

AESTHETICS IN IQBAL' S POETRY

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Iqbal was not only a great poet and, by virtue of his being a great poet, a great artist, but also a great art critic. His aesthetic taste coupled with his expression has no parallel in Urdu or Persian poetry. In almost all his poetical works in Urdu and Persian he examines the ideas of beauty, which have prevailed in all ages to find out, as far as possible, the fundamental principles on which such ideas rest. As a philosopher Iqbal has a realm of concrete knowledge in his possession but through poetry he communicates all his concrete knowledge in a sensory form. In his poetry we discover philosophised study of all the arts manifested through natural beauty. A pleasant blend indeed!

Before I move on further with this subject I would like to point out that according to some art critics aestheticism is generally not limited with classicism. Most of the classical theories have been considered by Benedetto Croce, a great modern aesthetic philosopher, to be less than "aesthetic", defective either through simple hedonism or through hedonism joined with didacticism. But as Iqbal was a poet who could not be labeled as only classical or only didactic or only a philosopher poet or only a modern poet or only a mystic poet, he was something more than "aesthetic", a mystical access or ascent into the boundless beyond criticism. He was an amalgam of a seer, a philosopher and a poet.

Iqbal presents his world beautifully and delightfully and the delight comes from the passionate vitality of his expression, for this gives him a criterion which, if necessary, he can abstract altogether from his total view of poetry as the most effective way of moving to virtue and apply to a work of literary art, whatsoever its subject matter and whether it has a moral purpose or not. Iqbal's poetry both teaches and delights and in case the reader has separate criteria for what is good doctrine and what constitutes delight in the way of expression, he or she has thus prepared the way for the emergence of the purely aesthetic point of view.

The world created by Iqbal is not an "imitation", in any sense, of the real world we live in, but an improvement on it, presented so purposively that the reader will wish to imitate that improvement. This aspect of Iqbal's poetry is also due to his perception of the beautiful in nature and art.

Aesthetics, although a branch of philosophy, deals with the appreciation of the beautiful in accordance with the principles of good taste for the main reason that it belongs to the appreciation of the Beautiful. The bliss that it provides to its reader is not a product of philosophical reasoning but of emotion, imagination and fancy. However, it is not far away from fact that sometimes philosophical reasoning also tries to provide pleasure and derive pleasure from this process in a clandestine manner. This process is not a taboo for philosophical reasoning, the only condition for the philosophical reasoning is that it has to surrender before imagination. Here I am reminded of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's quotations: "No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher". So it is because emotion or the felt thought and that too when the poet is able to give it the language of poetry, that genuine great poetry comes into existence.

Iqbal's aesthetic taste is a remarkable God-given gift not only to poetry but also to entire humanity. In so far as his aesthetic sense becoming a part and parcel of his self and his poetic expression is concerned, he is unique in the entire galaxy of great Urdu and Persian poets.

According to Iqbal the entire universe is an endless river of beauty, elegance and sublimity; its every drop is surging with charm and positive pleasure only if the eye is able to see it; only if the eye is able to discern it. How beautifully, he in his poem "Sada-i-Dard" (Voice of Affliction) expresses it in a charming couplet:

Mehfil-i-qudrat hai ik darya-i-be-payan-i-husn,

ankh agar dekhe to har qatre men hai toofan-i-husm

For him life is all beautiful and real and earnest. On this issue Iqbal is most vocal in his disagreement with Plato, according to whom "there is the world, an appearance, and there is the reality which is yonder". Both in his Urdu and Persian poetry Iqbal transforms beauty into the soul of life with

the result that the human'soul derives aesthetic pleasure and delight out of the process.

However, this should not lead us to misconstrue that Iqbal disagrees with Plato on every issue touching on aesthetics. For instance, take Plato's following assertion to which Iqbal is in agreement to a great extent.

Still the arts are not to be slighted on the ground that they create by imitation of natural objects; for, to begin with, these natural objects are themselves imitations; then, we must recognise that they (the arts) give no bare reproduction of the thing seen but go back to the Ideas from which nature derives,—and, furthermore, that much of their work is all their own; they are moulders of beauty and add where nature is lacking.

One of Iqbal's couplets touching on this issue is

Wahi jahan hai tira jis ko tu kare paida

Yeh sang-o-khisht naheen jo teree nigah men hai

Your world is (only) the one which you create yourself,

Not these stones and bricks, which are in sight

And again

Shair-i-dilnawaz bhi bat agar kabe kharee

Hoti hai us ke faiz se kisht-i-sukhanwari haree

If a heart-soothing poet utters something genuine

Through his grace and blessings plantation of poetry grows lush green

Mentioning Iqbal's disagreement and agreement with Plato on the issues mentioned above, it would perhaps be a bit unfair to bypass two of the most respected criteria of beauty—symmetry and brightness of colour—known to later

antiquity and emphasized by stoic philosophers and litterateurs. According to Cicero "the essential characters composing beauty are order, symmetry and definition". And according to Coleridge" a poem is a species of composition which proposes to itself such delight from the whole as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part (Biographia Literaria). Here two modern writers, William K. Winsatt, Jr. and Cleanth Brooks of Yale University have raised a question saying, "how could symmetry be part of the definition of beauty?" and then they quote Plotinus who says.

**Only compound can be beautiful, never anything devoid
of parts; and only a whole; the several parts will have
beauty, not in themselves, but only as working together
to give a comely total. Yet beauty in an aggregate
demands beauty in details; it cannot be constructed
out of ugliness its laws must run
throughout Ennead I. vi, !.**

**All the loveliness of colour and even the light of the sun,
being devoid of parts and so not beautiful by symmetry,
must be ruled out of the realm of beauty. And how
comes gold to be a beautiful thing? And lightning by
night and the stars, why are these so fair?**

Ennead I, vi 1.

It appears a bit strange but an in-depth study of Iqbal's poetry and prose reveals this fact that such questions have been tackled with in Iqbal's poetry in relation to the study of aesthetics.

According to him it is not essential for symmetry to be part of the definition of beauty but at the same time symmetry is not opposed in nature of tendency to definition of beauty. Similarly like a whole component parts can also be beautiful and thus be a source of delight for the reader or the viewer. Here are a few instances:-

Yeh sahar jo kabhi farda hai kabhi hai imroz

Nab een maloom ki hoti hai kahan se paida

Wub sahar jis se larazta hai shabistan-i-wujood

Hoti hai banda-i-momin ki Azaan se paida

This dawn which is sometimes tomorrow and sometimes today, It is not known to me as to where it appears from;

(But I know) the morning which causes tremulousness in the night-seraglio of existence

Takes its birth from the Azaan of Momin

Taseer hai yeh mere nafas kee hi kbazan men

Murghan-i-Saharh kbwan miree subbat men hain kbursand

It is due to my refreshing breath (poetry) that even in autumn singing birds of morning are satisfied and happy in my company

Sarood-o-sber-o-siasat, kitab-o-Been-o-hunar

Gubar hain in kee grab men tamam yakdana

Music, poetry, politics, book, religion and art & craft Each one of these has a unique pearl within it.

(Religion and Art & Craft)

Taban-i-Taza hi afhar-i-taza se hat namood

ki sang-o-khisht se hote nabeen jahan paida

A new world order can come into being only through fresh and novel ideas

Stones and bricks cannot create a new universe (Creativity)

Mujhe Khabar nabeen yeh shairi hai ya kuchh aur

ata hua hat mujhe ziker-o-fiker-o-soz-o-sarood

I am not aware whether it is poetry or something else

(But I know) I have been granted invocation, a questioning mind, fervour and passionate zeal and music

Touching on this question, William K. Wimsatt Jr. and Cleanth Brooks provide an answer in their own way saying:

"How many lines of a poem, we might ask ourselves, do we read before we begin to form some opinion of its merit? How many scenes of a play before knowing whether we enjoy it? Certain short phrases have, or seem to have, poetic power the sudden flashes of the sublime about which Longinus spoke the sure "touchstones" or sovereign fragments by which Matthew Arnold in a distant post-Platonic age would propose the ordering of criticism" "Our choice between a holistic view of art and a connoisseurship of the disjecta membra may not be able altogether to escape the fact that in one of its most natural, primitive and perennial uses, the term beautiful does apply to simple and bright and smooth objects—gold rather than rusty iron, a polished topaz rather than a lump of mud. The stoic doctrine of charming color may seem, when confronted with such examples, not very profoundly integrated with that of symmetry. If nowadays we refuse to entertain any such

conception as that earlier Greek one of "Kosmos the word "purple" or the word "topaz" as a valuable ornament in a poem_or to adopt the thought of the sophist Hippias in the Platonic dialogue, "Gold is what is beautiful".- nevertheless we do, to some extent, inevitably recognise the affinity between the beautiful and the brilliant. We do so, for instance, in the very metaphors we choose for commending works of art—bright or brilliant or clean or clear, we are likely to say, not muddy, or dirty or drab"

Iqbal is one of those poets who know what they are composing, what they have to say and what they have to delete. Repetition in poetry, more often than not, does not serve any aesthetical purpose, as for an intelligent and thoughtful reader it proves to be boring. Quite a large portion of Josh Melehabadi's poetry is a specimen of that.

Let us take sublimity. There is first, a certain emotion to be identified and analysed. This Iqbal calls "astonishment" (hairat)

Kabhi hairat, kabhi masti, kabhi aah-i-sahargah-i

Badalta hai hazaron rang mera dard-i-mahjoori

At times astonishment, at times intoxication and at times morning sighs

My forlorn condition appears in varied hues and colours

This astonishment is a state of the soul in which all motions are suspended, a sense of the mind's filled with what it contemplates, held and transfixed. The lower grade of this feeling of sublimity are admiration, reverence and respect expressed with a pinch of salt.

Iqbal's poem on Mussolini in "Bal-i Jibreel"(not to be confused with another poem under the same title in "Zarb-i-Kaleem"), which outwardly appears to be in praise of Mussolini reflects the above mentioned lower grade of Iqbal's feeling of admiration and reverence. Actually during his meeting with Mussolini in 1931 Iqbal was "impressed" by his sense of patriotism and what he had done for his country, Italy. That is why Iqbal praising him says:-

Nudrat-i-fiker-o-amal se mucjzat-i-zindgi

Nudrat-i-fiker-o-amal se sang-i-khara lal-i-nab

Chashm-i-Peeran-i-kuhan men zindagani ka farogh

Naujawan tere bain soz-i-arzoo se seen a tab

Faiz yeh kis ki nazr lea hai karamat kis ki hai

Woh ki hai jis ki nazar misl-i-shua-i-afab

Miracles of life are always the product of innovation in thought and action,

Innovation of thought and action can transform granite into a real ruby,

Life is now glittering in the eyes of aged Romans,

O' Italy, thy youth are now youth with glowing chests through their ardent desire

Whose mind has bestowed these blessings on thee? Who has performed these miraculous acts?

The one whose looks are like the rays of the sun.

In this poem Iqbal describes Mussolini as an embodiment of thought and action, a harbinger of warmth of love, a combination of beauty and grandeur and elegance and majesty.

It was only three years later, in November 1934, that Mussolini's intentions about Abyssinia became plainer. At that time Iqbal's attitude towards Mussolini has undergone a sea-change which one can see in Iqbal's poem on Mussolini included in "Zarb-i-Kaleem", but that is not the subject of the present writer's discussion here.

In so far as appreciation of beauty and elegance is concerned, Iqbal stands unique in India and Iran among his contemporary poets or even those who have gone before him. He sees beauty in all aspects of nature, even in the appalling and dreaded silence of mountains.

Husn kobistan ki huibatanaak khamoshi men hai

Mebr ki zaugustari, shab ki siyah poshi men hai

Asman-e-subh kee aaeana poshee men hai yeh

Sham ki zulmat, shafaq ki gulfirosi men hai yeh,

Azamt-i-dereena ka mitte hue aasar men

Tifliki na ashna ki koshish-i-guftar men,

Sakinan-i-sehn-i-gulshan ki ham--avazi men hai

Nanneh nanneh tairon ki aashian sazi me hai

Chashma-i-kuhsar men, darya ki azadi men husn

Shebr men, sebra men, veerane me, aabadi men husn

Beauty is there in mirror-clad morning sky, tis in the darkness of evening; in the twilights, florist business

In the decaying relics of ancient glory,

In the symphony of the chirping birds in the garden

In small birds' nest making process;

Beauty is there in the mountain spring, and in the freedom of the flowing river;

Beauty is there in the city, in the desert, in the waste-land and also in the flourishings

However Iqbal is not content with this and says

Ruh ko lekin kisi gum-gashta shai ki hai hawas

Warna is sehra men yeh nalam hai hun misl-e jaras

Husn ke is aam jalwe men bhi yeh betab hai

Zindagi is ke misal-e- mahi-e- be ab hai

But the soul is longing for some lost object,

Otherwise why is it vailing like a bell in this desert?

It is restless in this boundless manifestation and splendour of

Beauty,

Its life is like a fish thrown out of water.

Iqbal wants to see the beautiful world more beautiful. That is why he says:-

Haveda aaj apne zakhm-i pinhan karke chhoroon ga

Laboo ro ro ke mehfil ko gulistan kar ke chhoroon ga

Jalana hai mujhe her sham-i-dil ko soz-i-pinhan se

Tin tareek raton men chiraghan kar ke Chhoroon ga

Mujhe ai hamnasheen rehne de shaql-e-seena kavi men

Kih main dagh-i-mahabbat ko numayan kar ke chhornga

Today I shall manifest all my hidden wounds

I shall go on weeping blood till the entire assembly is transformed into a garden

I have to light the candle of every heart with my inner warmth,

I am bent upon transforming your dark nights into illumination.

O'my companion, please let me remain busy with my heart rending process,

As I am determined to make my scar of love palpable.

In one of his lectures entitled "the Conception of God and Meaning of Prayer" Iqbal says: "The teaching of the Our'an, which believes in the possibility of improvement in the behaviour of man and his control over natural forces is neither optimism nor pessimism. It is meliorism, which recognises a growing Universe and is animated by the hope of man's eventual

victory over evil". How beautifully he expresses the same idea in "Bal-i Jibreel" when he says

Yeh kainat abhi natamam hai shayad

ki aa rahi hai damadam sada-i-kun fayakoon

This universe is perhaps incomplete so far,

As every moment the voice-call of "kun fayakoon" (Be and it is) is coming

Aesthetics is theory of philosophy of taste, or of the perception of the beautiful in nature or art. Most authorities agree with Plato, the first great exponent of this theory or philosophy, that behind the changes due to the progress of time and differences of race, there is in the mind of man an idea of beauty that is absolute and exists quite apart from all consideration of time and space. One of its essentials is harmony; another is truth; fidelity to an ideal; and one of its tastes is giving of pleasure. It would not be overstressing a point to say that this pleasure is the creation of sentiment, emotion and imagination and not of reasoning or of philosophy in the strict sense of the terms. However, great thought transformed into felt-thought and given the language of poetry by a great poet like Iqbal lends to the ear as also to the mind of the reader the same pleasurable taste, which perception of the beautiful in nature and art is supposed to give. Iqbal, when addressing the sun says:-

Arzoo noor-i-Hagigi ki hamare dil men hat

Laili-e-zauq-i-talab lea ghar isi rnanzil men hai

Kis qadar lazzat kushood-t-uqda-e-mushkil men hai

Lutf i-sad basil hamari say-i-la basil men hai

Dard-i-istafham se wafiq tira pehlu naheen

Justju-e-raz-i-qudrat ka shanasa too naheen

A desire to behold the light of Reality is in our hearts,

The house of Laila of taste for search, quest, and seeking is in
this very camel-litter

(How can I describe) as to how much pleasure lies in opening a
difficult knot?

(Actually) pleasure of a hundred gains is there in this "fruitless" effort.

Thou art not aware of the pangs of the questioning mind,

Thou art not acquainted with the quest of nature's secrets

He is actually in search of the sublimest forms of beauty, elegance, truthfulness, harmony, fidelity to an ideal all giving pleasure and all this he finds in his religion, life of the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace be upon him) and his concept of God.

Like Ghalib, for Iqbal also Paradise is a place meant for recreation, rest, pleasure and luxury. It is, therefore, not worth giving any attention to. From his point of view, Paradise or Jannat is a place where one's all desires would be fulfilled and contrary to worldly life one would have there eternal repose and tranquility. But as he has always been preferring action and movement to rest and recreation and tranquility he has described Jannat in the following words.

The Old Testament curses the earth for Adam's act of disobedience; the Qur'an declares the earth to be the 'dwelling place' of man and a 'source of profit' to him for the possession of which he ought to be grateful to God. 'And we have established you on the earth and given you therein the supports of life. How little do ye give thanks', (7:10) Nor is there any reason to suppose that the word 'Jannat' (Garden) as used here means the supersensual paradise from which man is supposed to have fallen on this earth. According to the Qur'an man is not a stranger on this earth. 'And we have caused you to grow from the earth, says the Qur'an. The 'Jannat', mentioned in the legend, cannot mean the eternal

abode of the righteous. In the sense of the eternal abode of the righteous, 'Jannat' is described by the Qur'an to be the place 'wherein the righteous will pass to one another the cup which shall engender no light discourse, no motive to sin', It is further described to be the place 'wherein no weariness shall reach the righteous, nor forth from it shall they be cast.' In the 'Jannat' mentioned in the legend, however, the very first event that took place was man's sin of disobedience followed by his expulsion. In fact, the Qur'an itself explains the meaning of the word as used in its own narration. In the second episode of the legend the garden is described as a place 'where there is neither hunger, no thirst, neither heat nor nakedness'. I am, therefore, inclined to think that the 'Jannat' in the Qur'anic narration is the conception of a primitive state in which man is practically unrelated to his environment and consequently does not feel the sting of human wants the birth of which alone marks the beginning of human culture.

Although a number of Iqbal's complets and other writings can be referred to for giving instances of Iqbal's above-mentioned approach to Jannat, but the most glaring example is "Masjid-i-Qurtuba" which is generally regarded not only as Iqbal's best poem but a magnum opus in the entire world of Urdu poetry. The main point of similarity between the mazquita de-Qordoba in Spain and Masjid-i-Qurtuba in "Bal-i Jibreel" is that the former is a feat of architecture and the latter a literary or, in more_ appropriate words a poetic masterpiece.

This poem comprising eight stanzas which opens with a poetic description of the nature and essence of the Real Time touches on a variety of subjects, mundane as well as celestial, including fine arts, love with all its sweep, philosophy, history, politics, religion mortality and immortality, grandeur, charm, elegance and beauty the mosque possesses. In one of its eight stanzas Iqbal addresses the mosque making references to French revolution, catholicism, Reformation and finally says:

Ruh-i-Muslimn men hai aaj wuhi iztirab

Raz-i-khudai hai yeh keh naheen sakti zaban

Dekhiye is behr bitch se uchhalta hai kya

Gunhad-i-neelufari rang badalta hai kya

Now that commotion has seized even the soul of the Muslim

Strangely, divinely its meaning cannot be told by the tongue

Watch from this ocean-floor what new protents shall burst

Watch within azur vault what new cluours hall spring.

The charm of the poem lies in the most exquisite use of pleasant blend of thought and emotion embellished with simile, mataphor, myth, symbol, metaphysical approach and imagery. Iqbal is a perfect master in using metaphor as a device for expanding meaning, for saving several things at once, for producing ambivalence and demonstration of how metaphysical expression can help to achieve richness and subtlety of implication. In "Masjid-i-Qurtuba" recurring images of a certain kind give a characteristic tone and, a whole set of echoing meaning to the poem as well to the backdrop of the poem, La Mazquita de Cordoba, a feat of architecture. The marvellous city of Cordoba was founded in the 18th century a few years after the invasion and the rapid conquest of the Peninsula by the great Muslim General Tariq. The city attained the highest splendour under two great sovereigns, the caliphs Abdur-Rehman III (912-961) and his son Al-Kakim II (976-1009) and the de facto government of Ahangar until the first year of the 11th century.

The twin focal points of this city were the La Mazquta de Qordoba and the Madinat-uz-Zohra, one reflective of the grandeur and strength of the Mooish rulers, the other representative of spiritual faith. The city had an aesthetic appeal as well as it was planned to house the monarch, his court and the nobility.

The Spanish poet Gorgora says addressing this city

Oh lofty wall Oh towere crowned

With honour, majesty and valor!

Oh you great river, king of Andalusia,

Of noble, if no golden sands!

To see your wall, your towers and your river,

Your plains and mountains—oh my native country! Flower of Spain.

One can, therefore, say that the back drop for Bal-i-Jibreeli's poem, "Masjid-i-Qurtuba" had already been set by political and social circumstances as well as nature itself about ten centuries before Iqbal set his foot on the soil of Spain, particular Andalusia to see L. Mazquita- de Cordoba and have spiritual communion with 'it.

Iqbal is fully aware that social progress is inconceivable without the development of spiritual culture, which boosts the peoples' creative energy. He is also conscious of the fact that we need today, as never before in history including the history of aesthetic thought, the solid basis of progressive traditions and a correct ideologic approach to past development. In other words, analysis of our aesthetic heritage, however instructive it may be, must be based on feeling for history, its knowledge and understanding without unnecessary modernisation and with due consideration for historic distance, so to speak.

What Karl Marx said of John Milton that "Milton produced 'paradise Lost' for the same reason that a silk worm produces silk. It was an activity of his nature", aptly applies to Iqbal in so far as his poetry including "Masjid-i-Qurtuba" is concerned.

In one or two paragraphs in the foregoing pages of this paper it has been stated that aesthetic expression as distinct from the philosophy of art pertains to the perceptual level of human experience, but I hope my readers would pardon me if I say that in so far as Iqbal's poetry, which is all philosophical from beginning to end, is concerned, gives an insight into moral; aesthetic and religious values and helps men and women to discriminate. Philosophy does not give sensuous pleasure, but great philosophical poetry does give and Iqbal's poetry can be quoted as a

specimen of that genre. Generally speaking the goals of art are not knowledge and understanding as in philosophy, nor description and controls as in science, but creativity, perception, form, beauty, communication and expression and above all the esthetic response. But Iqbal's poetry transcends all such barriers and so in addition to creativity, perfection, form, beauty, sensuous pleasure, also provides its reader with knowledge and understanding and also modernness and progressive outlook which science provides.

In his book "Living issues in Philosophy "Herald H. Titus, explaining what the aesthetic experience can do for us, says:- "The aesthetic experience, in addition to bringing immediate pleasure and satisfaction by revealing certain experimental elements of reality can also fortify us in various ways to meet the practical demand of life". keeping in view what Herald says one can feel that aesthetic response to Iqbal's poetry in general and the long poem "Masjid-i-Qurtuba" in particular may help renew our spirits, exciting us and giving us courage and enthusiasm for some strenuous task. The power of the aesthetic experiences in its different forms to create various moods from patience to a spirit of sacrifice is what we have in Iqbal's poetry with full vigour and charm and "Masjid-i-Qurtuba" is a remarkable example of this. The aesthetic experience and response that we have from Iqbal's poetry helps create a social bond between diverse individuals and groups by arousing sympathy, furnishing understanding and producing a desire for harmonious relationship. The presence of beauty whether in nature or art-objects like Iqbal's poetry tends to make our lives qualitatively. richer.

"Masjid-i-Qurtuba", an embodiment of beauty and grace, flows into the eye and ear and a reader or a listener of this master-piece in Urdu literature invites a taste for beauty and decency.

In "Masjid-i-Qurtuba", which is a work of art, aesthetic experience is related to a number of elements including medium, the technique form and the content or subject--matter. As for the medium the material used in the poem varies from subject to subject, from spiritual to mundane, from philosophy to politics to history

As for the technique, the aesthetically experience is enriched by awareness of the skill which in execution is quite perfect and prominent only

to the extent which is essential for attainment of,them sense of qualitative whole so essential to aesthetic appreciation.

According to some art-critics "how" Is everything and the "what" is not important. Iqbal poetry, however, presents -a happy, blend of both and provides aesthetic pleasure which is a very special type of pleasure related to the aesthetic experience.

One noticeable element of Iqbal's poetry is its revealing power. It opens our eyes to sensuous beauties and spiritual meanings in the world of human experience and of nature to which otherwise we should remain blind. In addition another special power has been granted to Iqbal the power of so expressing and interpreting what lie sees and feels as to ' quicken our old imagination and sympathies, and to make us see and feel with him. Thus the one great service that Iqbal renders to us is what Coleridge has described as "awakening the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the whim of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand".

Iqbal was the man, who of all modern and perhaps ancient Urdu and Persian poets had d the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were ever present to him and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily. When he describes any thing, we more than see it, we feel it too. The beauty which we see in Iqbal's "Masjid-i-Qurtuba" is not the beauty we see in individual things like statues, buildings and people or men or even in animals or birds. It is the essential form of beauty, Absolute Beauty not seen with the eyes but grasped conceptually by the "mind alone".

No doubt, the beauty of this world reminds us of the true beauty, but here the question arises as to what the role of Iqbal is in this process of recollection in respect of his poem "Masjid-i-Qurtuba". Here we may refer to a few couplets of this poem wherein Iqbal says:-

Ai haram-i-Qurtuba ishq se tera wujood

Ishq sarapa dawan jis men naheen raft-o-bood,

Rang ho ya k̄hisbt-o-sang chang ho ya harf o-saut

Mojza-i-fan ki hai k̄hoon-i jigar se namood

Qatra-i-k̄hoon-i jigar sil ko banata hai dil

Khun-i jigar se sada soz-o-suroor-o-sarood

Teri faza d̄lfaroz, meri nawa seena soz

Tujh se delon ka hazoor, mujh se dilon ki kusbood

Arsh-i-mualla se barn seena-i-Aadam naheen

Garchi kaf e-khak ki had hai siphr-e-kubooc/

Tera jalal-o-jamal mard-i-k̄huda ki daleel

woh bhi jaleel-o-jameel too bhi jaleel-o-jameel

Thou, oh Shrine of Cordoba owest existence to love,

Deathless in all its being, Stranger to 'Then and Now

Colour or brick or stone, speech or music and song

Only the heart's warm blood feeds, the craftsman's design,

One drop of heart's blood lends marble .a beating heart;

Out of the heart's blood gush warmth and music and mirth.

Thine the soul-quickening pile, mine the soul-kindling verse,

Thou to the guidance of God callest, I open men's hearts,

Strong is the human breast, great as the Heaven of Heavens,

Handful of dust though it be hemmed in the azure sky.

Thou with outward and inward beauty, thy builders witness,

Provest him like thyself, fair of shape and of soul.

And now the answer to the question as to what Iqbal's roll is in this process of recollection. His roll is that he has progressed from bodily beauty to beauty of mind, to beauty of institutions and laws of civilised society and tenets of Islam and to essential beauty entirely pure and unallayed".

It was in July, 1928 that Iqbal wrote in the Forword to "Muragga-i-Chughtai", Illustrated edition of Ghalib's Urdu Poetry) by M. A. Rahman Chughtai:-

I look upon art as subservient to life and personality. I picture the soul-movement of the ideal artist (as one) in whom love reveals itself as a unity of Beauty and Power.

The spiritual health of a people largely depends on the kinds of inspiration which their poets and artists receive. But inspiration is not a matter of choice. It is a gift, the character of which cannot be critically judged by the recipient before accepting it. It comes to the individual unsolicited, and only to socialise itself. For this reason the personality that receives, and the life-quality of that which is received, are matters which are of the utmost importance for mankind. The inspiration of a single decadent, if his art can lure his fellows to his song or picture, may prove more ruinous to a people than whole battalions of an Attila or a Changez....

To permit the visible to shape the invisible, to seek what is scientifically called adjustment with nature is to recognise her mastery over the spirit of man. Power comes from resisting her stimulus and not from exposing ourselves to their action. Resistance of what is, with a view to create what ought to be, is health and life. All else is decay and death. Both God and man live by perpetual creation. The artist who is a blessing to mankind defies life. He is an associate of God and feels the contact of Time and Eternity in his soul...

And in so far as the cultural history of Islam is concerned, it is my belief that, with the single exception of Architecture, the art of Islam (Music, Painting and even Poetry) is yet to be born the art, that is to say, which aims at

the human assimilation of Divine attributes, gives man infinite inspiration, and finally wins for him the status of God's Representative on earth.

This poem "Masjid-i-Qurtuba", the greatest piece of poetry in Urdu, dealing with essence of Time, the difference between pure duration and serial time, mortality of the universe, permanence of a piece of art, love with all its sweep in which Masjid-i-Qurtuba is based, grandeur of the mosque, heritage of Islamic creativity, emergence of reformation, French Revolution, renaissance and confidence in- life future of Islam goes on producing in the reader not mere pleasure or intellectual conviction, but "transport" the sense of being carried away as though by magic. Carrying fu blooded ideas and vehement emotion the poem says in the last three couplets (out of which I have already quoted two) of the last but one stanza.

Millat-i-Roomi nayad kuhna parasti se peer,

Lazzat-i-tajdeed se woh bhi bui phir jawan

Ruh-i-musalman men hai aaj wuhi iztirab

Raz-i-Khudai hai yeh, keh naheen sakti zaban

Dekhyey is behr ki teh se uchhalta hai kya

Gunbad-i-neelupari rang badalta hai kya

The Roman nation grown old by worshipping ancient things,

Led by the lure of rebirth found once again her youth;

Now that commotion has seized even the soul of the Muslim,

Strangely, divinely its meaning cant be told by the tongue.

Let us see what new portents burst from the bed of this ocean

And watch within azurevault what new colour shall spring

To identify such a quality as the necessary and sufficient condition of literary greatness is not without interest. It is the genuine emotion in the right place. And also, a great style is the natural outcome of weighty thoughts.

The last two couplets reflect a highly progressive rather a prophetic outlook about the present day agitation, commotion, excitement, anxiety and restlessness in modern Muslim mind. These two couplets make this great poem a greater piece of art which is not only beautiful, elegant and charming but also pulsating with vigour.

The present august house would kindly forgive me if I present an exposition in prose of these couplets in Allama Iqbal's own words. In his first lecture entitled "Knowledge and Religious experience" contained in "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam" he says:-

During the last five hundred years religious thought in Islam has been practically stationary. There was a time when European thought received inspiration from the world of Islam. The most remarkable phenomenon of modern history, however, is the enormous rapidity with which the world of Islam is spiritually moving towards the West. There is nothing wrong in this movement, for European culture, on its intellectual side, is only a further development of some of the most important phases of the culture of Islam. Our only fear is that the dazzling exterior of European Culture may arrest our movement and we may fail to reach the true inwardness of that culture.

And in the fourth lecture entitled "The Human Ego: His Freedom and Immortality" in the same book:-

The task before the modern Muslim is, therefore, immense. He has to rethink the whole system of Islam without completely breaking with the past

The only course open to us is to approach modern knowledge with a respectful but independent attitude and to appreciate the teachings of Islam in the light of that knowledge; even though we may be led to differ from those who have gone before us.

Iqbal's views on the subject referred to in the above quoted two couplets in his prose reveal the fact that Iqbal through his prose as well as poetry wants

to make the world more beautiful and more elegant than the one he is seeing around. He is a great philosopher poet, who has in so far as Urdu and Persian poetry is concerned revolutionised aestheticism i.e. the cult of the beautiful in nature and in art.