

Shakespeare and Iqbal : An Illuminationist (Ishraqi) Context

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Great literature is an institutional continuity defining the complex relationship that it forms with the emerging possibilities of future and the never entombed past. Its thematic pattern functions ‘performatively’ making the reader to see a past lodging within the text and a future knocking at the gates of it. When William Shakespeare spoke of ‘dog’s obeyed in office’ in *King Lear*, the thematic pattern was clearly welcoming a change perceived by the senses of sight and ear that the days of monarchy are numbered in England. At the same time a very bitter past resonates in the sentence which despite a distance of four centuries, relates to us as our own ongoing political crises. However, it is the quality of dialogue in all great works that expresses a keen awareness of varied perceptions of the readers inspired by the same discourse. This opaque quality of widening horizons of thoughts while reducing them to a particular socio-historical metaphor, makes a great writer a sage or in the ancient Greek sense, a prophet of the age.

Allama Mohammad Iqbal’s spiritual lineage connects him to William Shakespeare in a very intense way. It is the full potential of a language that we see deployed through the verbal skills that connects Iqbal’s epical works to the great plays of Shakespeare. Shakespeare creates a dialogue with the power of unexpectedness in the widest sense of the word as it may range from invention of a word to expression of a revolutionary thought and from theatrical disruptive urgency to poetic silky politeness. While watching a Shakespearean play this unexpectedness keeps us haunting even if the story is well known to us. Story in this particular case stops playing its role altogether and we rise above it to find out that great literature is not created for the sake of storytelling. Story is merely another

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tool among many in the hand of the writer through which message is imparted. Story is an indicator of the nature of the work; it is not the work itself. It is therefore of no significance whatsoever that Shakespeare borrowed outlines of the plays from various sources and adopted themes but it is of importance that once in his hand, the existing story (no matter how many centuries old) would lose itself to his way of approaching it to become his and only his for the rest of the history of the mankind. The complexion of the story is entirely transformed when Shakespeare starts coding his messages through his metaphors and treatment of imagery delivered by his characters on stage. Dialogue is Shakespeare's creative agency. Every time we go back to a work of Shakespeare, the dialogue formation seems, as if, rearranged and automatically situationalized as derivative form of the plight of existence and we look at the play every time as a new discovery, a newly found document about our own past. While writing a dialogue Shakespeare definitely keeps himself busy in engaging the character into its particular social and political 'science', psychological adventure, spiritual state, intended degree of philosophical embellishment, class and gender elaboration and linguistic resource mobilized by particular set of sensitivity. As a result such intense variety of conduct appears within the character that it is sometimes difficult to believe that the writer of the dialogues for the character of *Hamlet* created the text for *Othello* as well or the one involved in hypnotic speeches of *King Lear* was the source behind ambling, meditative calmness of Rosalind. If it was not for the specific kind of treatment of the imagery and the recurring thematic patterns within Shakespearean text, many conspiracy theorists would have been by now declared as authentic critics.

Allama Iqbal's construction of dialogue is of a very similar nature; it is definitely of a non-Indian origin where always exaggerations in expressions serve as model of speech. In the Sub-continent, a specific kind of patriarchal mind also dominates the pitch of the voice of the characters, this has affects the female personae the most, regardless of their 'order of appearance' thousands of years ago in the great epical literature, on early twentieth century stage or in the recent days cinematic tradition. Iqbalian dialogue is of psychological and political nature, it is revelatory not just in traditional sense of speculating character's inner world but it simultaneously involves study of historical and geographical locale. While reading *Siddique*, for instance, we cannot keep ourselves aloof of the atmosphere and find ourselves within the mosque fourteen centuries ago

where the dialogue originally took place. The order in which internal constitution of the speeches takes place but also theatrical turn-taking, character's having 'access to the floor', everything well secured. Iqbal here establishes communication in real situations and transports the readers' imagination to the world apparently lost to us in the flood of time. He elaborates through the power of dialogue the 'power relations' in the scene and traps our 'mind's eye' to observe and access the speeches in formal setting through the eyes of those who deliver them. Thus in the process he distances himself from the stereotypes of his contemporary stage and epical heritage. This particular poem is remarkable for one more reason as it avoids any 'pseudo' spiritual treatment of metaphor otherwise central to Persian tradition, another great traditional inspiration of Iqbal that he improves upon by considering the force shaped by the silence or non-participation of dramatis personae. Action and silence sail together on the sea of the discourse in Iqbal's poetry, just like it does with William Shakespeare's.

اک دن رسول پاک نے اصحاب کے کما دین مال اوتھیں بیچیں ہوں تم میں مال دار
 ارشاد میں کے فرط طرب سے عجز آٹھے اُس دوران کے پاس تھے درگم تھی ہزار
 دل میں کہہ رہے تھے کہ صدیق بننے پر بٹھ کر رکھے گا آج موت م میرا راجہ وار
 لائے غرض کہ مال رسول امیں کے پاس ایسا کی ہے مست نگر ابتدا سے کار
 پوچھا حضورؐ فرما تم نے اے عزرا! اے وہ کہ جوش حق سے تڑپے دل کو ہے قرار
 زلفا ہے کچھ عیال کی خاطر بھی تو نے کیا؟ مسلم ہے اپنے پوشش و آثار کا جتن گزار
 کی عرض نصیحت مال ہے غرض نہ زن کا حق
 باقی جو ہے وہ ملت بیضا پر ہے شہنشاہ
 اتنے میں وہ منسوق بہت بھی آیا جس سے بنائے عشق و محبت سے استواء

لے آیا اپنے ساتھ وہ مرد وفا شریست ہر چیز جس سے چشم جہاں میں ہوا اعتبار
 ملک میدیں درہم دینار و خست و جفن اسپہ قہر ہم ہوش تروت المرو حمار
 بولے حضور چاہیے منکر عیال بھی کہنے لگا وہ عشق و محبت کا راز دار
 اے تجھ سے زیادہ مرد و خست و غم کیرا اے تیری ذات باعشرت کیونے نگار
 پروانے کو چراغ بنے ٹیل کو پھول بس
 جسدیق کے لیے ہے خدا کا تہل بس

Iqbal and Shakespeare's common spiritual heritage connects them both directly to Ibn Arbi and, therefore, philosophically to the Illuminationist tradition (Hikmat al Ishraq). Drama when it becomes Shakespearean dram is 'interim reading of life'. Shakespeare's concepts of statehood, womanhood, education of Self, Godhood, transformation of twoness to One-ness and Nature as first Principle of Diversity throughout his career especially from 1599 to 1611 echo Illuminationist disciplines. It is within position of disposition of Nature that Shakespeare centers his interest in the last decade of his playwriting. Elizabethan model of Nature was flawed as in its scope chaos ('Confused Mixture') or as the Romantics would call it 'Nagative Capability' (leaving one's place and find oneself in that of something else) is considered disposition. Shakespeare's illumantionist context on the other hand led him to see that Nature does not create 'monstrisities of virtue' and within disposition a nucleus, a reference point of position could be found. 'Disposotion' then defines 'position'. We see this theme repeated throughout his great tragedies and late romances. And it is this mechanism in his plays' structure that helps them finding a place in every culture of man and in all ages of history. Inversely we find truth in his drama. 'By indirections find directions out', a line spoken by Polonius in *Hamlet* in Act III Sc.I, is the key through which we can develop fresh understanding of plays like *Hamlet* every time we have a look at it. Within this disposition element of drama, *Hamlet* becomes to Laertes what Claudius is to *Hamlet*, 'murderous Dane'. Claudius emerges as an efficient politician and beloved of Gertrude who herself appears in

turn to be a victim of circumstances given into a marital deal to a much older man who (least to say) was completely dysfunctional almost paralyzed in the last phase of his life. In *King Lear* similarly the evil daughter, Goneril, become a victim of her father's desire to go beyond the constitutional frame work of England to make the youngest Cordelia the queen. Constitutionally it is Goneril's kingdom taken away from her through political machinations. Cordelia, despite all our sympathies, would look odd to us if we were living in 17th century, to lead French army, an enemy army, to soil of England.

Iqbal, too, speaks inversely. This remains unnoticed from the eyes of the scholars or at least that's how I have been reported by responsible intellectuals of Iqbalogy. Localization of a writer of caliber is a trend that leads to its demise before its expected universal birth. It is choice that history offers to only a very few. In Shakespeare's case, universality came as early as 1620s. With Iqbal, localization element keeps on working up to this day despite the fact that translations have been successfully carried out in major languages and Iqbal Chairs are active in many parts of the world. His Persian poetry is considered of a much serious note and Urdu poems fall under the category, as it was mentioned to me by one worthy Irani thinker Mr. Abedpour, 'zaeef', meaning of lesser quality. When it comes to Urdu poetry of Iqbal, localization element has devastating effect. In great poets there is such a thing as 'voice potential'. It can both be related to rhetorical skill or the social position which the poet acquires in a society. Literature is economics of linguistic exchange. How works of poets receive their values in particular contexts. It is important to study scientifically the conditions of reception and to see how and when a poet gets recognized? The social impact of a writer as a cultural icon and his works listened to, even obeyed, by audience and the study when a particular kind of poetry is silenced and which kind of poets fail to gain attention or credit must be part of our academic researches. Iqbal's value in Pakistan, as a result, will depend on the symbolic power relation between the particular kind of poems and the ready-made audience of such poems. This trend is not wholesome. Great poetry does not need 'symbolic capital'. Two years ago in a conference in Germany, I registered my concerns and showed to the audience that how when read inversely, things become more clear in Iqbal's poetry. Khudi, Self, is among the fundamental issue of concern for both Shakespeare and Iqbal due to their Illuminationist contexts. It remains though a grey area up to this day. In my speech, while describing concept of 'Khudi' I had the following suggestions. Inversely it reminds me of the following ayet from the Quran and inversely the word 'Khudi', started opening up to me.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۗ

(And be not among those who forgot God and He caused them to forget their own selves.)

The forgetfulness of one's self, the loss of awareness of one's self, is a curse inflicted upon mankind as 'wages' of the sin for forgetting the One, the ultimate Reality - the ultimate Truth. Farther from the Truth one goes, further one draws itself into the realm of falsehood. It is a tragic journey that one takes away from the perennial towards the terrestrial, from the celestial to the abysmal, from being to non-being. Away from self lies non-existence as existence is marked by self:

The being of existence is the effect of self
Whatever seest thou is the secret of self

When, in Iqbal's last days, Syyed Nazeer Niazi (during last two years of Iqbal's life Niazi's discourses with him became the basic source for Iqbal Studies worldwide) asked the Allama about the source and inspiration behind his concept of khudi (self), Iqbal replied opening the Quran, reciting the above mentioned ayet from Al-Hashr. It is an interesting reply because it avoids all the formal possibilities of a philosophical talk regarding influences on Iqbal's 'khudi' of Rumi, Nietzsche or Kierkegaard and links us most accurately with his immediate source. It is even more interesting when we realize that Allama decided to define his concept of self by quoting an ayet which refers to the opposite state, non-self; as if describing morning through night or spring through autumn. This particular reply leads us to observe that when surveyed, the works of Iqbal throughout deal with opposite states for fuller realization of the subject.

To understand this specific nature of the treatment of 'self' as a poetic metaphor existing inversely in Iqbal, we ought to see things from an Ishraqi (Illuminationist) point of view. In Nature when more than one thing exists it exists in an 'explanatory process'. Etymologically speaking the word 'explain' leads us to the concept of 'unfolding'. We may well say that in Nature things exist in an unfolding process towards each other. It is obviously natural that the intensity of such interpenetrative processes varies due to the intensity of the mind that shares it. The intensity of a mind is constituted by the states of mind or as William Chittick says 'the Stations of Wisdom'. As many stations one reaches in life time as comprehensive is the meaning of interpenetrative process. The word for this process in Ishraq is 'Ishq'. Ishq is a word derived from the Arabic root 'Ashaqa'. When two wines or two tree trunks grow in a way that they both entangle inseparably and one of the wines or the trees kills the other one, the process is called 'Ashaqa'. (Unlike it, the root of the English word 'love' is

within many Indo-European languages ‘lub’, ‘lubido’, ‘luf’ and even Sanskrit ‘lubha’. All these words mean to desire for something or have liking for something. This etymological survey is necessary to suggest that the attitude of civilization towards a particular metaphor is not always the same). A universal poet-philosopher like Iqbal expresses his ideal of ‘self’ bound within a linguistic system; system which works as source of division among mankind. The concept behind the language however goes beyond the linguistic barriers. Therefore a metaphor appears to go beyond a language but all metaphors depend on the way a poet treats them and gives a cosmic value. Iqbal’s treatment of the image of ‘self’ leads him to demonstrate various phases-states and stations that fade away and interpenetrate into the next one until reaching ‘the ever fixed mark’. His poetry and prose deal with the evolutionary stages, formulative features and impact of total awareness of ‘self’ on man. For Iqbal:

What else is existence but manifestation of the essence of ‘self’.

The universe is the manifestation of self. Iqbal says in Reconstruction of Religious Thought, ‘God’s I-am-ness (Self) is independent, elemental absolute..... A self is unthinkable without a character, i.e. a uniform mode of behaviour. Nature, as we have seen is not a pure mass of materiality occupying a void. It is a structure of events, a systematic mode of behavior and as such organic to the Ultimate Self. Nature is to Divine Self as character is to human self.’ (p. 56)

Interpreting the above passage Sheikh Saeed wrote, ‘(for Iqbal) reality is essentially one though it has various levels or grades of its manifestation. It manifests itself variously at the levels of matter, life and mind and it best manifests itself in the selves of human beings.’

However, (just to return to the initial argument) selves in human beings suffer from the curse of forgetfulness when they forget God, the Ultimate Reality. This forgetfulness, existing as interpenetrative process, takes a very concrete shape as poetic image in the works of Iqbal. *Jawab e Shikwah* is the response of God to the Muslim, disclosing the reasons of the failure of the world of Islam as a civilization. The following references from the poem are point by point descriptions of the meaning of ‘forgetfulness of self’ or non-self of the world of Islam in the 20th century.

فانقل ارباب سے کجاں میں کیسے ہیں
شوح بستان بیستہ کی مگر کیسے ہیں!

How little do these beings of earth the laws of comportment know;
How coarse and insolent they are, these who live below.

عالم نیکے دانے کو ملے ہے ہاں مگر جب کے اسرار سے نیک ہے

Of Quality and Quantity He knows the secrets, true—
The ways of humility as well if he a little knew!

ہاتھ بے دہریں الٹے لے لیں انقی باشت رسوائی پیسے ہیں

Apostate hearts and palsied hands Your earthly lives debase,
You all, to your great Prophet (PBUH), are Bringers of deep disgrace

جن کو آتا نہیں دنیا کی کوئی چیز تم ہو نہیں سب قوم کو پونے شین تم ہو

You love your homes the least among the nations of the earth,
You are the most incompetent in knowledge and in worth;

بھلیاں جس میں آئے لٹو وہ غرضن تم ہو بیچ کھاتے ہرچ سلاٹ کفن تم ہو

You are a barn where lightning stays, where ruin idle lies,
Ancestral coffins long entombed your only merchandise;

قلب میں زینتِ لوح میں اسرار نہیں
کچھ بھی پیٹ محمد کا تمہیں پائے نہیں

Your hearts are now of longing void, Your souls now know no zeal,
You heed no more that message great which Ahmad (PBUH) did reveal.

اُمراؤ شہتہ دولت میں ہر غافل ہے سے
زندہ ہے پرت بیضا غراب کے دم سے

The rich are drunk with wine of wealth, their God they hardly know,
It is because the poor yet live That wells of Faith still flow.

دہم سے یہی سہل صہلت لے بال عدل سے کا تاقویٰ لہ اشاعت پاک

The Muslim was sincere of speech, of fear his voice was free;
Just, staunch, he scorned the slightest breath of partiality.

شجرِ فطرتِ مسلمِ تمنا سے نازِ نال
تھا شجاعتِ میر و ہاکِ تہِ فوجِ ادراک

In nature, like a tree, kept fresh by modesty most rare,
Yet braver than the bravest he, intrepid past compare.

حیدریِ فوج سے زولتِ عثمانی ہے
تم کو اسلاف کے کیا نسبتِ عثمانی ہے؟

Nor Usman's treasure in chest you own, Nor Ali's empty bowl,
With spirits of such great forbears, What kinship has your soul?

وہ زمانے میر سے تیز تھے سماں چکر
اور تم خوار ہو گئے تارکِ مشراں چکر

The honoured of their times, they lived, For theirs was true iman,
You live disgraced, as having left the paths of Al-Quran.

تم آؤ اس میں غصہ نال وہ آپس میں کریم
تم خطا کار خطا بین، وہ خطا پوش کریم

You roll the eye of mutual wrath, Their eye was ever kind;
You err, for errors look, while they were generously blind.

آج بھی جو جو براہِ تہیم کا ایمان پیدا
اگلے رکتی ہے اندازِ گھٹاں پیدا

The faith of Abraham if born even now,
Fire may engender what belongs to gardens alone.

قوتِ عشق سے پرست کو بالا کر دے
دہریں ام محمد سے اُجالا کر دے

Raise you, through ishq, all the humble to greatness;
Illuminate by the name of Muhammad the world of ignorance.

These verses quoted above are an outstanding explanation of what is required to enter the state of non-self, 'forgetting God and thus forgetting one's self'. To enter this state one needs to (in order of the appearance of the verses in the poem):

1. forget the decorum of respect at the cost of concept of respect itself
2. forget the virtue of humility
3. forget in earthly life the life of hereafter
4. forget the meaning of knowledge and forget what one could claim as one's belonging
5. forget true ancestral essence and trade virtue in their name
6. forget the Divine message, forget warmth of longing
7. forget in joy of riches the meaning of suffering
8. forget the value of justice to sustain partiality
9. forget that loss of modesty leads to shamelessness
10. forget that adapted poverty and generosity remain the greatest model of life
11. forget to connect with the spirit of revelations
12. forget that kind heartedness helps to have life of sympathy and grace
13. forget about the power of faith (iman) that transforms fires into gardens
14. forget about the power of 'ishq' that elevates the humblest

Inversely, self starts taking shape if these reference points of identity start appearing in individuals who then serve as element of reform in a community.

The last point is of utmost significance because if 'Ishq' (longing) is the relation between the hierarchies of existence, even if between the Ultimate Existence and the lowest of all that exists, belonging takes place. Longing leads to belonging and explanatory process becomes evolutionary process. In Iqbal's opinion Khudi's evolution is marked by illumination. We may call evolutionary process, 'illuminationary process' as well.

At this stage we can well assume that nothing exists in the universe but the longitudinal and latitudinal hierarchies of light. The Light of all the lights resides as the fountainhead of all. Being lost is being away from the Light, being lost in the darkness of terrestrial ignorance. The wise, the illuminated, the possessor of 'khudi' is the one aware of the loss, aware of his Origin and longs to return to It as 'nafse Mutmainna' (self in peace, contented self) and as a result in this world lives as if in exile. Awareness and longing is the seat of knowledge. Thus the self aware of its plight enters the self that longs and the self that longs interpenetrates the self that knows. The knowledgeable self finally interpenetrates the sphere of peace, setting itself free from the terrestrial cell, the shell of existence of shadows and ignorance. This is the light attainable by all whether emperors or beggars, philosophers or 'clowns' (meaning ordinary people). Socrates and Plato had it and so did Hermes. Grand kings like Kay Khusraw and Mannu had it and so did humble Al-Hallaj and Augustine. Men of letters like Shahab Uddin Surawardi, William Shakespeare and Goethe saw its bliss and reckless malaamati (sufisilsila of the Punjab) Bulha Shah also infused its power among his followers. This is the

state that empowers one to rise above the values of riches and virtues of one's age and breath beyond all ages. This is the power of becoming, what Iqbal calls, behr-e-bekraan, fathomless ocean. Knowledgeable self in state of Ishq at this stage compounds with faqr (poverty) and man becomes image of God, his hand becomes God's Hand and tongue the Tongue of God (Surah Al-Fath, 48: 10).

ہاتھ سے اللہ کا ہندہ مومن کا ہاتھ
غالب و کار آستہ ترین کار کشا، کار کش

The hand of the man of faith is the hand of the Almighty:
Dominant, creative, resourceful, consummate.

خالق و نوری ہندہ مولا صفات
ہر وہ جس سے معنی اس کا دل بے نیاز

Terrestrial yet celestial he is; the one created with the qualities of the Creator.
His contented self has no desires for this world or hereafter.

Adopted poverty is a virtue. Unlike the inflicted poverty it gives one a vision that glory becomes to the Glorious alone and resources of the earth are bestowed upon man as custodian for sole purpose of sharing the resources, not to take pride and demonstrate them as tools of power.

اک منقر کھاتا ہے صیاد کو پھیری
اک منقر کھلتے ہیں اس کا دریاں پھیری

There is a faqr that teaches the hunter to be a prey;
There is another that opens the secrets of mastery over the world.

اک منقر سے قوموں میں سکینہ لگیری
اک منقر سے مٹی میں خاصیت لگیری

There is a faqr among nations causing needfulness and sorrow;
While faqr of another kind turns dust into elixir.

Without this faqr king remains a beggar and by virtue of it beggar becomes his own king and thus king of others.

خدا سے پھر تو قلب نظر مانگ
نہیں ممکن ایسے ہی بے تقویٰ

Beg God for the heart and the vision as it was once,
Without becoming a faqr, it's not possible to be a king.

Faqr leads to a political ideal as well. Faqr is the primary qualification for the head of the state if longitudinal and latitudinal measures of its Khudi help to take up to the task of becoming custodian. As long as khudi and faqr are not the essential criterion the political chaos worldwide shall continue along with widespread injustice where 20 percent people exploit 80 percent resources of the world. A faqir in office, a confident and sincere visionary, speaks only to echo his deepest self and whose soul is filled with grave empathy and sympathetic sorrow.

بلوچ بخت سخن دل نواز جاں پرور
یہی ہے رخت سفر میاں کا وہاں کے لیے

Lofty vision, winsome speech, a sympathetic passionate soul—
This is all the luggage required of the leader of a Caravan.

Khudi when attained reflects itself throughout the profile of nafs e Mutmainna (contended self). And that profile reflects itself over all the walks of life that possessor of khudi becomes custodian of. As a result reforms become the most obvious feature of its presence in a society where injustice had prevailed. Land reforms, bureaucratic institutions rebuild, economic justice, fair division of wealth and resources, allocation of jobs and duties on the merit of calibre, religious and ideological evolution, and most of all construction of a social system by setting personal examples based on values of compassion and cooperation rather than competition, is the historical context of all the faqir kings. Whenever and wherever they appear they look alike and work alike. Our contemporary institutions harbouring political and economic injustice would stand no chance whatsoever if a Moses, a Krishna, a Jesus or Muhammed (sa) were adapted as role models of absolute khudi in high offices.

نظر کو تیرو کرتی ہے چمک تہذیب حاضر کی
یہ ستاعی مگر جھوٹے گلوں کی ریزہ کاری ہے

The glitter of modern civilization dazzles the sight;
This clever craftsmanship is a mosaic of fake jewels though.

وہ حکمت ناز تھا جس پر خرد سندان غرب کو
چمک کے شبہ سخن میں تیغ کارزار ہے

That wisdom, the scholars of the West took pride in,
In the bloody grip of greed has turned into a sword.

تہذیب کی فنونِ کاری محکم نہیں کرتا
جہاں میں جس تمدن کی بنا سٹریڈ اسی ہے

Enchanting schemes of thoughtfulness cannot let prosper
Civilization of the world, founded on capitalism.

All in all the message send by a dedicated father to a son of rather tender age carries more moral and practical value for the judicious than volumes written by scholars.

مرا طریق اسی ہی نہایت حقیر ہے
خود ہی نہ بیچ جسیری میں نام پیدا کر!

The way of poverty not of riches is mine;
Sell not your 'self'! in beggar's rags shine.

The greedy and the unjust, the accursed whom He made to forget their selves, always create systems where their non-selves reflect. And we who gather to talk or hear about illuminated ones like Hafiz, Rumi, Shakespeare, Goethe or Iqbal have a question to answer. If there are in us signs of any of those points of references that as elements of khudi (self) gradually appear. If not, then we are also among the non-selves, away from the light lost in the terrestrial abyss, ignorant, proud and dangerous creatures. But if there is even only one of the reference points visible in us, we have a responsibility to identify with the role models closest to the Light of all the lights rather than those whose curse will never let them see their own darkness. If our selves don't let them see the truth of their non-selves the curse of darkness shall prevail over the earth.

لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

Verily, God does not change the condition of people until they change their selves.

Abstract

Great Literature is an institution and it defines relationship that it forms with the emerging possibilities of future and the never entombed past. Pasts and futures reflect in great literary works. Shakespeare and Allama Iqbal share spiritual lineage and it is most visibly evident in their verbal decorum and thematic patterns. Allama Iqbal's construction of dialogue is similar to that of Shakespeare's in its nature and thus it distances him from both Indian and Persian forms of dialogue composition. Dialogue is Shakespeare's creative agency. Every time we go back to a work of Shakespeare, the dialogue formation seems, as if, rearranged and automatically situationalized as derivative form of the plight of existence and we look at the play every time as a new discovery, a newly found document about our own past. Iqbalian dialogue is of psychological and political nature, it is revelatory not just in traditional sense of speculating character's inner world but it simultaneously involves study of historical and geographical locale. While reading 'Siddique', for instance, we cannot keep ourselves aloof of the atmosphere and find ourselves within the mosque fourteen centuries ago where the dialogue originally took place. The order in which internal constitution of the speeches takes place but also theatrical turn-taking, character's having 'access to the floor', everything well secured. Iqbal here establishes communication in real situations and transports the readers' imagination to the world apparently lost to us in the flood of time. Both the poets are Ishraqi in their approach towards their fundamental thematic issues and both encourage inverse reading of their texts. Iqbal's *Jawab-e-Shikwa* is among the best of his works to offer an inverse reading to understand the meaning of his central philosophical-poetic concern, Self (Khudi).

Keywords: Shakespeare, Iqbal, *King Lear*, *hamlet*, *Jawab-e-Shikwa*, Illuminationist philosophy, Ibn Arbi, Disposition and Position of Nature, Self (Khudi).