

spectrum so that the putting back of the different colours into the pencil of light again, if not impossible, becomes a formidable task, and requires a trained mind and considerable agility. Ghalib's central idea, with all its component parts (for no thought is ever single, and is always a compound of many states), becomes an active metabolical process. As there is an under-current of plasma in the body-organism, there is a continuous under-current of feeling in Ghalib's poetic system which forces us to revert to his poetry all the time. This is a sure test of great poetry as Coleridge pointed out, and even in his obscurest moments, there is something in Ghalib which compels us to go back to him. It is this which lies behind his undying appeal, so that in spite of any psychological aversion one may have for this kind of poetry, in spite of the impossibilities of his poetic technique and impenetrable obscurity, one cannot ignore him or put him out of mind. Because what he says is universal, and because it had never been said in the way Ghalib says it, he becomes a classicist in expression, and no one, not even the average reader, can forget his lines. Ghalib's poetry pleases for the same reason as it intrigues, and he remains a living poet. For the thoughtful reader, the search for the meaning becomes a stimulating mental exercise, and the casual reader derives enough aesthetic satisfaction from the surface. Even when inscrutable, his expression is so architectonic that he remains like the Sphinx, delightful in its mystery."\*

\*Ghalib: *Selected Poems*: pp. 22-23, published by ISMEO, Rome, 1969.

## GHALIB AND IQBAL

B.A. Dar

عمر با چرخ بگردد کہ جگر سوخته ای  
چون من از دودہ آزرنفسان برخیزد

*The heavens revolve and ages pass,  
That a person with a burning heart as I is born,  
From the stock of those who breathe fire.<sup>1</sup>*

So says Ghalib about himself. He has been more than fortunate in winning recognition for the sterling qualities of his art which charm and please lovers of poetry both Urdu and Persian. He seems to be himself fully convinced of the greatness of his art and was therefore greatly perturbed at the coldness shown by his contemporaries towards him. This feeling of frustration found expression in several of his verses both in Urdu and Persian.

نہ ستائش کی تمنا نہ صلے کی پروا

*Neither do I desire praise nor care for reward.*

And yet he was fully confident of his greatness as a creative artist. In one of his Persian verses he claims to possess the white hand of Moses while his critics are worshipping the calf of Samiri, the false prophet.

بنمای بہ گو سالہ پرستان بد بیضا  
غالب بہ سخن صاحب قرتاب کجائی

<sup>1</sup> *Kulliyat-i-Ghalib* (Persian) p.498. All references are to the one published by Shaikh Mubarak Ali, Lahore, 1965.

**O Ghalib, show your White Hand to those Calf-worshippers;  
Can there be other poet of such miraculous charm  
and beauty?<sup>1</sup>**

And he was so sure of winning recognition, if not during his life time, then after his death:

کوکیم را در عدم اوج قبولی بوده است  
شہرت شعرم بہ گیتی بعد سن خواهد شدن

**The Star of my Destiny had been in ascendance;  
The fame of my poetic art shall spread in the world  
after my death.<sup>2</sup>**

But Ghalib wished to be recognised not only as a poet excelling in the beauty of form: he seems to have the idea that the thoughts he is expressing in his poetry, especially Persian, are original and are as valuable as those of the sacred books of revealed religions. In the Introduction to his Persian Diwan, he says:

غالب اگر این فن سخن دین بودی  
آن دین را ایزدی کتاب این بودی

**If the art of poetry be taken as religion;  
This poetical collection of mine would have been its  
revealed book.<sup>3</sup>**

Besides being a great creative artist and poet Ghalib was a great intellectual. It is for this reason that he has been often classed as a philosopher-poet, though it would be hardly proper to call him a philosopher in the technical sense, for in Ghalib we would probably find no expounding of a consistent thought system. What one finds in him is "a keen intellectual awareness, a tendency to interrogate things,

and offering fresh and often profound comments on them, or re-discovering old truths anew for himself."<sup>4</sup>

In one of his Persian *Mathnavis*, *Mughanni Namah*, Ghalib has emphasised the important role of reason and intellect in human life.<sup>5</sup> Poetry, he says, is a valuable treasure of gems but it is intellect alone which can appreciate it. It is the fountain of life which never dries up, which never grows old even in old age. If it is necessary for philosophers, it is equally necessary for the mystics.

When poetry conveys some message of great significance and when music warms up the heart of the listeners and enraptures them, it is all due to reason. It is reason again which illumines the heart with a spiritual light (*nur*) and leads the individual to the vision of the ultimate truth:

خرد چشمہ زندگانی بود  
خرد را بہ پیری جوانی بود  
فروغ سمر کہ رومیان  
چراغ شبستان یونانیان  
خرد کردہ درخود ظہور دگر  
دل از دیدہ پذیرفتہ نوری دگر  
ز کنجی کہ پیش بویرانہ ریخت  
در آفاق طرح ہری خانہ ریخت  
ز دودن ز آئینہ ز نگہ برد  
ز دانش نگر ذوق دیدار برد

**Intellect is the fountain of Life,  
Intellect makes old age as good as youth.  
It provides light to morning meditation of the Sufi  
And serves as a lamp for the philosophers during dark  
nights.**

**Intellect manifests itself anew  
And the heart acquires a new light through the eyes.  
The treasure that the Intellect casts into the wilderness**

<sup>1</sup> *A History of Urdu Literature*. Muhammad Sadiq. (Oxford University Press. London, 1964), p.190

<sup>2</sup> *Kulliyat*, pp.190-197

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 635. Reference is to the story of Moses who was vouchsafed a miracle of White Hand: The Quran, xx,22; xxvii. 12; xxviii.32. "Calf-worshippers" is again a reference to another story of Moses. Samiri the magician, carved out of gold an image of calf before which Israilites prostrated as if before God—an act of disobedience for which they were rebuked by Moses. See the Quran, vii.148-152; xx.87-89.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.609

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.663

*Lays the foundation of an abode of beauty (and peace)  
in the world.*

*Intellect has rubbed off rust from the mirror  
And the eyes could enjoy the pleasure of vision.*

In the *tashbib* (introduction) of Qasida 19, he relates his imaginary meeting with *Aql Fa al*, i.e. Active Intellect.<sup>1</sup> According to Muslim philosophers, this Active Intellect is the lowest of the ten intelligences which gives individual forms to material objects and universal forms to the human intellect.<sup>2</sup>

The Active Intellect invites all intellectuals to a meeting to discuss some problems and thus attempts to arrive at some answers to the common riddles of life.

تا بہ بیند کہ اسرار نہانی پیداست

*That they might see that the hidden secrets are manifest*

Ghalib comes forward and begins to ask questions. I would only mention some of these questions asked by him. What is the secret of life? What is this world? How is One and Many related? What is the nature of free will and determinism? What is good and evil? Is it possible for the finite individual to reach the Infinite? If not, how far is our effort to reach that goal justified? It is this intellectual approach of Ghalib that distinguishes him from his contemporary poets. This aspect of his is much more emphasised in his Persian poetry than in Urdu, though glimpses of it are easily discernible there as well. The following well-known verses, for instance, speak of a great mind in search of truth but the way Ghalib gives expression to his thought is not that of a cold intellectual but of a creative artist:

جب کہ تجھ بن نہیں کوئی موجود  
پھر یہ ہنگامہ لے خدا کیا ہے؟  
سبزہ و گل کہاں سے آئے ہیں؟  
ابر کیا چیز ہے؟ ہوا کیا ہے؟

<sup>1</sup> *Kulliyat*, pp. 275-279

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II edition, Vol.1, p. 342

*Where none exists besides Thee,  
O God, what is all this going around.  
Whence do this greenery and flowers come?  
What is cloud and what is air?*

But his stature as an intellectually oriented poet is truly revealed in his Persian verses which have not received the attention they deserve. Iqbal once tried to bring this fact to the notice of Ghalib's admirers. In a message on Ghalib Day, celebrated by Anjuman-i-Urdu Punjab in February 1937, Iqbal said:

"....On this day I would like to remind you of the message  
of Ghalib h'mself:

بگذر از مجموعہ اردو کہ بی رنگ من است

*Leave aside my collection of Urdu poetry which lacks  
beauty and colour.*

Ghalib invites you to his Persian poetry....While reading it, we should, however, note how far *Bedil's* philosophy of life influenced Ghalib's mind and how far he was able to understand and assimilate it..."

In the following verses Ghalib describes how he feels constrained to give expression to ideas which belong to another world:

آتش اندر نہاد من زدہ اند  
لالہ و ارغوان نمی خواہم  
بادۂ من مدام خون دل است  
ارغوان از رنگان نمی خواہم  
سخن از عالم دگر دارم  
ہدم و رازدان نمی خواہم  
سینہ صافم، قلندر، مستم  
راز خود را نہاں نمی خواہم

*Destiny has made my nature fiery,  
I need no tulip nor any fruit of red colour;  
My wine is ever blood of the heart  
I need no gift from the wine-seller.*

*My poetry is from another world,  
I need no companion or sharer of secrets;  
A sincere heart, a galander and intoxicated I am.  
I need not keep my secret hidden.<sup>1</sup>*

One can easily find here similarities of phrases and ideas with Iqbal.

Ghalib tried to create a new world for himself and for others to contemplate and enjoy. He calls himself the nightingale of a yet-to-be created garden that will come into being through his songs born out of the fire generated by his undying love for new worlds:

ہوں گرمی نشاط تصور سے نغمہ سنج  
میں عندلیب گلشن نا آفریدہ ہوں

*The pleasure of the Idea fires my imagination  
And I sing as a nightingale  
Of a yet-to-be created garden.*

It was this fire, all-consuming and all-pervasive, which Ghalib felt in himself and which found expression in his verses:

ہے ننگ سینہ دل اگر آتش کلمہ نہ ہو  
ہے عار دل نفس اگر آرزو شاں نہ ہو

*If heart is not a fire temple  
It is not worthy of my body;  
My heart would feel ashamed  
If my soul does not sprout out fire.*

In one of his Persian Ghazals, he says:

دلے دارم کہ در ہنگامہ شوق  
سرستش دوزخ است و گوہر آتش

بہ خلد از سردی ہنگامہ خواہم  
بر افروزم بہ گرد کوثر آتش

*I have a heart that through the ecstasy of love  
Its nature is Hell and its essence fire.  
In the cold atmosphere of Paradise  
I kindle fire all around the pond of Kauthar<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Kulliyat, pp. 412-415  
<sup>2</sup> Kulliyat, p. 556

Another very significant feature of Ghalib's poetry is his independence of spirit, his conscious revolt against the conventional and the customary, an open mind for the new instead of the old rotten values. He had the courage to stand by his own convictions and was always ready to suffer for them. "Do not think," he says, as reported by Hali, "that whatever the ancients have written is true. Were there no asses in the times gone by?"

لازم نہیں کہ خضر کی ہم پیروی کریں  
مانا کہ اک بزرگ ہمیں ہم سفر ملے

*It is not necessary that we follow Khidhr;  
If we meet him, we shall look upon him  
As a fellow traveller and not as a guide.*

In a Persian verse, he has expressed this idea with reference to the life of Abraham and his father (or uncle) Azar:

باسن میاویں اے پدر، فرزند آزر را نگر  
ہرکس کہ شد صاحب نظر، دین بزرگان خوش نکرد

*Don't fall foul of me, O Father;  
Look at Abraham, the son of Adhar  
Whoever acquires insight  
Becomes dissatisfied with the faith of his ancestors.<sup>3</sup>*

Some idea has been expressed by Iqbal:

اگر تقلید بودے شیوہ خوب  
بہر ہم رہ اجداد رفتے

*Had imitation been good,  
The Prophet too would have followed  
In the footsteps of his ancestors.<sup>4</sup>*

His spirit of independence manifested itself most obtrusively in his comments on the reprinting of *Ain-i-Akbari* by Sayyed Ahmad Khan. As a work of scholarship, it was of course a commendable step, but Ghalib's point of

<sup>3</sup> Kulliyat, p. 533  
<sup>4</sup> Payam-i-Mashriq, p. 264

view reflected his conviction that the old order was bound to give place to a new order with all the possibilities of providing better opportunities to the people. In spite of his great regard for the Sayyed, he could not resist expressing his personal conviction:

پیش این آئین کہ دارد روزگار  
گشته آئین دگر تقویم ہار

*In face of the present new prevalent order  
Old order has become as obsolete as last year's  
calender.<sup>1</sup>*

Thirdly, Ghalib is enamoured of life here and now, a life which is fully lived and richly enjoyed. He has a deep passion and yearning for a meaningful life in proportion to the vicissitudes and miseries that he had to suffer throughout his long career of over seventy years. He was fully aware of the intensity of pain and evil in life and the consequent disillusion and frustration that one meets everywhere at almost all times. And yet, he was able to find not only solace but actual enjoyment out of this life because to him life *qua* life was worth living in spite of everything:

رونق ہستی ہے عشق خانہ ویراں ساز ہے  
انجمن بے شمع ہے گر برق خرمین میں نہیں

*Life is enriched by Love which is a house-consuming  
fire;  
Without lightening (that is evil) that falls on the harvest  
(and thereby tends to destroy it),  
There would be no brightening up of human life.*

Several verses can be quoted which express his great passion and zest for life. Only one or two would suffice here:

ہزاروں خوابشیں ایسی کہ ہر خوابش پہ دم نکلے  
بہت نکلے سرے ارمان لیکن پھر بھی کم نکلے  
ہوس کو ہے نشاط کار کیا کیا  
نہ ہو مرنا تو جینے کا مزا کیا

<sup>1</sup> Kulliyat, p.146

عشق سے طبیعت نے زیست کا مزہ پایا  
درد کی دوا ہائی درد بے دوا پایا

*A thousand desires and each desire more charming  
than the other,*

*Most of them are satisfied yet a lot remained.*

*What a delight my ambitious nature find in activity,  
No zest in life there would be if there were no death.*

*Through Love I feel ecstasy in life*

*A remedy for pain and yet an eternal pain itself.*

This experiment with life here and now, sometimes leads man to what is religiously called sin. Should one stay one's foot merely for the fear that his footsteps may lead him astray? This is the eternal conflict of good and evil which is involved in the very determination of man to say yes to life, to accept it at its face value and to plunge deep into it — sometimes brining out pearls of rarest beauty and sometimes plunging into darkness. But the effort continues on the part of man. It is the effort, the determination to try the hazards for achieving ends and objects, that is valuable and desirable. Man as flesh is liable to sin, these are foibles which further prompt man to try harder. To commit sin in the attempt is not as much evil as never to try. Ghalib realises this truth which he expresses thus:

خوئے آدم دارم، آدم زادہ ام  
آشکارا دم ز عصیاں می زلم

*As a progeny of Adam, I inherit Adam's temperament;  
I openly confess my liability to committing sin.<sup>1</sup>*

To this, I would compare Iqbal's following verses from the *Javid Nama*:

چوں بروید آدم از مشتے کلی  
با دلی، با آرزوی در دلی  
لذت عصیاں چشیدن کار اوست  
غیر خود چیزی ندیدن کار اوست  
زانکہ بی عصیاں خودی ناید ہلست  
تا خودی ناید ہلست، آید شکست

<sup>1</sup> Kulliyat, p.146

*When Adam grows from a handful of dust  
With a heart throbbing with desire,  
He is destined to taste the delight of sin  
And to see nothing besides himself.  
Without committing sin, self does not develop,  
And without selfhood, life must end in total failure.<sup>1</sup>*

It is not that one commits sin for the sake of sin but because it is the necessary adjunct of Man's unique nature and his selfhood which involves constant struggle against difficulties and odds. And we find Ghalib ever ready to meet these challenges of life:

می ستیزم با قضا از دیر باز  
خویش را بر تیغ عریان می زخم

*I have been fighting with fate since long  
And meeting the challenge of the naked sword.<sup>2</sup>*

In another place, Ghalib says:

ساقی بمت که صلاحی دهد  
باده زخم خانه لا می دهد  
بمت اگر بال کشتائی کند  
صعوه تواند که بهائی کند  
نیر توفیق اگر بر دهد  
لاله عجب نیست کز انگر دهد

*The Saqi of ambition gives an open invitation,  
It gives wine from the tavern of Negation,  
If ambition could spread its wings  
Goldfinch could become a Huma (a fabulous bird of  
good omen);*

*If the sun of ambition could shine  
Tulip can grow out of embers.<sup>3</sup>*

These ideas Ghalib and Iqbal shared to a great extent and I feel that it was this community of ideas and spirit which led Iqbal nearer to Ghalib. Before I take up how

<sup>1</sup> Javid Namah, pp.212-213

<sup>2</sup> Kulliyat, p.402

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.121

Iqbal treats Ghalib in his works, I would like to refer to some very important events in the lives of both. It is said that Ghalib met an Iranian scholar, Abdul Samad by name, who was a Zoroastrian before his conversion to Islam, and had the opportunity to live with him for two years. It was probably due to this contact that Ghalib seems to have developed interest in the philosophic heritage of Iran as symbolised in the system of Ibn al-Arabi and Shihabuddin Suhrawardy Maqtul, specially the latter whose system of thought draws heavily from Zoroastrian sources.

The question whether the doctrine of Unity of Being so ardently, passionately and repeatedly expounded by Ghalib in his Urdu and Persian verses in varied forms, was the product of intellectual formulation as a result of this contact, or merely a product of artistic requirements or aesthetic expression of different wayward moods, as expounded in the famous sentence of Hazin that

تصوف برائے شعر گفتن خوب است

*Mysticism is the fondest expression for the poetic art,* is difficult to decide. I would rather explain Ghalib's partiality for Unity of Being more the result of an aesthetic rather than intellectual need. This tendency in Ghalib must have got some intellectual support due to the influence of this Iranian scholar.

Yet Ghalib was equally conscious of the incompatibility of holding this doctrine in all its implications of moral laxity and denial of responsibility with the demands of a religious system like Islam. He expressed this contrast in a beautiful verse of a Ghazal:

رموز دین نشناسم، درست و معذورم  
نهاد من عجمی و طریق من عربی است

*I do not understand the implications of religion;  
Therefore I must be excused.  
For by temperament I belong to Ajam (Iran),  
While my faith is Arabian.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Kulliyat, p.485

The disparity between the two, 'Ajam and Arab', had been the subject of a great controversy long after the time of Ghalib and still remains undecided. But Iqbal seems to accept this dichotomy and has given expression to it in his verses in words reminiscent of this very verse of Ghalib:

عجم ہنوز نداند رموز دین و رنہ۔۔

*Ajam is not yet aware of the secrets of Religion....*

It was again under the influence of this Iranian scholar that Ghalib became familiar with the intricacies of Persian idiom of which he was later so proud. His inclination towards Shiaism in spite of what he says about his being a Turk, was again no doubt the result of this contact. What I have called an 'inclination towards Shiaism' may be interpreted as a conscious attempt on the part of Ghalib to bring about a compromise between the two different currents of the main Islamic stream. The dichotomy of Arab and Ajam, the thesis and antithesis, may be so resolved that a higher and more comprehensive synthesis is evolved. One may doubt the authenticity of this fact in the case of Ghalib but Iqbal, under similar circumstances and under similar influences, did make a serious attempt in this direction.<sup>1</sup> In the life of Iqbal, we come across a similar personality with almost similar results. An Iranian scholar, Abdul Ali Hirvi (d.1922), happened to visit Lahore during his long sojourns. Iqbal happened to attend his religious sermons. In one of his letters dated 31 October 1916 to Maharaja Kishan Parshad, he speaks very highly of his intellectual attainments. He says, "He is a very great scholar. Although Shia by faith, his exposition of the Quran is surprisingly very profound and appealing. I attend his lectures now and then."

Iqbal's infatuation for Ghalib first found expression when he wrote a poem about him which was published in *Makhzan* in September 1901 and later included in *Bang-i-Dara*. It is one of the greatest tributes ever paid by any poet to Ghalib. It must, however, be remembered that Iqbal's opinion of Ghalib, as expressed here, is most probably confined to his Urdu poetry alone.

<sup>1</sup> Letters and Writings of Iqbal. (Iqbal Academy, 1967) pp.4-6

According to Iqbal, Ghalib's greatest characteristics are two: first, a lofty creative imagination which produces several universes of beauty and imparts tongue to the dumb, life to the dead and movement to the stationary. He was in search of Beauty which lives in the form of "yearning" in the heart of everything in the world and found expression in words which give a new significance to our life, as the sweet music of the stream by breaking the monotony of the mountains, enlivens the whole atmosphere. Secondly, his great intellectual stature which contributed greatly towards perfecting his poetic art and giving it a form unique in the history of Urdu literature.

لطف گوئی میں تیری ہمسری ممکن نہیں

ہو تخیل کا نہ جب تک فکر کامل ہم نشین

*It is not possible to compete with you in the beauty of expression  
Unless imagination and mature thought coalesce*

It is due to this wonderful synthesis of imaginative power and intellectual creativity that Ghalib, the "bud of Delhi" can rightly claim to excel the "rose of Shiraz". I may, however, add that what appeared to Iqbal in 1901 as a 'bud' yet waiting for time to grow and mature into a flower, has now grown full bloom, spreading its fragrance to all corners of the world. The greatest tribute that Iqbal has paid to Ghalib in this poem is to rank him along with Goethe, who lies buried in Weimer:

گلشن ویمر میں تیرا ہم نوا خوابند ہے

*Your brother poet lies buried in Weimer*

And to Iqbal, Goethe was the symbol of the greatest creative artist.<sup>1</sup>

In *Payam-i-Mashriq*, Iqbal has brought together four poets of the world in a symposium on Life: two from the West: Browning and Byron; and two from the East: Ghalib

<sup>1</sup> See *Payam-i-Mashriq*, p.246, footnote

and Rumi<sup>1</sup>. The bubbling wine of life, Browning thinks, lacked invigoration and, therefore, needed support from outside to make it regain its pristine fervour and energy. This led him to seek help from *Khidhr*, the unerring guide of mankind in the Muslim religious tradition who is said to have taken Alexander to the Fountain of Life. Browning would pour water taken from *Khidhr* into the cup and try to make it invigorating as before.

But Byron would not like to be under obligation to anybody, not even to *Khidhr*, for it would be to stain the purity of life. The best way would be to melt one's heart into water and pour it into the wine-cup of Life in order to make it more stimulating.

Then Ghalib comes forward and suggests his own prescription. To make life once more invigorating, to give it its original warmth and to make it as strong as before, Ghalib would like to render wine more bitter, more penetrative, more effective so as to reach the inner core of one's heart by melting glass and pouring it into the cup of life:

تا بادہ تلخ تر شود و سینہ ریش تر  
بگدازم آبگینہ و در ساغر افکنم

*That the wine be more bitter and the chest more sore,  
I melt the glass and pour into the cup.*

Rumi comes in the end. His stand is quite different from the rest. He asserts that life in its purity does not need any admixture; a water from the fount of Eternity or from the inner recesses of one's heart or even melting of glass would not achieve the ultimate purpose. To be truly worthy of Life, one must establish contacts, direct and immediate, with the ultimate source of Being and Existence. Unless this contact is established, no half-way remedies would make our life meaningful and significant:

آبیز شے کجا گہر پاک او کجا  
از تاک بادہ گیرم و در ساغر افکنم

<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p.252

*Leave aside purity of Life; it needs no admixture,  
I would fetch wine direct from the plant and pour it into  
the cup.*

Iqbal has here brought the four outstanding poets of the world together in a contest on the ideological level and not on the artistic plane. It is the basic question of life and in this, Iqbal feels Rumi's approach better and truer than Ghalib's and for that matter, than others'. But on the artistic plane, one is constrained to conclude that Iqbal was greatly struck by the aesthetic quality and beauty of Ghalib's ghazal and composed this piece of symposium after his style. I would like to quote here some three or four verses from this ghazal of exquisite beauty and charm:

رفتم کہ کہنگی ز تماشا بر افکنم  
در بزم رنگ و بو نمطے دیگر افکنم  
نخلم کہ ہم بجائے رطب طوطی آورم  
اہم کہ ہم بروئے زمین گوہر افکنم  
راہے ز کنج دیر بہ سینو کشادہ ام  
از خم کشم پیالہ و در کوثر افکنم

*I decided to destroy all antiquated things  
And to set a new pattern in this world.  
I am a tree that produces songs instead of dates,  
I am a cloud that showers pearls on the ground.  
I have opened a way to the Paradise through the corner  
of the tavern,  
I take up a cupful from the pitcher and pour it into  
Kauthar.<sup>2</sup>*

In the *Javid Nama*, while on a journey through the skies "in quest of ever-new manifestations," Iqbal arrives at the sphere of Jupiter, where he meets Ghalib, Hallaj and Qurratul Ain Tahira, the three pure spirits harbouring a fire in their hearts that might easily melt the world.<sup>3</sup> Their tulip-like red attires symbolise their inner yearnings which had kept them in constant fervour since eternity and were

<sup>2</sup> *Kulliyat*, p.578

<sup>3</sup> *Javid Nama*, pp.133-161



so much intoxicated with the wine of their own melodies that they preferred an ever-roaming life in space to any particular allocation in Paradise.

To Iqbal, Ghalib shares with Hallaj and the Lady of Iran, a common feature. He calls them all *آتش نوا* [musicians of the songs of fire] that burns whatever is old, antiquated and unworthy of preservation, they are moved by a passion and fervour that knows no limits and brings about intoxication of a sort, a characteristic of a truly great genius that destroys in order to build anew on a strong foundation for a better future. All three of them, in short, symbolise in their person, important sign-posts in the onward journey of the Muslim community towards its destined goal. The words they use are often provocative as if they wished to cry and shriek into the ears of the men who were unwilling to listen to them, who were unaware of the malady they were suffering from and, therefore, did not feel they needed a doctor—a surgeon who knows how to apply the knife of his thought to the virtues of the times. This provocative role created no doubt a great stir, but at the same time, it poured new blood into the veins of the people thus contributing towards a new resurrection.

Hallaj, in Muslim tradition, stands for revolution and a new world-order. His cry of *Ana'l Haq* (I am the creative truth) is "the bold affirmation of the reality and permanence of the human ego in a profounder personality" in an age which tended to deny the very existence of human self. It was, as Iqbal says, a challenge flung against the *Mutakallimin*.<sup>1</sup> Hallaj, thus, stands in the eyes of Iqbal, for revolution against the established order whether in morality, religion or in literature.

The revolutionary character of Hallaj is apparent when Iqbal calls both Nietzsche, the German thinker and McTaggart, his teacher at Cambridge (UK) as new Hallajes, for both, in their way, revolted against the inert and antiquated

<sup>1</sup> Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, p.96

order prevalent in their days. The beautiful Lady of Ajam, Qurratul Ain Tahira, whose name has grown into a legend, symbolises in her life the same revolutionary zeal to build anew on the ashes of the old. Both Hallaj and Tahira have the honour of laying down their lives for the promotion of the cause dearest to their heart.

Ghalib, though not a martyr as Hallaj and Tahira, is yet in the eyes of Iqbal, an equally ardent revolutionary in the world of art. His songs and laments are a source of inspiration to the weary soul of the individual in search of spiritual peace:

این نواها روح را بخشد ثبات

*These songs afford solace to the spirit.*<sup>1</sup>

Well could Ghalib sing with Hallaj:

ز خاک خویش طلب آتشی که پیدا نیست  
تجلی دگرے در خور تقاضا نیست

*Seek fire, as yet unseen, from your own self;  
Light borrowed from others cannot illumine the temple  
of your soul.*<sup>2</sup>

And then cry out:

بیا که قاعده آسمان بگردانیم  
قضا بگردش رطل گران بگردانیم  
زحیدایم من و تو، وفا عجب نبود  
گر آفتاب سوئے خاوران بگردانیم

*Let us change the way of the Heaven,  
And the decree of the Destiny  
By distributing a large goblet of wine  
No wonder if you and I, being devotees of Haider,  
Turn back the sun towards the East.*<sup>3</sup>

Ghalib and Hallaj, being revolutionary by nature and burning with the fire of infinite yearning, could not remain

<sup>1</sup> *Javid Nama*, p.135

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *Javid Nama*, pp.136-137. See also Ghalib's *Kulliyat*, p.592

content within the confines of a Paradise which, according to the Mulla, is an abode of eating, sleeping and singing, or, you may say, wine, houries and pageboys. Anguished lovers like Ghalib would rather prefer a life of eternal wandering, strung by tumult-arousing love and seek direct vision of the Ultimate Being:

جنت عاشق تماشائے وجود

*Lover's Paradise is contemplation of Being (Beauty)<sup>1</sup>*

or as Ghalib says:

ستے ہیں جو بہشت کی تعریف سب درست  
لیکن خدا کرے وہ تری جلوہ گاہ ہو

*What we hear about Paradise may be true  
But we wish it would be your Abode of Manifestation.*

In one of his Persian Mathnavis, *Ab-i-Guhar Ba*, Ghalib, during the course of a story, has described the traditional paradise as the dullest place imaginable, unsuitable for ardent lovers who cannot bear the monotony of drinking wine day and night at regular intervals out of the same cups:

دراں پاک میخانہ ہے خروش  
چہ گجائش شورش نای و نوش  
سپہ مستی ابرو باران کجا  
خزاں چون نباشد بہاراں کجا  
نظر بازی و ذوق دیدار کو  
بفردوس روزن بدیوار کو

*In that sacred tavern with no commotion  
There is no scope for the tumults of life;  
No dark clouds and rain,  
Neither autumn nor spring;  
There is no prospect of stealing a view of the beloved  
For there is no opening in its wall.<sup>2</sup>*

Unless there is something disturbing, something unexpected

<sup>1</sup> *Javid Nama*, p.139  
<sup>2</sup> *Kulliyat*, pp.163-164

ed and unforeseen breaking the monotony of the routine, Ghalib and Hallaj would not like to dwell in it and, therefore, their decision to wander for ever and ever:

ہے خلش با زیستن نا زیستن  
باید آتش در تہ با زیستن

*To live without stings and pricks is no living;  
One must live with fire under one's feet.<sup>3</sup>*

Mohyuddin Ibn al-Arabi once said that the fruits of Paradise need the heat of the Hell to ripen. In other words, the paradise would be incomplete without hell; both must be brought together to afford complete and full enjoyment. As Ghalib says:

خلد میں کہیو تو دوزخ بھی ملائیں یا رب  
سیر کے واسطے تھوڑی سی فضا اور سہی

*If you permit, O God, we may bring a little of Hell into  
Heaven;  
Let there be a somewhat different atmosphere for pleasure's sake.*

And the reason is that the Paradise as it is, cannot satisfy the cravings of a heart burning with the ardour of love. Ghalib says:

جنت نشود چارہ افسردگی دل  
تعمیر باندازہ ویرانی ما نیست

*The Paradise does not afford any remedy to our sad  
heart;  
It is too small to satisfy our inner yearnings.<sup>3</sup>*

This hell in paradise, fire in water, as Ghalib describes himself in one of his *qasidas*,

از بروں سو آہم اما از دروں سو آتشم

*Outwardly I am like water, although inwardly I am fire.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> *Javid Nama*, p. 140  
<sup>2</sup> *Kulliyat*, p. 451  
<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p.404

is one of the effects of what Ghalib calls a 'burning heart' in his famous verse which had been since long a subject of great controversy:

قمری کف خاکستر و بلبل قفس رنگ  
اے نالہ نشان جگر سوختہ کیا ہے؟

*The dove is a handful of ashes, the nightingale a network of colour  
O lamentation, what is the true sign of a broken heart?*

Iqbal has tried to develop the idea of Ghalib in this verse in his own way which is not much different from what Ghalib himself would have expounded.

A lamentation that rises out of a broken heart manifests itself in the world in variegated forms. It has made the dove a handful of ashes while the nightingale has acquired through this very lamentation, a variety of colours. In every case, the actuality is in proportion to the potentiality. In the case of the dove, it leads to death; while in the case of a nightingale, it leads to flowering of life in a multiplicity of colours. Iqbal sums up this discussion:

تو ندانی این مقام رنگ و بوست  
قسمت ہر دل بقدر ہائی و بوست

*In this station of colour and scent  
The portion of every heart is determined by its lamentation and yearning.<sup>1</sup>*

It is an echo of what Ghalib has said about the unlimited possibilities of existence:

توفیق باندازہ ہمت ہے ازل سے  
آنکھوں میں وہ قطرہ ہے جو کور نہ ہوا تھا

*Divine Grace has ever been commensurate with one's ambition  
The tear in the eye is a drop of water that preferred not to be a gem.*

<sup>1</sup> *Javid Nama*, p.145

Much depends on one's effort which is the result of constant promptings from within one's heart, the expression of love, search and attainment of ideals:

شوق ہے سامان طراز نازش ارباب عجز  
ذره صحرا دستگاہ و قطرہ دریا آشنا

*It is desire which affords opportunity of glory to the weak  
An atom has the possibility of being a desert and a drop has the ambition of being an ocean.*

The last point which Iqbal raises with regard to Ghalib in *Javid Nama*, revolves round the *Mathnavi* which Ghalib wrote at the request of his friend, Fazal Huq of Khayrabad who, although a logician of great eminence, played a reactionary role in the religious field. He opposed tooth and nail the reform movement initiated by Shah Ismail Shahid and asked Ghalib to write a *Mathnavi* in his defence which he accordingly did.<sup>1</sup>

One of the disputed points was whether God could produce another Muhammad. Fazl Haq held that God cannot and would not; while Shah Ismail held that God *can* but would not produce another one like him because it would go against prophet's finality. Ghalib had started writing the *Mathnavi* to defend Fazal Haq's stand but the logic of the argument as well as, most probably, Ghalib's own common sense led him to a stand which supported Shah Ismail's thesis:

صورت آرائش عالم نگر  
یک سہر ویک سہر ویک خاتم نگر

*Look at the arrangement of the universe—  
One sun, one moon and therefore one final prophet.*

But then he added that God, in his infinite mercy, can create

<sup>1</sup> *Kulliyat*, pp.130-137

many worlds and, therefore, each world can have a final prophet:

هر کجا بنگامه عالم بود  
رحمة اللعالمین هم بود

*Wherever the tumultuous clamour of a world arises,*

*There too is a Mercy unto all beings.<sup>1</sup>*

Iqbal asks Ghalib to explain the verse more clearly but Ghalib expresses his inability to put in simple words the richness of ideas implied in the verse. Being pressed hard by Iqbal, Ghalib cries out:

خلق و تقدیر و هدایت ابتداست  
رحمة اللعالمین انتهاست

*Creation, shaping and guidance are the beginning  
A Mercy unto all beings is the end.*

It is a reference to the Quranic verse:  
الذی خلق فسوی والذی قدر فهدی

*God created and shaped, determined and guided.<sup>2</sup>*

God's role in the universe is to create, determine the nature of every object and then to afford it guidance from within its own self. But what is the object of this whole process of creation? It is to reach a stage of perfection that is designated as *رحمة اللعالمین* "Mercy unto all," the Perfect Man. He is the final end of creation.

Round a simple verse of Ghalib which, no doubt, is pregnant with great possibilities of meaning, Iqbal has developed a philosophico-theological doctrine of Logos or the Perfect Man.

This doctrine was developed by Philo, the Alexandrian Jew under the influence of Greek philosophy and can hardly be said to be compatible with the conception of a

<sup>1</sup> Ibid  
<sup>2</sup> The Quran, lxxxvii.2-3

theistic God present in the Quran. Between God who is spirit pure and simple, and the universe of matter there can be no direct and immediate contact. The Perfect Man is the intermediary between the two; it is he who first reflects the light Divine and then distributes it to the universe in ever decreasing degrees. Among Muslim thinkers, it was adopted first by Hallaj, then by Ibn al-Arabi and al-Jili and since then, it has become the stock-in-trade of Muslim mystics and poets. Ghalib refers to it in the beginning of the same *Mathnavi*:

جلوة اول که حق بر خویش کرد  
مشعل از نور مجده پیش کرد  
شد عیان زان نور در بزم ظهور  
برچه پنهان بود از نزدیک و دور  
نور حق است احمد و لمعان نور  
از نبی و اولیا دارد ظهور

*The first epiphany of God directed towards itself  
Produced a candle out of Nuri-i-Muhammadi.  
All the hidden things of the universe, far and near,  
Were made manifest through this light.  
Ahmad is the Light of God and reflection of this Light  
Is present in every prophet and saint.*

This very doctrine of Logos to which Ghalib refers in this *Mathnavi*, has been expounded by Iqbal in explication of one of Ghalib's verses. But Iqbal makes this detailed exposition come from the mouth of Hallaj who expounded it in its mystic rather than philosophic aspect. Moreover, Hallaj is not a pantheist like Iqbal; while Ghalib, after Ibn al-Arabi, was a great advocate of pantheism.

To conclude with a verse from Ghalib:

در ته بر حرف غالب چیده ام میخانه  
تاز دیوانم که سرست سخن خواهد شدن

*Every word of mine is a tavern by itself—  
So that it might intoxicate lovers of poetry.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>3</sup> Kudliyat, p.610