

It asserts that poetry is created by a society whose impressions are received by individual consciousnesses attempting to express their experience of life. Language and cultural patterns play a seminal role in developing poetic consciousnesses, some of which become poets. Where cultural values have matured to form civilisational patterns, these consciousnesses express the holistic vision of a whole (2); where such patterns are distorted, blunted or defeated, failure of language to communicate the poetic vision results and poetry becomes mere versification. Emerson had expressed it for America some 150 years ago.

"The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language. When simplicity of character and the sovereignty of ideas is broken up by the prevalence of secondary desires, the desire of riches, of pleasure, of power, and of praise, -- and duplicity and falsehood take place of simplicity and truth, ... new imagery ceases to be created, and old words are perverted to stand for things which are not; a paper currency is employed, when there is no bullion in the vaults.(3)

In his Preface, in an almost terrifying prophetic tone, Dr. Ansari expresses: "Poetry which is incapable of discovering the vicissitudes of language, soon ceases to be ponderable."(4)

Takrar-e-Tamanna, his youthful venture into poetic drama, seems to try to achieve just that - discovering the vicissitudes of language to express the ponderable. The play seems to be a poetic expression of what Yeats had sworn to do: "I have invented a form of drama, distinguished, indirect, and symbolic, and having no need of

mob or press to pay its way - an aristocratic form..."(5) Yeats is Dr. Ansari's mentor. Like him, he has tried to invent a drama capable of expressing what Dr. Sohail Ahmad Khan termed "the grand theme of eastern literature".

Today, Pakistani poetic consciousness, having failed to absorb the symbols of regional languages, has become so reticent of its Indo-Iranian heritage that contemporary Urdu poetry has become a popular sort of versification good only for college youth - which coincidentally is its largest consumer. The age of great poetry seems to have ended, at least for now.

Aslam Ansari is a great poet of this small age of poetry. Had he been a small poet of a great age of verse, he would have measured taller than he does now, but - and here lies the pity of it - he is a giant subdued, a mere Gulliver tied to the ground by Lilliputians. His poetry is distinguished by its virtue of not dealing merely with the mundane or the material, nor with the lover and the lost. In his poetry, the traditional themes of love and suffering are transformed into complexities of human psychology and problems of human consciousness are sublimated into intricate metaphysical predicaments. *Takrar-e-Tamanna* is the essence of this all. It is an example of what he writes in his Preface: "Poetry, despite being essentially an aesthetic experience, is still a bodying forth of consciousness."(6)

This poetic play, which he calls a *taswwuriyya* (translated here as *imagirama*), is proof that he is no genius; that's for sure. No god talks to him; nor any god through him. In the world he creates, man

talks to God through him. This verse play is the quintessence of human plight, of the enigma and the riddle we call life. A stilled being throbs in its lines, like late buds fearing an early frost - the play was written in his youth. He gives words to the emptiness we name life, voice to the torment we have baptised desire, harmony to the chaos we designate human thoughts. In short, he has poeticised the genesis of human being-in-this-world.

This poetic play is a sharp reminder that poetry which is easily understood is not worth preserving. It is an interface between a play and a poem; the setting and the action are dramatic but the content is made up of several soliloquic poems which express the birth of human being or consciousness. Unfortunately, at the time of the play's creation, Urdu criticism was not ready to deal with this kind of creative art. It is still not well equipped to absorb this kind of writing into the customary reach of its thought. Criticism in Urdu has languished in the comforting shades of passive admiration and active resentment for so long that except for a few transient shudders and consoling astonishment it has failed to establish sure and indubitable standards of greatness. The obvious symptom of this is the ongoing war between potpourri ghazal and cast-iron nuzm.⁽⁷⁾ Affective fallacies haunt Urdu criticism's empty corridors and no practical terms signal the way forward. Aslam Ansari has suffered the neglect of this criticism whose nemesis are the blurb and the flap.

Aslam Ansari's poems, as opposed to his ghazals, defy a first-reading contentment, no gratification follows their perusal - not that they are disturbing or mystical, quite the opposite; but they

demand a second and a third reading, both for the meaning and the pleasure - one has to return to them as a newcomer to a town returns to a certain place again and again not knowing why, but always finding newer reasons to return. Dr. Ansari is well-versed in literatures of East and West both of which have left their mark on the chiaroscuro of his poetic patterns. His lines shy away from tenderfeet and demand a close acquaintance with higher voices of the world. Takrar-e-Tamunna is another such poem. It is firmly rooted in the Eastern (which, of course means, both the Indian and the Near Eastern) and Western traditions of drama and philosophical monologues. Samuel Becket's short plays and sonic involutions of his radio plays seem to have left their sharp imprints on the structure of the poem.(8)

Takrar-e-Tamunna was brought back to life by Dr. Sohail Ahmad Khan (Sawaira July-Sept. 2007), not as a friendly gesture but as an answer to a vital need. This dramatic poem, which suffered the 1965 war and cruel poeticisation efforts by its editor, was thus restored to its original form which its creator had intended. The poem is a drama in abeyance, an imaginative sound show to accompany the spectacle of life. A sound show because it was obviously written for the radio, but it has sure signs of the imaginative influence from Becket's short plays which can be used for the radio and stage, as well as for the television.(9)

The poem has two major parts; a formidably Persian prefatory Paish-e-Aahung serves as poet's own introduction to the drama of the poem that follows it in the form of a radio play. This preface

establishes how this imagirama focuses on the eternal quest of Life for its birth.(10)

ایک ہی مظر کی تکمیل وجود ایک ہی مضمون کے اندازِ بیاں
ایک ہی نغمے کے سامانِ سرود ایک ہی نغمے کے مضراب و نثاں (۱۱)

It is a play where the reader has to imagine the action as taking place in a theatre, but the matter of the poem is made up of a set of soliloquies which are uttered by different personalities while the events in the theatre house go on. These soliloquies are uttered by Paiker, Uks, Zill, and Shukhs. It is with these that I shall be concerned with.

The dramatic part is introduced by a Ravi, who was added to the poem on the request of Prof. Sohail Ahmad Khan. He is a prosaic appendage and is palpably separated from the poetic action of the poem. He is an afterthought, not yet absorbed into the structure of the poem.(12)

The dramatic part of the poem has a simple plot. While audience wait impatiently, and noisily for what was planned to be the last opus of the Universal Theatre, it is announced that the play cannot start for Laila, the dancer, is ill. While preparations are made to bring her on stage, the persistent din of audience's noises sounds the note of impatience, not rising to a clamour but always as a din of unsatisfied men. This is most obviously a symbol of the drama of life which is failing to begin, while Paiker sits in a dark cabin of the theatre and in the depths of his self voices rise to form dramatic characters. The individual soliloquising voices merge indistinguishably with the narrative of the poem and characters

emerge as if being born in the imagination of the central character. So while on the stage of the world the birth of life is to take place, Self as an agent strives to be born.

The poem gets a little fuzzy here because new scenes originate to replace the theatre and it seems that the stage of the theatre house has expanded to include the wilderness of man's lonely search for meaning with promises of substantial oases on the distant horizon. Every soliloquy evokes images of solitary toil and quest for the beloved. Dr. Ansari has throughout used the traditional symbols of Urdu romantic love poetry to reflect the eternal search for meanings and Self's realisation.

The rest is an expression of life as a journey of unknown, unmeasured millennia out of which no recognisable agent of thought has yet been formed. The voices of Paiker, Zill, Uks, and Shukhs materialise to express the various stages of life's recognition of itself and the eternal quest which has not yet proven fruitful. The four of them occur in a kind of evolving order, though the intermingling of their voices in a medley clearly reflects that there is no definitive order, but rather an attempt on the part of the various selves to be born. It is as if they exist contemporaneously, merging into one another, and yet maintaining their distinct existences. It is history of the evolution of the self seen on a spectrum of timelessness.

The adventurous travel in the imagination of the characters is nothing short of a psychomachia. It is the journey of the soul on its eternal quest for meaning as the various stages of the self tend to rise to form them into entities but soon are dispelled into an unreality of

meaning. I think that the characters are traceable to the early part of Yeats' *Byzantium* where he speaks of "image, man or shade, Shade more than man, more image than a shade;" whom Yeats had called "death-in-life and life-in-death". Dr. Ansari is well versed in English poetry and its symbols. Yeats must have been a definitely potent influence in his youth. When Yeats spoke of Hades' Bobbin in *Byzantium*, he brought in an important symbolic expression of the various states of being. The scene is of the winding stair - an important symbol of the development of the soul, which corresponds to the symbol of the gyre - on which the poet meets the Bobbin. This Bobbin corresponds to the developed soul which now comes down the winding stair to guide other souls on their way to mystic development. When Yeats calls it image, he refers to the Biblical idea of man being made in the image of God. With its spiritual development almost complete, the guide appears as an indistinct shape, as well as an image of God. As the features of the Bobbin are not clear, Yeats termed it shade, only a shadow - a common variant for shade or soul. Essentially it is man as it was once the soul of man, though now it is developed to its highest point, Ansari's Paiker, Zill, Uks, and Shukhs correspond to similar stages on the ladder of Being.

With this kind of paraphernalia Dr. Ansari has dramatised the various selves voicing their discontentment. The usual symbols of travel, quest, traveller's hardships, etc. have been used to bring out the totality of this experience. Paiker is the soul separated from God, and lost in the wilderness of earthy realities which seem like stones to him. The discontentment gives birth to questions: mainly the questions

relating to the surprise of finding oneself in a material world. Thus both Paiker and Uks ask the question "where"

پیکر: کہاں رہ گیا ہوں! / میں کیا ہو گیا ہوں (۱۳)

It is the surprise of the soul waking up in the material world and wondering what change has come over it. Significantly, Uks asks the similar questions but with the consciousness that he is not alone; thus the question is asked in the plural.

عکس: کہاں گئے ہم، / کہاں گئے ہم ___ (۱۴)

Paiker is expressive of the pain of being:

پیکر: کہ ہر شے مرے واسطے ایک نقشِ الم ___
ایک آفاقِ غم ___ / ایک دنیائے دروانا بن گئی ہے (۱۵)

Uks speaks on the wonder of the self coming to terms with an unknown world which it knows only as a manifestation and not in its essence.

نگاہِ جادو، خیالِ افسوں جہاں طلسم و وجود حیرت
ہر ایک نقشِ نمود حیرت، ہر ایک اسم و وجود حیرت
غیاب حیرت، حضور حیرت، تمام نزدیک و دور حیرت
زبان حیرت، کلام حیرت ___
سکوت حیرت، پیام حیرت ___ (۱۶)

These lines are most obviously an early draft of the vision which later consummated in *Gotum Budh Ka Akhri Waas*, written some two decades later, where the same stylistic pattern is used with the repetition of *dukh* - pain.

شعور کیا ہے؟ اک التزام وجود ہے، اور وجود کا التزام دکھ ہے
جدائی تو خیر آپ دکھ ہے، ملاپ دکھ ہے

کہ ملنے والے جدائی کی رات میں ملے ہیں، یہ رات دکھ ہے
یہ زندہ رہنے کا، باقی رہنے کا شوق، یہ اہتمام دکھ ہے
سکوت دکھ ہے کہ اس کے کرب عظیم کو کون سہہ سکا ہے
کلام دکھ ہے کہ کون دنیا میں کہہ سکا ہے جو ماورائے کلام دکھ ہے
یہ ہوا دکھ ہے، نہ ہوا دکھ ہے، ثبات دکھ ہے، دوام دکھ ہے،
میرے عزیزو، تمام دکھ ہے! (۱۷)

This is a serious reminder that Ansari's poetry follows certain stylistic patterns and paradigms which bespeak of a mind constantly engaged with the same ideas and ways of expressions. If this is true then we must look for a certain continuity of ideas and stylistics in his poetry, rather than rejecting it as occasioned by transitory moments of poetic consciousness expressed in dispersed ushaars of ghazals and then lost forever. Though this may be true to some extent in his ghazals, the form being wary of fixity of thought, in his poems, Dr. Ansari is surely a constant and perpetual thinker.

Paiker is the unrealised soul imprisoned in the cage of the human body. It has no self, just a desire to be realised and emerge as a self. This has to happen through the intermediary of the Soul, which is paradoxically a female entity. It is not that she represents the earthly beloved and Paiker is the ordinary lover yearning for his vusl. The valley of stones (wadi-e-sung)(18) he complains of is counterbalanced by the valley of flowers (wadi-e-gul) (19) in the dialogue of the beloved. In a later soliloquy Paiker calls them valleys of words and meanings (lufz-o-maani ki waadian, p209) in his second soliloquy. In his second expression, Paiker's realisation of the world increases and he is more conscious of happenings.

عجیب بے نام مرغلے ہیں، عجیب
 پراسرار فاصلے ہیں
 کسی صراحی سے قطرہ قطرہ نئے
 حوادث ٹپک رہے ہیں (۲۰)

The contrasted images of drops of events and inflamed moments beautifully bring out the pain of being. The water image in the first is the oxymoronic counterpart of the second - the cause and the effect.

ٹپک رہے ہیں وہ زخم جن کی جراثیم بے نصیب مرہم
 سلگتے لمحے، بھڑکتی صدیاں، دکھتے عالم (۲۱)

Paiker is the first manifestation of self separated from God and yearning for His union to be whole, and disappointed in the process. This early or primitive stage of realisation by the Self as separated expresses its sufferings in verse.

سراب حیرت کی دوریوں میں خیال کا تافلہ رواں ہے
 فقط گماں ہے ___ کہ جس کے ہاتھوں (۲۲)

It also realises that the entire manifested world is expressive of the Being of God.

یہ تحمل گل میں شاید گل ___ یہ روحِ نغمہ یہ عرضِ نغمہ
 یہ کیا ہیں ___ تیرے جمالِ بے نام کے امیں ہیں (۲۳)

Before Paiker voices the last of his feelings, Zill takes over. As the word suggests, it is the Shadow or Shade, of God - both of them expressing a closer relation with God, and a sort of presence of God by proxy. Zill's questions are more cognisant of the facts of Being-of-God-in-the-world and expresses its pantheistic realisation

that the light of God is at once the dawn and the sight which sees the coming of light.

وہ اک کرن ___ جو کہیں سحر ہے کہیں نظر ہے (۲۴)

It is the Inspirer, the Inspired, and the Inspiration.

کہیں شبِ آب و گل کے دامن میں آفتابِ جمالِ فن ہے
کہیں نمودِ کمالِ فن ہے (۲۵)

This idea had been previously echoed by Paiker when it had realised how the quest for meanings had yielded the realisation of God and the world in religion, philosophy and art.

ظل: کہیں صنم ہائے آگہی کے چہاریوں کی عظیم حیرت
کہیں درختِ قدیم کے نیچے روشنی کی ندیم حیرت
طویل غاروں میں رنگ بنتی ہوئی کلاؤں کا عکس ہے یہ (۲۶)

Zill's questions are answered by Uks in a sort of echo or repetition of the same idea as if the soliloquy had become a duet.

عکس: (زبانِ ترکیبِ رنگ و خط میں) طلوعِ لیلایے آرزو ہے
طلسمِ حرف و بیاں کے پردے میں شرحِ تقدیر جستجو ہے (۲۷)

This then suddenly yields to the expression of Shukhs. The symbolism derived from Persian mystical sources now becomes truly Sufic. Shukhs is that stage of the Self which has achieved a Tashakhus and has a personality. Dr. Ansari is familiar with the idea of the self appearing in several garbs. Paiker, Zill, Uks, and Shukhs are obviously different stages of the development of the self into a recognisable entity in its own right.

I believe that another influence on him was the mystic idea of the various stages of the development of the saalik on his way to

mystical union with God. Prof. Nicholson, in his *The Idea of Personality in Sufism*, distinguishes the stages of the development of God's selfhood. *Huwa*, *dhat*, and *fard*. The quality of being oneself, which is the essential element of identity is limited to God alone, but the personality as coming into its own, and realising itself as a self is the basis of *Tashakhus* and helps the human self develop into a person.(28) If this is true, then *Shukhs* is an expression of the human self finally coming into its own, realising its human predicaments, and finding a reconciliation with the enigmas of life. It must be kept in mind that the dramatic situation of the play does not have a dramatically developing plot; it does not work itself out to a solution. but rather, like *Prufrock's* predicament, uses self expressions as its dramatic action and acquires a *psychomachia*-like form which expresses desire and its possible solutions as simultaneously happening to the soul/mind of the protagonist.

The lines of *Shukhs* are in rhyming couplets as against the free verse of the other soliloquies. This deliberate choice reflects the psychic wholeness, or nearness to this state, embodied in *Shukhs*. Dr. Ansari is a Shakespeare fan and knows how to use variant rhymes to express idiosyncrasies. *Paiker*, *Zill*, and *Uks* are developing stages of the Self, still in quest of meanings or at least a harmony of meanings; *Shukhs* has acquired that state where higher order questions are transmuted into their relevant probable answers, thus causing a kind of poise which comes with the revelation, or nirvana. In a private conversation, Dr. Ansari admitted that he conceived of *Shukhs* to be a kind a Buddha; thus we can say that *Shukhs* is the state to which all

other manifestations of the human Self are growing. He is Yeats' human soul encountering Hades' Bobbin.

Therefore, Shukhs is the one conscious of the quest and the goal. His questions are still who and where but significantly he is also capable of the understanding that there is someone muntazar (Expected) and not muntazir (Expecting).(29)

شخص: کون جانے کون ہے وہ منتظر
کون ہیں ہم، کس طرف کرم سفر (۳۰)

For Shukhs, the emphasis is on the one who is expected, and on the one who expects, e.g., Paiker. Zill has now evolved into a personality having an understanding mind. What was previously only a hopeless desire has been transformed into an objective quest. Zill is the intermediate stage between Shukhs and Uks. He is pantheistic and sees the transcendent and the ephemeral in the material.

ظلم: وہ اک کرن _ جو کہیں سحر ہے، کہیں نظر ہے
کہیں شب آپ و گل کے دامن میں آفتاب جمال فن ہے
کہیں نمود کمال فن ہے (۳۱)

His "Namood-e-Kamaal-e-Fun" (نمود کمال فن) changes into Shukhs' "Johar-e-Aaeena-e-Dill" (جوہر آئینہ دل) which results in Iztaraab (اضطراب) which becomes Iztaraab-o-Inqalaab-o-Iztaraab-o-Inqalaab (اضطراب و انقلاب و اضطراب و انقلاب) in a sort of Shelleyan call for change. Shukhs is capable of transforming the energy of the quest into a revolutionary vigour. It is no coincidence that at this vehement voicing of Iztaraab-o-Inqalaab the din of the audience rises significantly as if to accompany Shukhs' words or to confirm his assertion.

It is not surprising that Laila speaks to Shukhs in a kind of behind-the-curtain-address. She has not yet entered the stage and yet her voice speaks to Shukhs. I believe that Dr. Ansari, who is soberly conscious of form, meant this to be a significant point to be noted by the reader. Also, at this stage, the poetic thoughts become palpably pantheistic, thus proving the influence of Persian mysticism. To Zill's

ظل: اس ایک بے نام چیز کو جو کہیں نہیں ہے

کہ سارے ناموں میں نام اس کا ہے سارے چروں میں اس کا چہرہ (۳۲)

Laila replies

لیلی: وہ اک حقیقت ___ جو میں ہوں، تم ہو

اگر نہ دیکھو، قصور کس کا ___ اگر نہ پاؤ تو کون مجرم (۳۳)

I would venture another interpretation here which makes more sense of her than is readily obvious. I think that while related to traditional Laila as the one who is loved and desired - and therefore expected - she is also Hindi Leela, a concept meaning "pastime", Raslila being Krishna's dance with the Gopis on the stage of life. A variant Krishna Leela refers to the God's cosmic play when he spent time on earth disguised as a simple human cow-herd and seduced the local cow-girls or Gopis. The concept gives birth to such mystic notions as Ramlila, the drama of Ram's fight with Ravan, and. While it also refers to the free will of God, it means free self-indulgence (leela or play). Dr. Ansari could not have been unaware that dance in all world myths symbolises the soul's unceasing struggle to break free of the constraints of the body(34), to make contact with the supra-reality it knows to be out there. It also symbolises the rhythm with which the elements of the world come together to form the universe.(35) Leila is

also an Indian game of self-knowledge and the universal play of cosmic energies, similar to snakes and ladders, in which the ups and downs of the soul's path toward reunion with the Infinite have been charted in seventy-two stages. For some mystics Lila is comparable to the Pandeism, in which the Universe is seen as God taking a physical form in order to experience the interplay between the elements of the Universe.

I do not mean to assert that this is what Dr. Ansari had in mind when he was writing this poetic play some 35 years ago. What I mean is that his youthful mind may have received various impressions which all came together in the making of this play. That this image of the dance was in the poet's mind is confirmed by the last episode of this unveiling of knowledge when Paiker realises how the secret of the world unfolds itself in a sort of spark or flame which is a reflection of its kindness to her lovers (dilbari).

Returning to the play, we see that last words of Shukhs show that he is in the know as to what this drama is all about.

شخص: کسے خبر کہ یہ کس انجمن سے باہر ہیں

تمام سوز تمنا، تمام درد فراق (۳۶)

While Where is a question in all other soliloquies (an adverb) asking the whereabouts of the reality and meanings, it seems a kind of reference (a kind of relative pronoun) to reality in Shukhs' words, as if he knows and sees that others do not. His last line seems to use Where as a spatial reference to the world of here and now, requiring man to go on.

چلے چلو کہ یہ دولت کہاں نہیں ملتی (۳۷)

The last soliloquy of Paiker, after this long drama of self and soul express more understanding of life. This is also indicated by the change in time; for it is already the next day for Paiker.

کل جو میں زندگی کے حادثے سے تھک کر

سمندر کے ساحل پہ ابھری ہوئی کچھ چٹانوں پہ اک لفظ رک سا گیا (۳۸)

The stages of increasing awareness or understanding then become imaged in the layered currents or waves of the sea, some rising in the depths and some visible on the surface.

پھر بھی لہجوں کی تہ میں ___ کہیں بہت کی موج زیریں میں ہے

سردی نور کا ایک دھارا ___ (۳۹)

In a matter of minutes, Paiker has gone through his psychic developmental stages and has emerged a consciousness more equipped to wrestle with the meanings of life. It is thus that the dance on the stage begins for him. The play ends as the dance of life begins. The drama of life and the psychomachia never merge and never make one entity. This may seem a little blot on the poem as I see it; perhaps, the sound show lacks unity because the spectacles of life it is presenting lack any unity either in form or in meaning. The uncertainty of form the poem seems to suffer from is the inherent meaning of the poem. It has no coherence for life's various meanings, nor do its many stages of realisation ever cohere. The form, therefore, is the meaning and the meaning has dictated the form. In Dr. Ansari's own words in the Preface "every new poetic experience brings its own form into being". He is a deeply form conscious poet who considers Eliot and

Pound to be the last of the great poets of English. Towards the end of his Preface he asserts that for him poetry is "the quest for the eternal in language". By this he means "the perfecting of the form, which bestows continuity to language."⁽⁴⁰⁾ As a poetic drama the piece is a reminder that in this barren wilderness of weedy ideas, Aslam Ansari's may be the last call and before long we will be pushed back into pre-all age because there would be no one left to appreciate such tour de force.

I fear that Aslam Ansari is the last of the poets; a wilderness of versifiers threatens to engulf a blazing tradition of Arabic, Persian and Hindi paradigms and thought patterns whose grey ashes shape his poetry's smoky faintness, yield the last drafts of a tired symphony. This may sound utterly pessimistic but try comparing the verse collections on library bookshelves with heaps of old books on footpath and you will fail to find a visible line demarcating the trash from the quintessential. Sales success today is the marvel of marketing not a proof of poetry.



References

- (1) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 13
- (2) W. B. Yeats, A Vision, quoted in The Norton Anthology of English Literature to clarify the symbolism of Sailing to Byzantium.
- (3) Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature, Ch. 4. Italics mine. The complete excerpt goes: "The corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language. When simplicity of character and the

sovereignty of ideas is broken up by the prevalence of secondary desires, the desire of riches, of pleasure, of power, and of praise, -- and duplicity and falsehood take place of simplicity and truth, ... new imagery ceases to be created, and old words are perverted to stand for things which are not; a paper currency is employed, when there is no bullion in the vaults. In due time, the fraud is manifest, and words lose all power to stimulate the understanding or the affections. Hundreds of writers may be found in every long-civilized nation, who for a short time believe, and make others believe, that they see and utter truths, who do not of themselves clothe one thought in its natural garment, but who feed unconsciously on the language created by the primary writers of the country, those, namely, who hold primarily on nature."

- (4) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Kitab Nagar, Multan 2010 Page 16. The Urdu sentence reads:

جو شاعری زبان کی وسعتوں کی دریافت پر قادر نہیں، زیادہ دیر تک قابل توجہ نہیں رہتی۔

- (5) Quoted by Richard Ellman in Yeats: The Man and the Masks. Faber & Faber, 1949. (p 217)

- (6) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 15. The Urdu sentence reads:

شاعری بنیادی طور پر جمالیاتی تجربہ ہونے کے باوجود شعور ہی کی صورت گری ہے۔

- (7) Dr. Ansari's Preface sheds light on this aspect when he accuses both ghazal and free verse as being responsible for the loss of polyvalency (multidimensional meanings) in Urdu poetry (Preface, 14 - 15)
- (8) Since it was written, Dr. Ansari has assured me that he is quite

unfamiliar with Beckett's plays. This means that he invented this dramatic form free from any influence.

- (9) I have here the experimental TV plays of Ashfaq Ahmad in mind. Dr. Ansari wrote this poetic drama in early 1960s thus presaging all later experiments in modern Urdu drama.

(11) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 204

- (10) Dr. Sohail Ahmad Khan, the play's first commentator on the poems, made clear that it was an expression of the grand themes of Eastern literature - the quest for meaning and selfhood.

موضوع، جی ہاں وہی شرقی ادبیات کا موضوع جلیل..... غیب و شہود، خواب اور آگہی، وصال و فراق کا پھیلتا ہوا، تہ بہ تہ کھلتا ہوا، پراسرار تماشا جو عمر کی مہلت ہی کو انتظار سا بنا دیتا ہے۔

Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 236

- (12) Dr. Ansari to this later addition and also asserted that it was impossible for him to add or subtract a single word, so the poem was complete as it was.

(13) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 206-7

(14) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 209

(15) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 207, 2-4 lines

(16) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 209

(17) Gotum Budh Ka Akhri Waas

(18) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 206

(19) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 207

(20) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 209

(21) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 209

(22) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 210

(23) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 211

- (24) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 211
- (25) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 211
- (26) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 209-10
- (27) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 211
- (28) Especially Nicholson, *The Idea of Personality in Sufism*, P 2.
 Nicholson's "Thus the Sufi in the first stage of his journey is aware of himself as an individual distinct from God" is surely Ansari's Paiker yearning for his Beloved. But I would not press the influence beyond this as it is a poetic impression rather than a consciousness borrowing of the intellectual argument which is revealed in the poem.
- (29) This point becomes significant in the light of recent discussions on the nature of meanings contained in Iqbal's verse *Kabhi aye Haqeeqat-e-Muntazar nazar aa libas-e-majaaz main/ Keh hazaar sajday tarap rahay hain meri jabeen-e-nayaz main*, sung by Ibrar Ul Haq, a point which is quite missed by the mispronunciation of the word *muntazar*.
- (30) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 212
- (31) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 211
- (32) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 213
- (33) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 213
- (34) Particularly, Yeats' lines from *Byzantium* poems which refer to dance as a harmonising activity akin to recomposition of the constituents of the human self to make it perfect. *O sages, standing in God's holy fire/ ... / Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,/ And be the singing masters of my sould.*" *Sailing to*

(35) Kekule's vision of the Benzene ring in which he saw the atoms dancing in a ring.

(36) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 214-215

(37) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 215

(38) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 215

(39) Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 216

(40) Preface to Shub-e- Ishq Ka Sitara Page 16. The Urdu sentence reads:

(Poetry as quest for 'the eternal in language' قرار دیا ہے، اس سے مراد ہیئت کی 'تکمیل' ہے۔
میں نے اپنی تحریروں میں کہیں شاعری کو 'زبان میں ابدیت کی تلاش کا عمل' (Poetry as quest for the eternal in language)



Aslam Ansari's Imagirama Image, Man, or Shade

Shafaat Yar Khan☆

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to relate the images and symbols of Aslam Ansari's poetic play *Takrar-e-Tamanna* to their possible sources in English and mystic literature. It sees this poetic play as a philosophical document and attempts to unravel its symbols and formal patterns to unravel its philosophical content. These sources show the impressions made on Aslam Ansari's mind in his youth and will be helpful in understanding his more mature poetry. It foregrounds the idea that only through principles of comparative literature can we understand the poetry which has for its germinal influence various literatures of the world.

At the front of his Preface, Aslam Ansari appends a long passage from his prose work *Takallummaat*. The quotation ends at these significant words.

”شاعری میں معنی پہلے سے موجود حقیقت کا بیان ہی نہیں کرتے بلکہ معنی تخلیق بھی کرتے ہیں، شاعری کا سب سے بڑا جواز تخلیق معانی ہی ہے۔“ (1)

This play, the only one of its kind, is rooted in a certain poetics.

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