

# THE RISE OF ISLAM

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## Introduction

This is the English translation of the poem by Allamah Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, known as Tulu-e-Islam or the Rise of Islam. This long poem of nine ghazals, with differences in cadence, was written in the early 1920s after the First World War. In this poem Iqbal gives expression to his feelings on defeat of the Ottoman Empire and dismemberment of the Muslim Khilafat. It deals with the following subjects;

1. The starting point of the poem and its leading theme is the reassuring thought, that the time has come for the re-awakening of the Muslim world and re-assertion of Islamic values-Verses 1-4; 9-14<sup>1</sup>

2. The poet pleads with himself the need for awakening of Muslims-Verses 5-8;15-16

3. In order to regain their past glory Muslims must;

(a) Recognize the high place of Man in God's universe and also must appreciate the value of equality of Man above race and colour. This is also the essence of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an-Verses 37;46;57

(b) Recognize their high destiny as the architects of the new World order-Verses 17-24; 49-56; 62; 63;

(c) Consider the degeneration of the Muslim world, which has resulted from complaisance and forsaking of God's message in the Holy Qur'an-Verse 41-45

(d) Recognize the value of Faith and develop Faith- Verses 32-36;37;39;40;47;48

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<sup>1</sup> At the back of Iqbal's mind was the thrilling victories won by Kamal Ata Turk and Ismat Inono against the British, the French and Greek forces in 1921, 1922. This trumpeted resurgence of Islam

(e) Work and struggle for the establishment of a united ideological nation (millat) instead of secular, geographical nations, in other words pan-Islamism-Vreses 25-31; 49-57

4. There are passing remarks on the ethical degeneration of the Western world. This has been done to remove inferiority complex from the Muslim mind-Verses 37;57-60

5. He exhorts Muslims to be active and struggle hard to awaken Muslim and re-assert Islamic values – Verse 61

6. Create a new world order. This is also the closing message-verses 63-72

The verses are not arranged subject-wise in the above order for difficulties of rhyming.

Some words were difficult to translate into English correctly, such as illat and faqr. These are technical terms and can only be explained rather than translated. Most appropriate English words or phrases have been used in such cases and the original word has been mentioned in parentheses and underlined. In some cases additional words have been used in parentheses to bring out the special meaning of the word, such as the use of “brave” before “man” in verse 40. Some words have been translated with the first letter in capital to bring out the special meaning, such as “love” and “Man”. It is hoped that such efforts will help the reader in understanding the correct meaning.

Words needing explanation are indicated by numbers within parentheses in the text and explained in “Explanatory Notes” section.

## The Rise of Islam

### I

1. The fading glitter of stars is the signal of a bright morning. The sun has arisen from the horizon, gone is the period of deep torpor.

2. Life blood has started flowing in the veins of the corpse of the East Sina<sup>2</sup> and Farabi<sup>3</sup> cannot understand this secret

3. The storm of the West has made Muslim into the Muslim. Only the ocean storms complete the pearl's beauty

4. From the Court of God is again to be bestowed on the Believer. The Turkoman's dignity, the Indian's intelligence, the Arab's eloquence

5. IF there is some lurking slumber in the flower buds "Strike the beat harder if the taste for music is lacking"<sup>4</sup>

6. Jump restlessly in the garden, in the nest, in the bowers. Mercury cannot be deprived of its restlessness.

7. Why should the eye accustomed to seeing chaste things see the beauty of delicate leaves

When it can see the power of the holy warrior's soul?

8. Light the candle of Love in the tulip's heart. Make every dust grain of the garden a martyr in search (of the Truth)

## II

9. The tear of the Muslim's eye has acquired the effect of spring showers (nesan)<sup>5</sup>

Pearls will be produced again in the sea of God's Friend (Abraham)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Sina-Abu Alai Hasnain Ibn-e-Sina He is a famous Muslim philosopher, historian, scientist and physician (980-1050 C.E.)

<sup>3</sup> Farabi-Abu Nasr Muhammad Ibn-e-Muhammad Ibn-e-Tarkhan Ibn-e-Afzalagh Farabi - He is one of the most outstanding and renowned Muslim philosophers. He became known as "the second teacher" "the first being Aristotle (870-950 C.E.) C.E.is Christian Era.

<sup>4</sup> This is the first line of the famous verse of Urfi, the well known persian poet of India. The whole verse is given below in translation:

"Strike the beat harder if the taste for music is lacking. "Sing livlier marching songs if the load is heavy"

<sup>5</sup> Nesan is spring rain. The drops of this rain are believed to produce pearls when they enter the pearl oyster.

10. The book of the Bright Nation (millat)<sup>7</sup> is being bound again. This Hashemite branch<sup>8</sup> is to blossom again

11. The beloved from Shiraz has carried the heart of Tabriz and Kabul.  
The zephyr finds its fellow traveler in the rose's fragrance

12. The avalanche of calamity over the Ottomans is not to be bereaved.  
Because the destruction of a hundred thousand stars gives birth to the dawn

13. Insight in world's affairs is more difficult than world's administration

Insight is created only when the soul melts into blood

14. For thousands of years the narcissus bemoans its colourlessness. The person with insight is very hard to find in the garden

15. Sing O Nightingale so that thy modulations may produce. The heart of the falcon in the pigeon's frail body

16. The secret of life is concealed in thy heart; speak it out. Relate to the Muslim the traditions of the pathos of life

### III

17. Thou art the powerful hand and the Word of the Eternal God. O imprudent person develop Faith because thou hast been over-powered by doubt

18. The Muslim's destination is beyond the blue sky Stars are the dust of the caravan that thou art

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<sup>6</sup> Khalil-ullah means the Friend of God. This is the title of Hadhrat Ibrahim (On whom be peace) (Abraham).

<sup>7</sup> Millat-e-Baida- This means "the Bright Nation" Baida means egg and refers to the egg shaped shining spot on the palm of Moses which was one of the miracles he performed in the Pharo's court. Iqbal has called Muslims as Millat-e-Baida or "the Bright Nation" through-out his works to indicate their purity as well as bright future.

<sup>8</sup> Hashemite means pertaining to the clan of Bani Hashem to which the Holy Apostle belonged. "Hashemite Branch" is the branch of the progeny of Hadhrat Ibrahim (Abraham) (On whom be peace) to which the tribe of Bani Hashem belonged, i.e. the Ismalite Branch. It also means Muslims.

19. Both the house and dweller are transitory but thine are the Beginning and the End. Thou art the Word of God, thou art Eternal

20. Thy life-blood adorns with hinnah the bride that is the tulip. Thy origin is from Abraham; thou art the architect of the world

21. Thy nature is the custodian of all that is possible in life. In other words thou art the touchstone for the hidden jewels of the world

22. Thou art the gift which the Holy Apostle took<sup>9</sup> From the material to the Eternal World

23. The history of the Muslim nation (millat)<sup>10</sup> reveals the secret. That thou art the guardian of the Asian nations

24. Learn again the leasson of Truth, Justice, Bravery Thou shalt be entrusted with the leadership of mankind

#### IV

25. This is the purpose of creation; this is the secret of Islam. Universality of Brotherhood, abundance of Love

26. Breaking the idols of race and colour merge into the millat. There should be no Toorani, no Irani, no Afghani

27. How long will continue the companionship of the garden's bird in the garden's confines? Thy wings are endowed with the flight of Quhistan's falcon<sup>11</sup>

28. In the world of life full of doubts the Muslim's Faith. Is the guiding light -in the dark night of the wilderness

29. What was it which demolished the grandeur of Qaiser<sup>12</sup> and Kisra<sup>13</sup>?

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<sup>9</sup> (Meraj)- This refers to the Celestial Ascent of Holy Apostle.

<sup>10</sup> Millat is ideological nation as opposed to geographical nations.

<sup>11</sup> Quhistan is a tract of land in Kerman, now in Iran. The falcons of Quhistan are famous for the elegance and swiftness of flight.

<sup>12</sup> Qaiser is the Caeser of the Roman Empire.

Nothing else but the Prowess of Haider<sup>14</sup>, the Contentment of Bu Zar<sup>15</sup>, the Truthfulness of Salman<sup>16</sup>

30. With what dignity have- the free men of the millat marched out? The centuries-old prisoners are watching the spectacle through the door's fissure

31. The stability of life is from firm Faith. The Tooranis have lasted even longer than Germans

32. When Faith is created in this earthly ember. It acquires the wings and feathers of the Holy Spirit<sup>17</sup>

## V

33. Neither swords nor plans are of any. avail in slavery. Chains are cast away when the joy of Faith is created

34. Who can assess the power of his arm? Destinies are altered by a mere glance of the Believer

35. Sainthood, sovereignty, the universality of knowledge. What are all these? Merely explanations of the secret of Faith

36. It is, however, difficult to develop Abraham's vision. Greed stealthily makes images in, the sub-conscience

37. The distinction of the ruled and the ruler is the perversion of humanity. Beware 0 oppressors the punishments of God are severe

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<sup>13</sup> Kisra is the persian emperor in whose reign Iran was conquered by Muslims.

<sup>14</sup> Haider is Hadhrat Ali ( May God be pleased with him) who was a cousin and son in law of the Holy Apostle and the Fourth of the Guided Caliphs (khulafa-e-Rashida) famous for his prowess, courage and spiritual as well as physical strength. He is proverbial for these virtues in Islamic literature.

<sup>15</sup> Abu Zar was a well known companion of the Holy Apostle and is proverbial for his piety, which includes faqr which has been translated as "contentment".

<sup>16</sup> Salman is a well known companion of the Holy Apostle who was of persian origin, and is known as Salman-e-Farsi.

<sup>17</sup> Holy Spirit is the Angel Gabriel (Jibril)in Islamic Literature.

38. The essence of everything is the same, be it made of dust or light. The sun's Blood will ooze out by cutting the core of the grain of dust

39. Firm Faith, constant effort, Love, conquest of the universe. These are the swords of brave Men in the struggle of life

40. What is expected of a (brave) Man? A high disposition, a sincere creed. A warm heart, an immaculate vision and a restless soul

## VI

41. Those who had leapt like an eagle turned out to be wingless. Stars came out drenched in the blood of the dusk

42. Those who used to dive under the sea were burned under the sea. Those who bore the dashes of the ocean waves emerged as pearls

43. Those who were proud of alchemy are now the road's dust. Those who put their foreheads to the ground emerged as makers of elixir

44. Our slow moving messenger has brought the message full of life. Those who were getting messages from lightning turned out to be ignorant

45. The sacred sanctuary was disgraced by the short-sightedness of the priest. What a deep insight the Tatar youth had<sup>18</sup>

46. The angels with celestial flight were saying to the earth. These earthly men proved to be more alive, longer lasting, and more splendid than them

47. The Believers live in this world like the sun Setting hither, rising thither, setting thither, rising hither

48. The individuals' Faith is the capital for the millat's reconstruction. This is the force which shapes the millat's destiny

## VII

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<sup>18</sup> This refers to the Mongol invasion on the Islamic world. Muslims were defeated and badly humiliated. This happened because of their spiritual and military weakness. This part of Islamic history is famous in Islamic literature. Subsequently the Mongols Accepted Islam and their services in the cause of Islam are also well known in history.

49. Thou art the secret of “ Be and it is”<sup>19</sup>; be known to thyself. Know the secret of self-cognizance; be God’s interpreter

50. Avarice has torn mankind into pieces Become the declaration of Brotherhood; become the language of Love

51. This is Indian, that is Khorasani, this is Afghani, that is Torrent. O though the one disgraced on the shore; jump out and become universal

52. Thy wings and feathers are polluted with the dust of colour and race. O bird of the sacred sanctuary flutter thy wings before attempting to fly

53. Dive in self-cognizance O the imprudent one, this is the secret of life. Forsake the narrow confines of morning and evening and become eternal

54. In the struggle of life acquire the nature of steel In the Love’s bed chamber become soft like silk

55. Transcend mountains and deserts like a furious flood. If there be a garden in thy path become a melodious brook

56. There is no limit to thy Knowledge and Love. There is no melody sweeter than thou in the divine orchestra

## VIII

57. Man is still the helpless prey to imperialism. What a calamity that man is the hunter of the human race

58. The glitter of modern civilization dazzles the eye This is but the effect of unreal jewels

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<sup>19</sup> This refers to the Holy Quran 11:117, which reads, “To Him is due the primal origin of the Heaven and the earth: When He decreeth a matter, He sayeth to it: ‘Be and it is’. “According to Iqbal’s theory of Khudi or self-cognizance, the purpose of God in the creation of the universe was to create ultimately His masterpiece, i.e. Man and endow Man with all the potentials of God’s vicegerent on earth and to train Man with divine guidance to

fit for this high position. For the details of the process of development of Khudi see Iqbal’s book “Asrar-e-Khudi” (Secrets of Self).



59. The science which was the pride of the sages of the West. Is the battle-sword in the blood-stained hands of avarice

60. The magic of prudence cannot stabilize the civilization based on capitalism

61. Deeds build up life; heaven as well as hell. This earthly creature (man) is neither made of light (like angles) nor of fire (like jins)

62. Partake the nightingale's clamour, open the flower bud. Because thou art the spring breeze for this garden

63. The spark of Love has again risen from the Asia's heart. The earth is the parading ground of the satin-clad Tatars

64. Come, a purchaser has appeared for the frail soul<sup>20</sup>. After a long time a caravan has arrived at our place

## IX

65. Come, O beloved the pasture's music has come from the garden. Spring has come; the sweetheart has come; as the sweet-heart has come so has tranquility

66. The spring cloud has established its camp up hill and down dale. The sound of waterfalls has come from the mountain tops

67. I have won you over, O Loved one, thou shouldst also sing melodies of the days gone by. Because flocks of songster birds have come in rows after rows

68. Withdraw from the (ritualistic) pious people and fearlessly draw the wine cup. After a long time the nightingale's song has come from this old branch

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<sup>20</sup> This refers to the story of Hadhrat Yusuf (On whom be peace) (Joseph) as narrated in the Holy Qur'an. Joseph was thrown into a well by his jealous brothers. He remained there for a fairly long time after which a caravan arrived and rescued him.

69. Narrate to the anxious ones the traditions of the Master of Badr<sup>21</sup> and Honain<sup>22</sup>. Their hidden meanings have opened up before my eyes<sup>23</sup>

70. The other branch of Khalil<sup>24</sup> is greening up with our blood. In the Love's market place our currency has attained full value

71. I am sprinkling tulip petals at the martyr's grave Because his blood has nourished the young plant of our millat.

72. Come, so that we may sprinkle flowers and pour wine in the cup. Rend asunder the sky's roof and lay a new foundation.

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<sup>21</sup> Badr was the first battle between the newly formed Millat of Islam in Madina and the pagan Quraish. It was critical in that it established the stability and political credibility of Muslims.

<sup>22</sup> The battle of Honain was fought immediately after the conquest of Makka. This battle also was decisive in the sense that Muslims were almost defeated on account of their pride and reliance on arms and their numbers instead of their Faith and the truth of their mission. Ultimately, Muslims won the battle and this victory completed the sovereignty of the Islamic State of Madina over the Arabian Peninsula. The Master of Badr and Honain means the Holy Apostle.

<sup>23</sup> Or perhaps the line can be interpreted as His hidden spiritual strivings (for the good of the Ummah) have opened up before my eyes.

<sup>24</sup> The progeny of Hadrat Ibrahim (on whom be peace) (Abraham) comprises two branches, i.e. the Judeo-Christian or the Isaraelite branch and the Muslim or the Ismaelite branch. The latter is meant here.