IQBAL REPLYING TO A GHAZAL OF HAFIZ

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Muhammad Iqbal's long-standing love-hate relationship to À«fiï of Shâr«z is widely known. On the one hand, he blamed him to have spread quietism and deprived Muslims of progressing in *Asr«r-i Khudâ* ; on the other hand the influence of À«fiï in Iqbal's ghazals cannot be ignored. The strong influence of À«fiï on Iqbal has been discussed on a broad scale by Yūsuf Àusain Kh«n in his book *À«fiï aur Iqbal*. This article will deal in detail with an example of the most plain form of intertextuality in Persian literature, the 'reply' (in Persian: *jav«b*) or 'study' (*tatabbu'*), in which a poet reworks a famous poem, in most cases of À«fiï of Shâr«z, in his own words trying to introduce to the model something new yet fitting the old frame. From the times of 'AbrurraÁm«n J«mâ (d. 1492) onwards this became a touchstone for the quality of a poet, who could show that he was equally well versed in writing 'classical' and 'contemporary' poetry by taking a classical poem and adding to it "a slightly different interpretation, a novel twist."[122]

It is not astonishing that Muhammad Iqbal, trying to write *not like À«fiï,* often refers and even replies to him. With the title of his first Persian ghazal collection "Mai-i B«qâ" being a plain allusion to À«fiï's famous third ghazal, and *Pay«m i Mashriq* being a reply to Goethe's West-Eastern Divan, which in turn celebrates À«fiï, the context of "Mai-i B«qâ" clearly points to À«fiï' ghazals as an underlying text, and 10 of the 45 ghazals (no. 1, 5, 14, 23, 26, 28, 36, 41, 42, and 43) are indeed replies to À«fiï. Reading the ghazals of "Mai-i B«qâ", we encounter a certain appeal to the reader to put it on equal terms with the great Persian classic, but we also find that its ghazals often are difficult to read because they compromise with the style of À«fiï in order to compete with it. In contrast to that, the language of the ghazals in *Zabër-i 'Ajam* is less compromising and therefore more plain, so that we can state that the process of dealing with À«fiï's poetry is ended in *Zabër-i 'Ajam* and Iqbal's own mode of expression takes full control. However, this does not

[122] Subtelny, Maria Eva: „A Taste for the Intricate: The Persian Poetry of the Late Timurid Period." In: *ZDMG* (*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*) vol. 136 (1986) / 1, p. 63.

mean that we do not encounter allusions to À«fiï. Of the 123 poems in part I and II, there still are 13 ghazals that agree in metre, rhyme and selection of keywords to a ghazal of À«fiï, in other words, they are 'replies' to them, to be precise nos.12, 23, 33, and 55 in part I, and nos. 6, 15, 23, 27, 29, 46, 50, 52, and 62 in part II. In this article, I will concentrate on *Zabër-i 'Ajam* I 23, which is a 'reply' to À«fiï's ghazal no. 264.[123]

S«qâ, pour on my liver (i.e. organ of emotions) the liquid flame,
Pour another turmoil of Resurrection in a handful of dust.
He cast me (as Adam) on the earth by a grain of wheat,
You, cast me beyond the skies by a sip of juice!
Give to love the potent wine that knocks men over,
Cast the layer of this wine in the cup of cognition.
Science and philosophy have slowed me down.
My Khiïr! Cast this heavy burden all out of my head!
Reason did not attain melting by the heat of the red wine.
Remedy it with that bold wink!
The event still consists of fear and hope quarrelling,
Let them all fail to remember the turning of the sky (i.e. their fate)!
One can pour tulips and roses into the autumn's bosom.
Arise and cast vine vein blood on the old branch (of the world)![124]

Let us turn first to the ghazal of À«fiï Iqbal's poem is replying to:

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[123] Qazvânâ Ghanâ edition, equalling no. 258 in Kh« nlarâ's edition.

[124] S«qiy«, bar jigar-am shu'la-yi namn«k and«z,
Digar «shëb-i qiy«matba kaf-i Kh«k and«z!
ú ba d« -yi gandum ba zamân-am and«kht;
Tu ba yak jur'a-yi «b «-yi afl«k and«z!
'Ishq r« b«da-yi mard-afgan-u pur-zër bidih,
L«-yi ân b« ba paim«na-yi idr«k and«z!
Hikmat-u falsafa kardast gir«n-Khüz mar«.
Khiîr-i man! Az sar-am ân b«r-i gir«n p«k and«z!
Khirad az garmâ-yi Äahb« ba gud«zü narasâd.
Ch«ra-yi k«r ba «n ghamza-yi ch«k«k and«z!
Bazm dar kishmakash-i bâm-u umâd ast hanëz;
Hama r« bükhabar az gardish-i afl«k and«z!
Mütav«n rükht dar «ghàsh-i Khaz«n k«la-u gul;
Khüz-u bar sh«kh-i kuhan Khën-i rag-i t«k and«z!

Stand up and pour delightful juice into the golden cup,

Pour before the head cup turns to earth.

After all, we dwell in the valley of the silent,

Now pour a sparkle into the dome of the skies.

The glance-stained eye is far from the Beloved's face,

With his face reflect a glance out of the pure mirror!

O cypress, with your green top when I become dust

Take the pride out of your head and throw a shade on this dust!

Take our heart, which your snake tresses have bitten,

With your lips to the antidote hospital!

Know that the yield of this field cannot be relied upon.

Cast a fire from the (burning) liver of the cup on the lands!

I took a bath in tears, as the mystics say:

"First become pure, then set your eyes on that pure one!"

O Lord, that self-seeking ascetic, who did not find but shame,

Cast the smoke of his (cursing) sighs in the mirror of perception!

(i.e. he shall experience his curses himself.)

À«fii, because of His scent, tear apart the suit like the rose

And throw this suit on the way of that smart figure![125]

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[125] Khēz-u dar k«sa-yi zar «b-i Çarabn«k and«z,
Püshtar z'«nki shavad k«sa-yi sar Kh«k and«z!
'ÿqibat manzil-i m« v«dâ-yi Kh«màsh«n ast.
À«liy« ghulghula dar gunbad-i afl«k and«z!

To compare the content of the two poems, we turn to structural analysis, which is a potent method to achieve the literal sense of a text. This is already a fairly old method, which originated in France in the 1950s starting from Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics[126] and the Russian structuralists of the 1930s, especially Vladimir Propp.[127] Post-structuralists like Jacques Derrida, the late Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva and especially Umberto Eco and Wolfgang Iser have shown in the past twenty years that the meaning of a text is not confined to its literal sense, because texts only say as much as they need to say and consist in large parts of empty space that the reader's imagination must fill[128]. Taking Homer as an example, Umberto Eco explicates it thus: [129]

> And every interpretation of the opus, by filling the empty and open form of the original message (the physical form, which has been preserved without change through the centuries) with new senses, gives rise to new messages of sense which enrich our codes and ideological systems by transforming their structure, and prepares the readers of tomorrow for a new situation of interpreting.

Accordingly, if we interpret a text, we first must find out 'what is written there' in order to discover 'what is not written there' and where readers join the text to produce meaning. This meaning need not be what the author 'intended', as the empty space in texts may offer other ways to produce meaning to other people than the author. For example, *Gulliver's Travels* became famous as a book for children although Jonathan Swift intended it as a biting satire of British society, or the *Rub«'iy«t* of 'Umar Khayy«m, which

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[126] To be exact his lectures, which his students edited under the title *Cours de linguistique générale*, Paris 1916.

[127] It is not the panacea for providing an 'exact scientific' basis for history, social science, and the humanities, that it first was held to be.

128 Cf. ISER, Wolfgang: "The Reading Process", in: *New Literary History* 3 (1972), p. 279 – 299.

[129] „Und jede Interpretation des Werkes veranlaßt, indem es die leere und offene Form der ursprünglichen Botschaft (die physische Form, die sich unverändert während der Jahrhunderte erhalten hat) mit neuen Bedeutungen erfüllt, neue Bedeutungs-Botschaften, die unsere Codes und unsere ideologischen Systeme bereichern, indem sie sie umstrukturieren und die Leser von morgen auf eine neue Interpretationssituation vorbereitet." ECO, Umberto: Einführung in die Semiotik, 8th ed. Munich 1994, p. 192.

were read as a celebration of women, wine, and song by their editor FitzGerald, and as a guide to supreme spiritual experience by Paramhansa Yogananda. I hold that no matter on which side the author is, readings that differ from the author's view are not wrong, but add to the meaning and the cultural significance of a text.

In order to find out the literal sense of our two poems by means of structural analysis as described by Michael Titzmann,[130] we will look for words with similar meanings, and for words that are linked by grammatical apposition, like "red wine". These words are called equivalent to each other and linked by a sign of approximate equality (≈). Words that are not equivalent must be either opposed to each other, or not related at all, and because reading means constructing relations between the words of a text, words that are not related at all will be hard to find. The mind of a reader will usually put in opposition whatever is not equivalent because not to be related is the same as not to be understood. Opposed groups of words are marked by the abbreviation of versus (vs.). In the end, all the groups of equivalences and oppositions are arranged to a so-called 'paradigm' of the text. The paradigm rests in most cases on one or two basic oppositions, which represent the basic idea of the text, or the 'axis' around which all the parts of the text is arranged.

The ghazal of À«fïï can be analysed structurally in this way:

1 you_1 (S«qâ) ≈ pour ≈ [delightful juice vs. cup ≈ head] vs. dust

2 ≈ [sparkle vs. dome ≈ skies] vs. valley ≈ silence ≈ dwell

3 ≈ reflect ≈ [glance ≈ Beloved vs. mirror ≈ pure] vs. eye ≈ stained ≈ far

4 you_2 (Beloved) ≈ [cypress ≈ pride ≈ green top vs. take out ≈ throw shade] vs. I ≈ dust

5 ≈ [snake tresses ≈ bitten vs. lips ≈ antidote ≈ hospital ≈ take] vs. we ≈ hearts

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[130] In: TITZMANN, Michael: Strukturale Textanalyse, 3rd edition Munich 1993.

6 ≈ cast ≈ fire ≈ liver vs. lands ≈ field ≈ yield ≈ cannot be relied upon

7 {[that pure one vs. I ≈ bath ≈ pure ≈ tears ≈ first ≈ mystic]

8 vs. [Lord ≈ cast ≈ in mirror ≈ perception vs. ascetic ≈ self-seeking ≈ find shame ≈ sighs ≈ smoke]}

9 He ≈ scent ≈ smart ≈ figure vs. À«fiï (I) ≈ rose ≈ suit ≈ tear apart ≈ throw on the way

Axis: [S«qâ ≈ pour wine] ≈[Beloved ≈ be graceful] ≈[ascetic ≈ shame]

vs. I ≈ À«fiï ≈ we ≈ becoming dust ≈ pure ≈ waiting ≈ praising

À«fiï's poem shows very typical features of a classical Persian ghazal. Its focus is the relation of the speaker to his Beloved, the S«qâ, enemies and the audience. The Beloved may be a real girl friend, or a trope for a prince, in which case "kiss" often stands for "payment", or God himself, in which case "drinking" and "flirting" are expressions for being touched by more intensive modes of existence. Often we are not able to decide which kind of beloved a ghazal intends, and especially À«fiï apparently plays with these possibilities, so that the ambiguity in his ghazals may be a feature of the text. In the example cited the "cypress" of verse 4 is a typical image for a king, and verse 6 sounds like an admonition to a prince, but the imagery of ablution, tears and purity in verse 7 tends more to devotion. A hint to solve the puzzle in the future may be that in Sufi theories beautiful people embody God's beauty, and kings often bear the title "Shadow of God" (Ê*illu Lk«h*), so that they may serve as an intermediary between God and man as well.

The poem is plainly divided into three parts of three verses each. In the first part, the speaker addresses the s«qâ demanding wine; the second is directed to the Beloved asking for relief from the Beloved's neglect, and the third part turns to an imaginary audience and deals with the speaker himself as a devout adherent of the Beloved in contrast to a hostile ascetic.

The first part dealing with wine equals "wine" with "delightful", "sparkle", and "mirror", attributes known to a supposed audience and all

drawn from the image of young red wine in a cup. There is no attribute that could explain the meaning of this image, so it may be anything from real wine up to divine mercy. The second part addresses the Beloved with a request to show kindness to the speaker, using three times the rhetorical figure of 'beautiful explanation' (*Áusn-i ta'lâl*). The last of these verses addresses the Beloved as the patron of a feast, for which he must pay much of his property, and as 'fluid fire' is a common trope for "wine" and wine is a major good to be provided with this property on the feast, À«fiï's speaker can state that the beloved shall generously burn his royal possession with wine today. In the third part, the speaker presents himself as sincere to his beloved, praises him again and defends himself against a "self-seeking" enemy, who either is an ascetic but nor a 'lover' or depicted as such. Wine does not appear any more, because it is only a symbol among others to express the focus of a classical ghazal, 'love' relationship in its three possible modes. In cases the speaker recommends himself to the Beloved, demands like that for wine are rather out of place.

What remains is to regard the parts that the poem leaves to the readers' imagination. These are the identity of speaker, S«qâ, Beloved, ascetic, and wine, as in all classical ghazals. The beauty of the ghazal, thus its appeal to the reader, derives from the widely varied settings in which the main theme is repeated, especially with À«fiï. As we have seen, verses are not arranged without any logic, but within a frame that allows both the speaker to bring forward his arguments for his love and leave enough freedom for the various settings to associate each other within the reader's mind.

The reply Iqbal has written on this ghazal of À«fiï fulfils the requirements of a replying poem by taking over the metre *ramal-i makhbūn* (⏑ ∪ – – | ⏑ ∪ – – | ⏑ ∪ – – | ⏑ ∪ –), the rhyme "-*«k and«z*", and even the rhyming words, of which only the last one does not appear in À«fiï's ghazal. In theory, it is enough that some of the rhyming words reappear in the reply, so this ghazal is formally as close to the original as possible and in departing from this scheme in the last rhyme by the use of "*t«k*" (vine), a very common word with À«fiï, it apparently beats À«fiï with his own weapons. At this point, it urges the reader to wonder why À«fiï did not use the word "vine".

Iqbal's ghazal in *Zabër-i 'Ajam* I, no 23, has the following paradigm:

you ≈ **S«qâ** ≈ cast

≈ **wine** ≈ liquid flame ≈ vine vein blood ≈ sip ≈ potent ≈ bold ≈ knocking men over

≈ **heat** ≈ melting ≈ wink

≈ turmoil ≈ resurrection ≈ (burden) out ≈ **beyond the skies** ≈ fail to remember

≈ tulips ≈ roses (≈ **spring**)

vs.

(**I** ≈) my liver ≈ handful of dust ≈ my head ≈ cognition ≈ **cup** ≈ event ≈ grain

≈ science ≈ philosophy ≈ **reason**

≈ love ≈ quarrelling ≈[fear vs. hope] ≈ **earth** ≈ turning skies

≈ old branch ≈ **autumn**

Axis: cast ≈ you ≈ wine ≈ passion ≈ up vs. on ≈ me ≈ cup ≈ tired of being down

The axis results easily out of the *radâf* "cast!" (*and«z!*), a call that requires a subject and an object. The basis of this poem (like of the first three verses of À«fii's ghazal) is thus the sentence "Pour me wine". This, not a love relationship, is the red thread its verses vary under different settings. Regarding what the expression of "wine" is equivalent and what it is opposed to, we find that the equivalences are rather traditional; wine was always called "fluid fire", "strong" and "creating turmoil", and connected with spring. What is more noticeable is the statement that wine drinking creates spring, whereas in classical poems spring is the cause of wine drinking. Additionally, this spiritually understood spring is not restricted to a single person, but applied to the entire world; consequently salvation is called not only a personal, but also a social phenomenon. Other than with À«fii, the speaker is opposed to S«qâ and wine throughout the poem, so the relationship displayed in it is not so much that of lover and beloved, or lover and rival, but of "wine" and "drinker", that is of passion and a person striving for passion, as the equivalence of "wine" with "turmoil" (*«shâb*) and "melting" (*gud«z*) and the "liver", the organ of emotions as its recipient, shows. Typical for Iqbal's poetry is moreover the motif of transcending the "skies" in opposition to the narrowness of this world, "philosophy" and "reason" in opposition to "wine", the strength of the wine increasing the strength of "cognition" instead of knocking the speaker over and called a remedy not

against an adverse lot, but against fate and fatalism itself. Although it is an old desire of mystics to ascend into heaven like the Prophet, a poetical notion of "up ≈ wide vs. down ≈ narrow" is not found in classical Persian poetry, whereas it is frequent in Europe, where it provided the basic for Dante's *Divina Commedia* and later is paramount in Romantic Poetry. In Iqbal's verse, the sky acts as a limit between "narrow" and "wide", and the desire to transcend limits is one of the most characteristic traits of both Iqbalian and Romantic poetry. In the same way, we can regard reason and fate as limits to be transcended.

In accordance with temporary suppositions on ghazal structure this poem consists of an opening verse, a middle part, in which the order of verses is rather arbitrary and exchangeable, and a closing verse. As already in medieval times, this loose structure provides the freedom the verses need to create multiple cross-references in the reader's mind. This principle has been prevailing over rests of stricter rules of coherence between verses since about the time of J«mâ; a logical structure would hinder the associative, imaginative beauty of the ghazal. In the opening verse, wine itself and its power is introduced. It clearly refers to the opening verse of À«fiï's ghazal, as the rhyming words are the same, and the theme "Give me wine before I die" also appears in both verses. Consequently, we can state that Iqbal here interprets À«fiï's "golden cup" as liver, the organ of emotion, and demands a resurrection right now, not after death. The second verse also alludes to À«fiï's second verse, because both the rhyme "skies" and the theme "earth versus sky" reappear in Iqbal's verse. The 'novel twist' Iqbal is giving the verse consists in the speaker's demand to leave the world behind, whereas À«fiï's speaker stays within a drunken world. After these two verses, the themes of Iqbal's ghazal depart from those of Hafiz in order to expound Iqbal's views. The settings offered in the middle part are the world, cognition, science, reason, and fate, presented as limits and in opposition to the transcending power of wine. The ghazal closes with the promise of 'spring' as a result of this 'wine'. Wine is clearly specified as "passion", but what is left open to the reader for imagination and identification with the poem, is above all the aim of this passion. The reader may substitute his own passions here, and this is the way Iqbal's poetry can appeal to many different people.

So although Iqbal's ghazal is as close as possible to its model formally, the opposition of "wine" to limits such as the world, reason and fate reveals an influence of Romanticism deriving from Iqbal's earlier days. In addition, reason in opposition to love (alluded to by "wink", *ghamza*), fate as an obstacle instead of an excuse, and the boldness of passion refer to Iqbal's own activist approach of removing limits.

We see how deliberately modern ideas appear in an emphatically classic environment, and how this is done by merely inserting one single word or by minor changes in the relationships expected. There is no declaration in this poem such as "Wine now means passion!" Instead, the classical style is retained as much as possible and the changes made are as minute as possible to create the effect of new sayings by old tunes. The very task of a 'replying' ghazal is exploited to the full in this poem.

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