

ALLAMA IQBAL'S POETIC STYLE AND DICTION IN PERSIAN

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Iqbal is a great poet of Persian whose Persian Couplets exceed about 50% of his Urdu verses. His Persian Poetry contains almost all the forms. However, most of his Persian Couplets are in the forms of Mathnavis, Lyrics (Ghazaliyat), Rubai's (actually Dobeties) 'Qat'at (quatrains) and different patterns of Mustazadat. His first Persian Mathnavi *Asrar-i-Khudi* was published in 1915 when the poet was about 38- years old; Iqbal had started versifying this Mathnavi in Urdu but, as he himself writes, the incomplete Urdu versified portion was destroyed and he told the whole idea, which is his Philosophy of the development of individuality in Persian later. This Mathnavi was completed by the poet in the course of a few years. Sheikh Abdul Qadir in his preface to Iqbal's first Urdu Poetry collection 'Bang -e--Dra' which was published for the first time in 1924, claims that Iqbal had started versifying in Persian during his stay for higher studies in Europe (1905 to 1908) and prior to that he had attempted his aptitude in Persian Poetry only once or twice but this statement cannot be verified as over 100⁶⁶ and further research may explore even more number of Iqbal's Persian verses written prior to 1905.⁶⁷ During the student days of Iqbal, Persian was a familiar language of the educated elite but it may be noted that Iqbal had never chosen this language as a part of his courses during his School, College or University education. In one of his letters⁶⁸ he however argues that he had taken pains in mastering this language. Iqbal's command over Persian language and literature, his lucid poetic style and well understood and forceful diction of the language need no defence by now. Besides the great masters, poets and researchers of this language and literature in Iran, Afghanistan and elsewhere throughout the world appreciate his style and diction. His style is so innovative and unprecedented that it has been ascribed to his name; now Iqbal's style is gaining ground and fame and it is being

⁶⁶ See the appendix of my book *Iqbal and other Persian Poets*. Iran-Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, Islamabad, 1977.

⁶⁷ Such verses are found in the Manuscripts of Iqbal's Works in Iqbal Museum, Lahore.

⁶⁸ Editor. Sh. Attaullah. *Iqbal Namah* vol.11, p.343, Lahore 1951.

added to the prevalent four styles of the Persian poetry which have been assessed as such on the bases of words, style, subject-matter and meanings in the universe of Persian criticism.

Popular four styles of Persian Poetry

These styles are described as Khurasani (Turkistani/ Azarbaijani), Iraqi (Farsi), Indian (Isfahani) and literary revival return to the old styles of Khurasani and Iraqi. Some critics have sub-divided the Khurasani style as Azarbaijani and cited to the pattern of Qatran, Khaqani and Nizami but generally the first style of the Persian Poetry which begins with the advent specimen, of this poetry available from the beginning .of the third century A.H. towards the end of sixth century A.H. is generally termed Khurasani as it was the Khurasan area where Persian Poetry flourished during the Samani period and then it reached other parts of ancient Iran. This very style is described as Turkistani, too. The style or 'sabr' as the poet laureate Muhammad Taqi Bahar (1951) has popularised⁶⁹ the later, does not .belong to' geographical boundaries but it relates to some roughly estimated period. The Iraqi (Farsi) style or 'sabr' remained prevalent from the advent of 7th century A.H. till the middle of tenth century A.H. when a large number of Iranian poets and writers were attracted to migrate to India and thus a new style in Persian Poetry emerged which is termed as Indian (and also sub-divided as Isfahani). The Iranian literatures of many a genre during the period of Quarjaries came out to reform the Persian literature and thus the complexities of the Indian style were discussed and by and by, the poets tread retrospectively to the old styles of Khurasani and Iraqi as the subject-matter required. This style of literary revival is still in vogue in Iran while outside of the Center of Persian Poetry different styles may be envisaged. But Iqbal's style is a unique one. It has been ascribed to him by the contemporary Iranian stylistic critic Prof. Dr. Hussain Khateebi and none else has differed with his findings; his article had appeared for the first time⁷⁰ in 1952.

Characteristics of the styles

⁶⁹ See any edition of his 'Sabr Shinasi.

⁷⁰ First issue of Majallah Danistkade Adabiyat, Tehran University.

Though Iqbal's style has been ascribed to him as unique and it is true as far as the whole pattern of his poetry is concerned yet it does not necessitate that his poetry should not contain the elements of other popular Persian Poetic Styles. The critics have laid down the details of the main features and characteristics of the three styles of Persian Poetry. Here the details are not required. However to comprehend these points well, it seems proper to put the main points. The Khurasani style has been popular for its Qasidas characterized by their verbousity and high flown language. This has been a very forceful and vigorous style. The Iraqi style is the most beautiful style of the Persian Poetry. It is the style of Lyrics (the ghazals). The meanings may be deep and mystic but the words in Iraqi style are found to be of very lucid and fascinating nature. The great Masters of Iraqi style like Rumi, Saadi and Hafiz have used the Arabic words in such an artistic way that they appear to be mild and well-suited. Indian style is known for deep meanings and a complex way of saying. This style evokes thinking but some of the poets have indulged in exaggerations.

Sabk-e-Iqbal is very akin to Iraqi style. The *poet-philosopher has coined new terms and incorporated some new meanings in Persian language for the first time which has given a new name to his style. But Iqbal has some specimens of Khurasani and Indian styles too in his poetry. For example his 'Saqi Nama' is his 'Payam-e-Mashriq' reminds us of the eloquency and forcefulness of Khurasani style. And while rightly influenced by his era, and environment and by some poets of Persian following Indian style, couplets in his Persian Poetry may be found which correspond to Indian style.

In nutshell it seems proper to say that Iqbal's Persian Poetry contains Iraqi style but the poet had to add new words and meanings which do not correspond fully to any of the prevalent style. Thus Sabak-e Iqbal i.e. Iqbal's style has been added to the cluster of stars of the cosmos of Persian Poetry. The examples and further elucidations shall follow.

New words and terms coined by Iqbal

To respond to the demands of new meanings to be enunciated by him, Iqbal had to coin new phrases and words - structure; this shows his amazing command over both Persian and Urdu languages. Late Prof. Dr. Ahmed Ali Rajaii describes Iqbal's poetic style as very near to drama and this he conjures

to be under the influence of German dramist poet Goethe (d.1832). He highlights the new Persian diction coined by Iqbal. He cites from ‘Payam-e-Mashriq’ such examples that this book abounds in new terms. Here under is the list of such words as narrated by him⁷¹ and also by another researcher of repute late Prof. Dr. Sayyed Muhammad Abdullah in one of his articles.⁷²

رنگین بیان، چگون، پختہ کار، نرم خیز، حرف ہاف، بیگانہ خو، مژگان گسل،
اسکندر، فطرت، کم نظر، جمن زاد، خلوت آباد، صنم کدہ، جادو نوا، لالہ زار، آئینہ
تاب، خود گر، آتش گزار، کلان گیر، پختہ تدبیر، شعلہ گیر، صید بند، ادا فہم،
رمز آشنا، زخمہ ور، باختر رنگ۔

آہ خانہ زاد، گرہ خوردہ نگاہ، حاضر آرائی و آئندہ نگاری، طائر
پیشرس، حوصلہ زمزمہ پرواز، زادئہ باغ وراغ، شور پریدہ رنگ، شعلہ نم ناک،
تمہی ادراکی، چمن کدہ، تازہ کاری۔ افسونئی رنگ، گراں رکابی۔

The examples suffice for inference of Iqbal’s poetic calibre, though such new words are manifold in Iqbal’s work and I have already elucidated most of those in an Urdu article.⁷³ His this taste and capability is noteworthy that he has framed new phraseology in Persian which was an acquired language for him. In the versified prelude of his first Mathnavi ‘Asrar-e-Khudi’, he describes Persian a suitable language to contain and impart his new thoughts, but still ostensibly he refers to the necessity of framing new phraseology:

ور نمی گنجد بجو عمان من

⁷¹ Majallah Danishkada Adabiyat Mashhad, April 1967.

⁷² Monthly Iqbal-i-Nau, Pakistan, April 1956 and also in book Alaaat-i-Iqbal, Lahore, 1959.

⁷³ Quarterly Iqbal Review, Lahore, April 1979. تازہ بتازہ نو بنو تراکیب اقبال

بحرِ ها باید پئی طوفانِ من
 پارسی با رفعت اندیشه ام
 در خورد با فطرتِ اندیشه ام

My sea cannot be confined to a stream;

My flood calls for oceans, Persian, as according to the loftiness of my thoughts, Befits the nature of my ponderations.

The peculiarities of his diction and style

‘Allama Iqbal is a versatile, thoughtful and world-recognised Persian Poet, but many aspects of the exotic splendour of his art and thought have yet to be arranged and studied. One such aspect is a comparative study of over seventy Persian poets, renowned as well as less known, mentioned in his poetry and prose-works. The writer knows of no other Persian or Urdu poet-cum-writer whose works may reflect such an amazing galaxy of poets of the fifth-thirteenth/eleventh-nineteenth centuries. As compared to Persian poets, the number of Arabic, English, German and ‘Urdu poets traceable in Iqbal’s books is rather insignificant, though he knew these languages, too. The reason is obvious: Iqbal had learnt Persian with great enthusiasm; and consequently emerged to be essentially a Persian poet. No doubt, in addition to about nine thousand couplets in Persian,⁷⁴ Iqbal has versified nearly six thousand verses in Urdu, but his diction has remained explicitly Persian, as he had drunk deep at Persian’s fountain.

Iqbal’s Persian poetry started about the year 1906; till then he had been known for his Urdu poetry in the subcontinent, but his earlier Persian poetry too is well ‘attractive, though it didn’t make a part of his regular works.

The galaxy of Persian poets; reflective in Iqbal’s works, has different phases; the couplets of some poets are referred) in support of the use of certain correct rhetoric figures in poetry. The meanings of certain verses are appreciated and told by Iqbal in a different sense. There are allusions to the couplets of a number of poets; the meters, rhymes or rhythms of some poets

⁷⁴ Persian Muslims, Lahore, 1948, Sh. M. Ashr of Publications, pp. vii-viii.

have been borrowed and used by Iqbal in his Persian and Urdu poetry, and finally there is a good number of poets certain hemstiches or couplets of whom have been inserted by Iqbal among his verses for appreciating or even contradicting of certain meanings or feelings.

In his preface to English rendering of Iqbal's *Zabur-i-Ajarn* the late orientalist, Arthur John Arberry (d. 1969) writes:

“Iqbal accepted the ghazal as he found it, with all its age-long rigidity of form and matter; and with the true touch of genius, he took it one stage forward. While remaining absolutely true to both pattern and image, he gave the form the new meaning by making it express his individual message. The ghazal had been put to a variety of derived uses by the old masters; the panegyrists had taken the love-motive and directed it to patron-flattery; the mystics had used the language of human passion to express their devotion to God. Now for the first time the ancient form is made to clothe the body of a new philosophy. What that philosophy, is the reader... will find himself in a new world of thought and feeling, a world vibrant with hope and high endeavour, a world revealing the vision of a great thinker who saw in these sorely troubled times the dawn of a new age.”

What Arberry wrote about Iqbal's ghazal applies to all his poetry in Persian. Again, in his originalities in style, however, his love for the Persian language is also evincible--the language which, according to his hint in the *Javid Namah*, even Martian speaks.⁷⁵

Among the Persian poets of Khurasani style mentioned in Iqbal's works are Firdausi, Manuchihri, Nasir Khusrani, Masud Lahori, Sanai, Anwari, Khaqani, Nizami and Attar while those ascribed to the style of Iraqi are Rumi, Iraqi, Saadi, Qalandar Panipati, Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, Hafiz Shirazi, Faghani Shirazi, Faidi and Urfi. Among the poets mentioned above Rumi, Saadi and Hafiz have special significance in Iqbal's *Art and Thought*. I have already cited to the example in my English research⁷⁶ article and the book in⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Talk with the Martian Astronome.

⁷⁶ Quarterly Iqbal Review Lahore, April 1977.

⁷⁷ Iqbal our Farsi Shu'ra Lahore, Iqbal Academy, 1977.

Urdu which has been abridged into Persian also. I requite⁷⁸ the last portion of my English⁷⁹ article:

“Iqbal cites from and treads on the poetic path of Muhammad Hussain Naziri Nishapuri (d.1021/1642), Nuruddin Zahuri Tarshizi (d.1025/1616), Kalim Kashani (d. 1061/1651), Sa’ib Tabrizi (d.1086/1675), Abdul Qadir Bedil (d.1133/1721), Ghani Kashmiri (d.1077/1666), Mahmud Shabistari (d.720/1320), and 1v.lirza Ghalib Dihlavi (d.1285/1869). There are instances where he refers to Wahshi Bafaqi (d.991/1583), Muhsin Tathir Tabrizi (d.1131/1719) and Tahirha Babia (d.1264/1848), but the following Persian poets mentioned or cited in different writings of Iqbal don’t reflect any significant influence on him: Farrukhi Sistani (d.429/1037), Qatran Tabrizi (465/1072), Baba Tahir Hamadani (d. about 450/1058), Khawajah Abdullah Ansari (d.481/1088), Auhaduddin Kirmani (d.635/1237), Auhadi Maraghi (d.738/1337), Shaikh Chiragh Dihlavi (d.756/1356), Yahya Shirazi (d.782/1380), Kamal Khujandi (d.803/1400), Ghazali Mashhadi (d.980/1572), Mulla Arshi (d.989/1581), Sahabi Astarabadi (d.1010/1601), Anisi Shamlu (d.1014/1605), Malik Qummi (d.1024/1615), Zulali Khunsari (d.1024/1615), Mumin Akbarabadi (d.1034/1624), Talib Amali (d.1036/1626), Razi Danish Mashhadi (d.1076/1665), Izzat Bukhari (d.1089/1678), Faraj Tarshizi (d.after 1085/1674), Fauqi Yazdi, Hussain Gilani, Raqim Mashhadi (all the three of eleventh/seventeenth century), Thughra Mashhadi (d.1100/1688), Mukhlis Kashani (of twelfth/eighteenth century), Rasikh Sirhandi (d.1107/1695), Nasir All Sirhandi (d.1108/1696), Mukhlis Sialkoti (d.1165/1751), Hazin Lahijani (d.1181/1767), Jalal Asir (d.1040/1630), Mazhar Jan-i-Janan (d.1195/1781), Yahya Kashmiri (d.1181/1706), Azar Beg Isfahani (d.1195/1781), Nishat Isfahani (d. 1244/1828) and Qaani Shirazi (d.1270/1853). Similar is the case of contemporaries like ‘Aziz Lucknavi (d.1334/1915), and Garami Jalundhari (d.1346/1927). However, Iqbal’s image of Bedil and Ghalib is worth mentioning.

Iqbal has appreciated Bedil’s symbolic couplets; he has quoted from him and inserted several of his verses. Though Iqbal’s response to Bedil’s lyrics is not negligible, Ghalib’s impact on Iqbal’s Persian as well as Urdu poetry is

⁷⁸Referred to above, in No. 1.

⁷⁹ Reference 11 above, pp.30 to 33.

more intense; poem entitled “Ghalib” in Bang-e Dara, the firmament of Jupiter in Javid Namah, some couplets in Payam-i-Mashriq and statements in stray Reflections indicate Iqbal’s estimation of Ghalib. Ghalib is, no doubt, one of the greatest thoughtful Persian and Urdu poets of the subcontinent, and Iqbal rightly accepts him as his forerunner and literary model. A few examples of their different coincidences follow.

Ghalib

خونئی آدم دارم، آدم زاده ام
آشکارا دم ز عصیان می زخم

Son of Adam, I am habitual as my father was; I confess my sinfulness evidently.

Iqbal

لذتِ آدم، آدم زاده ام
غیرِ خود چیزی ندیدن کارِ اوست
زانکه بی عصیان خودی ناید بدست
تاخودی ناید بدست، آید شکست

Man’s concern is to taste the delight of rebellion, Not to behold anything but himself;

For without rebellion the self is unattainable, and while the self is not attained, defeat is inevitable.

Ghalib

سوخت جگر تا کجا رنج چکیدن و ہم
رنگ شو ای خونِ گرمِ تابه پریدن و ہم

The heart has burnt, how long to endure,
hot blood becomes colour to be poured. Iqbal

Iqbal

Each atom's body like a spark

I set a-quivering,

Each atom quivers through the dark, And soars as on a wing.

And the following comments by Iqbal on Ghalib make an end to our quotations:

“As far as I can see A-Mirza Ghalib, the Persian poet, is probably the only permanent contribution that we Indian

Muslims have made to the general literature. Indeed he is one of those poets whose imagination and intellect place them above the narrow limitations of creed and nationality...Mirza Ghalib (and) Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil... taught me how to remain oriental in spirit and expression after having assimilated foreign ideals of poetry”⁸⁰

In conclusion, Iqbal's quotations from, and appreciation of other Persian poets may not be misunderstood; like his thought, his poetic art is almost unprecedented and deserves to be called Iqbal's own style (Sabk-i Iqbal).

Note:

⁸⁰ Iqbal's Stray Reflections edited by Dr. Javid Iqbal, Lahore, Sh. Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1961, pp. 51-54.

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