and to find the

path of true guidance without Divine help: we are shown the right path only by the grace of God. “But God will choose for His special mercy whom He will.”⁴⁸ Iqbal presents the same maxim in this way:

خرید سکتے ہیں دنیا میں

⁴⁶ Qur’an, lix. 19.

⁴⁷ Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 31/323.

⁴⁸ Qur’an, ii. 105.

پر ویز غشرت
خدا کی دین ہے سرمایہ غم
فرہاد!⁴⁹

[Our personal efforts can help us buy the luxurious living of the mightiest of the kings in the world;

But the immense wealth of the burning soul of a true lover can be ours only by the grace of God.]

There are certain preconditions and irreversible rules governing the bestowal of this priceless jewel on men. The first prerequisite is that a keen and sincere desire for the search of the Ultimate. Reality should be kindled in the heart of a man, and that he should earnestly resolve to travel through the vale of life as a seeker after truth. And one of the irreversible rules is that only those who are receptive of guidance are guided to the right path. Hence God says:

“O ye that believe! fear God and believe in His apostle, and He will bestow on you a double portion of His mercy: He will provide for you a light by which ye shall walk (straight in your path).”⁵⁰

“O ye who believe! if ye fear God, He will grant you a: criterion (to judge between right and wrong), and remove from you all evil (that may afflict you).”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Bel-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 701362.

⁵⁰ lvii. 28.

⁵¹ viii. 29.

Iqbal is inspired by these very Divine assurances in writing the following couplet:

دل زندہ و بیدار اگر ہو تو

بتدریج

بندہ کو عطا کرتے ہیں چشمِ

اور⁵²

نگراں

[If you have a living and wakeful heart, by and by

You are given a deeper insight into the nature of things.]

When a man is in communion with God, he is set free from all fears and apprehensions. Such a man is very rich in spite of his apparent poverty: even when he has nothing, he has all, as the most adverse circumstances cannot snatch from him his serene smile. Since he loses his own will in the Will of God, he is impervious both to good luck and misfortune. For him a burning fire is turned into a bed of roses. Iqbal has given vent to these verities in different garbs in various collections of his poems and ghazals. Of these I quote only two couplets:

وہ ملتفت ہوں تو کنجِ قفس

آزادی

بھی

⁵² Bāl-i Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 156/448.

نہ ہوں، تو صحنِ چمن بھی
مقامِ ⁵³مجبوری

[So long as one enjoys the sunny side of God's favour one is truly free and buoyant even when one is confined within a dark dungeon.

But his indifference turns vast expanses of sunny parks into a place of imprisonment and privation,]

پاس اگر تو نہیں، شہر ہے ویراں
تمام
تو ہے، تو آباد ہیں اجڑے ہوئے
کاخ ⁵⁴و کوہ

[My awareness of Your Presence with and Favour to me turns ruins into scenes of a bustling life for me, whereas a populated city looks deserted and desolate to me when you have left me to my poor self.]

⁵³ Ibid., p. 42/334.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 92/384.

These couplets are replete with the conviction that God is enough for His servants. This conviction is a sincere affirmation for the following verse of the Qur’ān: “Is not God enough for His servants ?”⁵⁵

To series their political interests our British rulers made us believe that the Hereafter was for the believers and the world was for in fields; hence the former should not strive to secure temporal power and worldly authority which are subject to death and decay. The believers should, therefore, leave the world to be managed by others and devote themselves to the performance of their religious duties to get to heaven after death. Iqbal’s was the first voice to be raised in the subcontinent against this misleading philosophy of life. He gave us the clarion call in these couplets:

عالم ہے فقط مومنِ جاں باز کی
میراث
مومن نہیں جو صاحبِ لولاک
نہیں ہے!⁵⁶

[The whole universe is the patrimony of the militant believer;

He is not a true believer who is not the master of both the worlds.]

⁵⁵ xxxix. 36.

⁵⁶ &1-t Jibrīl (Kulliyāt), p. 34/326.

جہاں تمام ہے میراثِ مردِ
مومن کی
میرے کلام یہ حجت ہے
نکتہء لولاک⁵⁷

[The whole universe is the patrimony of the true believer.

I cite the tradition of Lolak⁵⁸ as proof of-the correctness of this assertion of mine.]

یہیں بہشت بھی ہے ، حور و
جبریل بھی ہے
تری نگہ میں ابھی شوخیء
نظارہ⁵⁹ نہیں

[Paradise, Houries and Gabriel—they are all present here in this world as well.

What keeps you from seeing them is your own lack of vision.]

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 67/359.

⁵⁸ These are the first words of a Tradition.

⁵⁹ Bāl-i Jibril (Kulliyat), p. 44/346.

These are not any novel discoveries of Iqbal; they all flow from the Quranic promise: “My servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth “⁶⁰ ; “For you must gain mastery if you are true in faith.”⁶¹

The foregoing quotations and illustrations make it, I hope, amply clear that Iqbal’s poetic creations in their bulk are direct or indirect summaries, commentaries, expositions and explanations of some of the verses of the Qur’ān. The following incident of his boyhood as narrated by one of his biographers, provides us the clue as to what made him such a keen and perceptive commentator and interpreter of the Qur’ān: “One day he was reading the Qur’ān when his father happened to come into his room. Seeing the young man absorbed in the holy Book, he said to him: O my son! you must study the Book as if it were being sent down to you just now.”

The obedient son seems to have treasured the advice and acted upon it for the rest of his life. As a result of it, the burthen of mystery was lightened of his heart, his prayers to God were all answered and he was granted a deep insight into all fields of life —religious, economic, historical and political. This insight enabled him—the offspring of a Kashmiri Brahmin though he was—to keep the flag of Islam flying high at a time when the British power, power and diplomacy had bought the very heart and soul of the scions of the oldest and most highly venerated religious families in the subcontinent, and they prided themselves on being its henchmen. Even today he is a beacon of light for the Muslims of the world because he lit his thought at the candle of the Qur’ān and also because he yearned that

کہ بھٹکتے نہ پھر میں ظلمتِ شب

⁶⁰ xxi. 105.

⁶¹ iii. 139.

[The wayfarers should not lose their way in the darkness of the modern age].

⁶² Bal-I Jibril (Kulliyat), p. 76/368.