

Impact of Arabic and Islamic teachings on the poetry of Allama Iqbal

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Abstract

Employment of different poetical devices, linguistic tools and loftiness of themes are the success indicator of any poet. These things determine status of a poet and his writing. Allama Iqbal is one of the greatest ever poets produced by the Indian Sub-Continent. He is the national poet of Pakistan. His poetry fulfills the highest rank among the Urdu and Persian poetry. Hardly there is any poetic or linguistic device which has escaped him in his poetry.

Apart from traditional Urdu and Persian literary devices, he has great benefitted from Arabic and Islamic teachings. We can find strong reflection of Quran, its style, meaning and its words in the poetry of Iqbal. He was the poet who translated many verses of the Quran into his poetry and those verses are well known and popular among people of every age, gender and social status. His poetry is a source to connect people with Quran and traditions of the holy prophet PBUH.

In the present article I will discuss and quote the influences of Arabic, Quran and Islamic teachings upon the poetry of Iqbal.

Key words: *linguistic ,loftiness, indicator, Allama, influences.*

If we look at the Urdu poets who have produced religious poetry we can find many of them. But whenever we talk about religious or Islamic poetry in Urdu, Allama Iqbal is the first and most important name which strikes our minds. This is because he had studied Quran so deeply that meaning, implications and translation of the Quran has become his part and parcel. His poetry reflected meanings and teaching of Quran as much as it seems like one is reading translation or commentary of the holy Quran while one is reciting poetry of Allama Iqbal. He is of the opinion that the only way of success in this world and the world hereafter is hidden in the teachings of the Quran and in practicing them. He points out to this in his verse when he says that:

وہ معزز تھے زمانہ میں مسلمان ہو کر اور تم خوار ہوئے تارک قرآن ہو کر

The first part of this verse conveys the meaning communicated in the verse of holy Quran:

”وانتم الاعلون ان كنتم مؤمنين“¹

“which says that only the Muslims and believers are the successful people”

The second part of the verse communicates meaning of another verse from the holy Quran :

”وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا“²

This verse means that the holy prophet PBUH will on the Day of Judgment, file his complaint against the believers in the court of Allah and will say that these are the people who believed in me and still forgot me in their lives. This situation is going to be the most humiliation for such a person against whom the holy prophet will file his complaint. Allama Iqbal communicated this meaning in the second part of the above quoted verse.

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He was a practicing Muslim and had enough knowledge of Islam. He felt the pain of the prevailing conditions of Muslims and was much worried for the slump the Muslims were through during his days. He would try to awake Muslims from the slump and for this purpose he used his poetry and political activism as his tools. He employed different poetical techniques and rhetorical devices for this purpose. He was calling Muslims back towards Quran and was asking them to stay strongly connected with Quran. His following verse is a good example of his thinking and vision in this regards. He says that:

قرآن میں ہو غوطہ زن اے مرد مسلمان اللہ کرے تجھ کو عطا جدت کردار

Quran as source for his philosophy of Self:

He has offered many philosophies in his poetry but his most important philosophy is that of Self. The source of his basic philosophy is none other than the holy Quran. The following verse of the holy Quran is the base for this.

”ولا تكونوا كالذين نسوا الله“³

“**And** to not turn like those who have forgotten Allah so Allah has forgotten them in reply”

A source and method of understanding Quran

Allama Iqbal not only would stress upon understanding and comprehension of the Quran but would also ask people to keep strong hold of the Quran. He would advise people to read Quran with full understanding and with the purpose of practicing it. His following verse categorically explains this thing:

ترے ضمیر پر جب تک نہ ہو نزول کتاب گرہ کشا ہے نہ رازی نہ صاحب کشاف

In this verse Allama Iqbal advises his readers that in order to understand Quran in its true sense, they should read it as if it is being revealed upon them directly. If they can create such an atmosphere and feelings while reading the Quran, it will be a perfect thing for them to do. Otherwise reading great commentaries like Tafseer e Razi and Tafseer e Kashaf will not benefit him greatly. These commentaries will otherwise not properly open the hidden secrets the Quran. Such an advice can only come from a person who has read and understood Quran in the same manner. Allama Iqbal has definitely read and understood Quran in this way.

Translation of the verses of the Quran in his poetry:

A large portion of his Urdu and Persian poetry comprises translation of verses from the holy Quran. Sometimes he expresses meanings of the verses of the Quran and sometimes he clearly translate them in his own style and wordings. Such translations of the verses of Quran can be quoted from his Urdu as well as Persian poetry one example of which is the following verse.

میرے اللہ برائی سے بچانا مجھ کو نیک جو راہ ہو اس رہ پر چلانا مجھ کو

The first part of this verse is translation of the verse (وکفر عنا سیاتنا⁴) and the second part of it is the translation of the verse (اهدنا الآیة⁵)

A mountain and squirrel (Aik Pahar our Gulehri) is a poem in his book *Bang e Dara*. One verse from this poem is in fact translation from the holy Quran. The verse says that:

نہیں ہے چیز نکمی کوئی زمانے میں کوئی برائیں قدرت کے کارخانے میں

This is verse is translation of the verse from the Quran (ربنا ما خلقت⁶) which means that Allah has not created any single aimless and purposeless thing in this world.

There is another verse from a song he has composed. The verse is:

دنیا کے بتکدوں میں پہلا وہ گھر خدا کا ہم اس کے پاس ہیں وہ پاس ہاں ہمارا

This verse is practical translation of the verse of Quran which says that (ان اول بیت⁷). This verse means that K'aba is the first ever home of Allah and a place to worship Him.

One verse from his poem *Tasweer e Dard* (Picture of pain) is:

زباں سے گر گیا توحید کا دعویٰ تو کیا حاصل بنایا ہے بت پندار کو اپنا خدا تو نے

this verse of Iqbal presents the translation of the verse of the Quran (افرأیت من اتخذ⁸). In this verse of Quran Allah says asks people if they have ever seen such a person who has taken his wishes and desires as his lord instead of Allah.

Other than the above quoted verses there are many verses in all his books of poetry which offer translations or meanings of the verses of the holy Quran. Such verses of poetry can be found in his books like *Bang e Darea*, *Armaghan e Hijaz*, *Bal e Jibril* and *Zarb e Kaleem* etc. etc. Apart from translations or meanings of the verses of the Quran there are many allusions from the Quran can be found in the poetry of Allama Iqbal. There is a detailed story of Hazrat Musa and Hazrat Khizar A. S in the Quran the gist of which Allama Iqbal has expressed in his one verse. The following verses covers the whole story of the two people mentioned above. The verse is:

کشتی مسکین، جان پاک، و دیوار یتیم علم موسیٰ بھی ہے تیرے سامنے حیرت فروش⁹

Similarly, he has very beautifully translated the story of Hazrat Ibrahim A. S. in the following verse.

بے خطر کو دپڑا آتش نمرود میں عشق عقل ہے محو تماشائے لب بام ابھی

From the above quoted verses one can easily understand how Allama Iqbal translated verses of the holy Quran into his poetry.

Usage of Quranic verses in his poetry:

On numeral occasions he has directly used verses from holy Quran in his poetry. By using direct words of the Quran in his poetry, he not only has beautifully incorporated allusions into his poetry but has achieved authenticity and enhanced the beauty of his poetry. Brevity is another quality which he has achieved while using words directly from the holy Quran. He has successfully narrated long stories and philosophies in just few lines. An example of this is the following line of his verse.

یہ لسان العصر کا پیغام ہے ان وعد اللہ حق یاد رکھ¹⁰

In this line of a verse he has used words from Surah Al Room and has communicated teaching of the Quran that we must never forget Allah's true promise.

Similarly, there is a verse in his book *Bang e Dara* which says that:

حکم حق ہے لیس للانسان الاماسعی کھائے کیوں مزدور کی محنت کا پھل سرمایہ دار¹¹

In this verse he used wording of Quran from Surah Najam.

With the passage of time his poetry became more and more mature and the presented messages of the Quran in more powerful and strong manner. Let me quote few verses from his poem *Shama wa Sh'ir* (Candle and poet).

کیوں چمن میں بے صدا مثل رم شبنم ہے تو لب کشا ہو جا، سرود بر بطل عالم ہے تو
بے خبر تو جو آئینہ ایام ہے تو زمانے میں خدا کا آخری پیغام ہے¹²

Reflection of Quranic style in his poetry:

There is pain, worry and concern in the poetry of Iqbal along with philosophy and ideological teachings through systematic and critical thinking, logic and powerful emotional appeal as per the requirement of the context. This is exactly the style and method of the holy Quran which has adopted and copied in his poetry.

Iqbal's infatuation with Quran:

سے صبح ازل انکار کی جرات ہوئی کیوں کر مجھے معلوم کیا وہ راز داں تیرا ہے یا میرا -----

In this one verse Iqbal refers to the following verses of the Quran.

”وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ (28) فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ (29) فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ (30) إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى أَنْ يَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ (31)“¹³

He further says that:

صبح ازل جو حسن ہو ادستان عشق آواز کن ہوئی تپش آموز جان عشق

In the above verse he refers to the following verse of the Quran.

”إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ (۲۸)“¹⁴

At another place in Quran Allah says tht:

”إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا“¹⁵

Reference to this verse of the Quran Allama Iqbal says that:

میرے بگڑے ہوئے کاموں کو بنایا تو نے بار جو مجھ سے نہ اٹھا وہ اٹھایا تو نے (بانگ دراء، ص: ۵۵)

The following verse of Iqbal is also relevant to the same meaning of the Quran.

تختیاں کرتا ہوں دل پر غیر سے غافل ہوں میں بات کیا اچھی کہی ظالم ہوں میں، جاہل ہوں میں

A verse from Quran regarding nobility of humanity

”لَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبُرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا“ (70) ¹⁶

Iqbal expresses the same meaning in the following verse.

مجھ کو یہ خلعت شرافت کا عطا کیوں کر ہوا جاے حیرت سے براسارے زمانے کا ہوں میں

In one another verse he says that:

آتی ہے نہد افراز کوہ سے گاتی ہوئی کوثر و تسنیم کی موجوں کو شرماتی ہوئی

In this verse he indicates towards two different verses of the holy Quran. These verses are:

”إِنَّا اعطینک الکوثر“ ¹⁷

And

”ومزاجه من تسنیم عینا یشرب بها المقربون“ ¹⁸

On many occasions in his poetry he has pen down the life events of different prophets as mentioned in the Quran. For example in the following verse he talks about Hazrat Ibrahim A. S.

بے خطر کو دپڑا آتش نمرود میں عشق عقل ہے محو تماشاے لب بام ابھی

In this verse he refers to the following verse of Quran.

”یا ناری کونی بردا و سلما علیٰ ابراهیم“ ¹⁹

Talking about the events of Hazrat Musa A. S. as mentioned in the verse of Quran

”ولما جاء موسىٰ لمیقاتنا وکلمه ربه قال رب ارنی وانا اول المؤمنین“ (سورة الاعراف: 1۴۳) ²⁰

Iqbal says that:

را سا تو دل ہوں مگر شوخ اتنا

وہی لن ترانی سنا چاہتا ہوں

کچھ دکھانے دیکھنے کا تقاضا طور پر

کیا خبر تجھ کو اسے دل فیصلہ کیوں کر ہوا

کبھی میں ذوق تکلم میں طور پر پہنچا

چھپا یا نور ازل زیر زمیں نے

اڑ بیٹھے کیا سمجھ کے بھلا طور پر کلیم

طاقت ہو دید کی تو تقاضا کرے کوئی

Talking about the holy prophet's travel Ascension he refers to the following verse of the Quran.

”سبحان الذى اسرى بعبده ليلا من المسجد الحرام إلى المسجد الأقصى“²¹

He says that:

سبق ملا ہے یہ معراج مصطفیٰ سے مجھے کہ عالم بشریت کی زد میں ہے افلاک

In the Quran Allah says that:

”مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِي مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفْرَاءِ رَحِمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ“²²

He expresses this thing so beautifully in his poetry. He says that:

ہو حلقہ یاراں تو بریشم کی طرح نرم رزم حق و باطل ہو تو فولاد ہے مومن²³

In the above quoted verse of the Quran as well as that of Iqbal fundamental qualities of Muslims are described. They are polite, helping and sharing while they are amongst themselves but same polite people turn into harsh and strong beings when they face the enemy in the battle field.

There is another verse of Iqbal in which he communicates meaning of the verse from the holy Quran. His verse is :

ہزار چشمے ترے سنگ راہ سے پھوٹیں خودی میں ڈوب کر ضرب کلیم پیدا کر²⁴

This verse of Iqbal conveys the meaning covered in the following verse of the Quran.

”وإذ استسقى موسى لقومه فقلنا اضرب بعصاك الحجر فانفجرت منه اثنتا عشرة عينا“²⁵

To cut things short, Iqbal's poetry is a reflection of teachings of the holy Quran. He not only follows linguistic style of the Quran but employs many poetic devices and techniques used in the Quran. He refers to many allusions from the Quran. A great critic of the poetry of Iqbal Sajjad Ansari says that had Quran been revealed in Urdu language it would have been in the poetry of Iqbal²⁶.

Not only that he incorporates teachings and wording from the Quran but he was a great lover of the holy prophet PBUH and the one who revered him more than anything else. He urges Muslims to gather round the personality and teachings of the holy prophet PBUH if they want to have success and progress not only in this world but the world hereafter. He also tells them that Prophet's is the only personality which can unite them together in the face of challenges and hardships. If his personality is removed then there will be nothing left with the Muslims. He says that:

بمصطفیٰ برسائل خویش را کہ دیں ہمہ اوست اگر باو نرسیدی تمام بولہبی است

He invites people towards unity and ask them not to divide themselves based on races or any other discrimination. He says that:

بتان رنگ و خوں کو تو ز کرمّت میں گم ہو جا نہ تو رانی رہے باقی، نہ ایرانی، نہ افغانی²⁷

In this verse he refers to the following verse of the Quran.

واعتصموا بحبل الله كي طرف اشارہ ہے۔²⁸

In his following verse he refers to the words of the holy prophet PBUH delivered during the Sermon of Hujjatul Wida.

جو کرے گا امتیاز رنگ و نون مٹ جائے گا
ترک خر گا ہی ہو یا اعرابی والا گھر!²⁹

In this verse he refers towards this:

لا فضل لعربی علی العجمی³⁰

Another influence of Islamic teachings found in his poetry is his invitation of people to unite and to become one nation instead of being divided. He would invite people to unite round the commonalities and to ignore differences. He said tht:

منفعت ایک ہے اس قوم کی، نقصان بھی ایک
ایک ہی سب کا نبی، دین بھی، ایمان بھی ایک
حرم پاک بھی، اللہ بھی، قرآن بھی ایک
کچھ بڑی بات تھی ہوتے جو مسلمان بھی ایک
فرقہ بندی ہے کہیں ذاتیں ہیں
کیا زمانے میں پنپنے کی یہی باتیں ہیں!

He further expressed the same thing in many other verses like the following ones.

ایک ہوں مسلم حرم کی پاسبانی کے لیے
نیل کے ساحل سے لے کر تاجخاک کا شغریٰ!³¹

فرد قائم ربط ملت سے ہے تنہا کچھ نہیں
موج ہے دریا میں اور بیرون دریا کچھ نہیں!³²

ملت کے ساتھ رابطہ استوار رکھ
پوستہ رہ شجر سے اُمید بہار رکھ!³³

بازو ترا توحید کی قوت سے قوی ہے
اسلام ترا دیس ہے تو مصطفوی ہے!³⁴

سروری زیبا فقط اس ذات بے ہمتا کو ہے
حکمران ہے اک وہی باقی بتان آزی!³⁵

The same thing is more beautifully, persuasively and strongly communicated in the following verses.

پر ونا ایک ہی تسبیح میں ان بکھرے دانوں کو
جو مشکل ہے، تو اس مشکل کو آساں کر کے چھوڑوں گا!³⁶

ہیں جذبِ باہمی سے قائم نظام سارے
پوشیدہ ہے یہ نکتہ تاروں کی زندگی میں³⁷
رابط و ضبطِ ملت بیضا ہے مشرق کی نجات
ایشیا والے ہیں اس نکتے سے اب تک بے خبر³⁸

EndNotes:

- ¹.Āl 'Imrān,#139
- ².al-Furqān # 30.
- ³.Al-Ḥaṣr # 19
- ⁴.Āl 'Imrān # 193
- ⁵.Al-Fāṭihah # 6
- ⁶.Āl 'Imrān # 191
- ⁷.Āl 'Imrān # 96
- ⁸.Al-Jāthiyah # 23
- ⁹.Al-Kahf # 60
- ¹⁰.Ar-Rūm # 60
- ¹¹.An-Najm # 39
- ¹².Al-'Aḥzāb # 40
- ¹³.Al-Hujurā #t 27
- ¹⁴.Yā' Sīn # 82
- ¹⁵.Al-'Aḥzāb # 72
- ¹⁶.Al-'Isrā' # 70
- ¹⁷.Al-Kawthar # 1
- ¹⁸.Al-Muṭaffifīn # 27
- ¹⁹.Al-'Anbiyā' # 27
- ²⁰.Al-'Anbiyā' # 69
- ²¹.Al-'Isrā' # 1
- ²².Al-Faṭḥ # 29
- ²³.Sir Muhammad Iqbal.,Zarb-e-Kaleem. Page:41 Publisher: Kutab Khana Talu-e-Islam,1956
- ²⁴.Sir Muhammad Iqbal.,Zarb-e-Kaleem. Page:463 Publisher: Kutab Khana Talu-e-Islam,1956
- ²⁵.Al-Baqārah # 60
- ²⁶.Gopi Chand Narang ,Iqbal Ka Fan page: 56, Publisher: Banaras Books Cornerindia 1990.
- ²⁷.Allama Muhammad Iqbal,kulyat Iqbal Urdu Page:270, Shaiekh Ghulam Ali and sons, Lahor
- ²⁸.Āl 'Imrān # 101
- ²⁹.Allama Muhammad Iqbal,kulyat Iqbal Urdu Page:256, Shaiekh Ghulam Ali and sons, Lahor
- ³⁰.Iman ahmad bin hanbal, Musnad Ahmad,Page:22391 ,al-resalah ,labnan 2000
- ³¹.Allama Muhammad Iqbal,kulyat Iqbal Urdu Page:.256, Shaiekh Ghulam Ali and sons, Lahor
- ³².Allama Muhammad Iqbal,kulyat Iqbal Urdu Page:190, Shaiekh Ghulam Ali and sons, Lahor
- ³³.Allama Muhammad Iqbal,kulyat Iqbal Urdu Page:249, Shaiekh Ghulam Ali and sons, Lahor
- ³⁴.Allama Muhammad Iqbal,kulyat Iqbal Urdu Page: 160,Shaiekh Ghulam Ali and sons, Lahor
- ³⁵.Allama Muhammad Iqbal,kulyat Iqbal Urdu Page:161, Shaiekh Ghulam Ali and sons, Lahor
- ³⁶.Allama Muhammad Iqbal,kulyat Iqbal Urdu Page:72, Shaiekh Ghulam Ali and sons, Lahor
- ³⁷.Allama Muhammad Iqbal,kulyat Iqbal Urdu Page: 174,Shaiekh Ghulam Ali and sons, Lahor
- ³⁸.Allama Muhammad Iqbal,kulyat Iqbal Urdu Page: 256, Shaiekh Ghulam Ali and sons, Lahor