Iqbal's Concept of Women hood: a Critical **Evaluation**

Saima Hamid

Department of Iqbal Institute of Culture and Philosophy

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Abstract: This paper tries to critically evaluate Igbal's concept of women hood. In this article an attempt will be made to analyse the status and role of the women as it emerges from the close reading of his works both Persian as well as Urdu. In this regard a particular emphasis will be laid on those

INTRODUCTION I.

The poetry of Igbal is multidimensional in nature. He is a poet of variegated experiences. He deals with deep metaphysical and philosophical questions. His poetic canvass is of huge dimensions within which so many things and experiences are accommodated which are rarely seen in the works of his contemporaries. From man-man relationship to man-universe relationship, his area of interest is quite discernible from the very first publication namely Asrar-I-Khudi. Despite being deeply preoccupied with his imaginary and idealistic world he was well in touch with the ground level realities of life. One such issue was the role and status of the women in the society. His emphasis on the importance of women education and awareness is quite visible even from the superficial overview of his works. However to arrive at any logical conclusion regarding Iqbal's notion of women hood, a critical evaluation of his works is inevitable. In this regard, many poems of Zarb-I-Kaleem which superficially deal the question women hood can be subjected to close reading and subsequent analysis. Furthermore, many scattered verses dealing with the aforementioned subject can be quoted to substantiate our argument.

DISCUSSION

From Igbalian perspective, the man is the protector of the women's dignity and honors. Such a role has been assigned to him by none other than the God himself. I holly Quran he has been labeled as Qawwam and the famous Quranic verse commands like this:

poems of Zarb-i-kaleem in which question of women hood and women freedom has been exclusively dealt with in the light of moral and ethical values of humanity in general and the Muslims in particular.

Keywords: Qawwam, Womanhood, Zun-shinasi

Ar-Rijal-u Qawwamoo na ala Nisa Iqbal echoes the same verse when he says: Ne parda, na taleem naye ho ke purani Niswaniyat-e- zan ka nighreban hai faqt mard Neither pardah nor education, whehter it be new or

the guardian of the feminity of

woman is only man

Jis qoum ne iss zinda haqikat ko na paya Uss qoum ka khursheed bahut jald hua zard The community that didn't realize this living truth/reality

That community's sun very quickly became yellow [and faded]

But the question arises, can we attribute the quality of Oawwam to every man or to put my question in another way isn't it basic requirement to precisely connotate the meaning of the word Qawwam both at literal and figurative level in the light of the religious, moral, social and ethical realities of our times. After all, thousands of cases of exploitation of the woman by the man are pending in the secular and religious courtrooms of our country. In Arabic dictionary Al-Munjid, one of the meanings for the word Qawwam is a person capable of fulfilling his responsibilities. Hence, at some level Qawwam is somehow related to capabilities. As such there seems a possibility of transcending the water tight compartmentalization of its meaning from gender point of view. Gender does not seem the only qualification for Qawwam; rather, the capability to deliver justice and shoulder responsibilities is equally important. In the light of the afore mentioned argument, Iqbal seems well aware about



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the exploitation of woman at the hands of social set up dominated by the mechanisms of patriarchy. He says:

Main bhi mazloom-e-niswaan se hoon gham –nak buhat

Nahi mumkin magar is uqdah –e mushkil k kushud! I too am very sorrowful at the oppression of woman.

But its not possible, the opening of this difficult knot!

He sincerely accepts the challenges and hurdles in front of the woman justice; however, his greatness lies in the fact that he cautions the woman in general and the Muslim woman in particular from falling prey to materialistic forces like capitalism and communism. He admits the injustice done to a woman in the society and seems very sorrowful about it. However, at the same time he reminds her of elevated status in the divine hierarchy. He is proud of her creative impulse and sacred mission. If he seems opposing to her role as clerk, typist, so on and so forth, it must be analysed from a broader and proper perspective. After all, it was the same when Iqbal's contemporary in the western world; T.S. Eliot was depicting the life of a woman typist in his famous poem the Wasteland as full of moral bankruptcy and spiritual crises. Iqbal had been to that part of the world where new materialistic philosophies had degraded the woman to a mere commercial commodity. He was insightful enough to predict the fate for the eastern woman with the possible inroads of these materialistic philosophies. Otherwise how could it be possible that the man of Igbal's futuristic vision could exclude woman from broader social settings.

Iqbal considers the woman as the creative force in the universe and to fully achieve her creative potentialities at home and in the society, he lays great emphasis on her educational aspect. He is always a great propounder of the woman education but not at the cost of herself honour and dignity. For him, the education of woman is a basic requisite for the development of a strong society and civilization. It is through education that the cherished qualities of self sacrifice, hard- work and patience find their full expression. The education makes her good daughter, wife and mother. Infact it is the lap of a mother where a child imbibes the basic human values. Iqbal shows his great respect and admiration for such an ideal womanhood when he expresses his desire to prostrate at the grave of Prophet's (SAW) beloved daughter lady Fatima Zehra (R.A) had there been no religious restriction to do nsuch an act. In the character of Fatima Zehra

(R.A), he sees womanhood at its zenith. Out of this great admiration, he says:

عزیز عیسی نسبت یک از مُریم عزیز زبرا حضرت نسبت سه از

Maryam az yek nisbat-e-Eesa azeez,

As seh nisbat hazrat-e-Zahra azeez

Maryam is honourable for one reason that she is the

mother of Jesus,

Look at Zahra, Her honour comes from three relationships

للعالمین رحمة چشم نور آخرین و اولین امام آن

Noor-e-chashm-e Rahmat-il-lil 'aalemin

un imam-e-awwalin-o-aahirin

She is the daughter of the Great personality known as Rahmat al-lil aalameen

Who is the Imam of all (the prophets) in the past and all (the leaders) in the future

دمید گیتی پیکر در جان آنکه آفرید آئین تازه روزگار

Aa'n ke ja'n dar payka-e-geeti dameed

Rozgaar-e-taaza aa'in aafreed He, who revived a dead society back to life,

And brought a new system of law

''اتے ہل'' تاجدار آن باتوی خدا شیر گشا مشکل مرتضی

Baanu-e aa'n taajdaar-e-'hal ataa'

Murtaza mushkil kusha sher-e-khuda She is the wife of the one who was crowned with Hal Ata[1]

He is the chosen one, solver of all problems, the lion of God

او ایوان ئی کلبہ و پادشاہ او سامان زرہ یک و حسام یک

Paadshhah-o-kulba'ee aywaan-e-oo

Yek hussam-o-yek zir'h saamaan-e-oo He was a king but lived in a hut,



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All he owned was a sword and a coat of chain[2]

عشق پرگار مرکز آن مادر عشق سالار کاروان آن مادر

Maadar-e-aa'n markaz-e-parkaar-e-ishq Maadar-e-aa'n kaarwa'n saalaar-e-ishq Her son was the center of Love and devotion[3] He was the chief of the army of Love

حرم شبستان شمع يكى آن خيرالامم جمعيت حافظ

Aa'n yeki sham'e shabistaan-e-haram Hafiz-e-jamee'at-e khayrul-umam He was a burning light in the gathering in the HARAM,

He was the protector of the best of the communities

کین و پیکار آتش نشیند تا نگین و تاج سر بر زد یا پشت

Taa nasheenad aatish-e-paykaar-o-kee'n

Pusht-e-pa zad bar sar-e-taaj-o-nagee'n He kicked the throne and the crown aside[4], Only because he did not want to see the fire of killing and hatred

جهان ابرار مولای دگر وان جهان احرار بازوی قوت

Wa'n digar maulaa-e abraar-e-jahaa'n Quwwat-e baazu-e-ahraar-e-jahaa'n And the other son (of hers) is the leader of the pious He gave strength to all the revolutionaries of the world

حسین از سوز زندگی نوای در حسین از آموز حریت حق ابل

Dar nawaa-e-zindagi soz az Hussain[5] Ahl-e-haq hurriyat amoz az Hussain[6] Hussain becomes passion to the ode of humanity Hussain gives rise of freedom to the truthful people

امهات از با فرزند سیرت امهات از صفا و صدق جوبر

Seerat-e-farzandaha az ummahaat[7] Jawhar-e-sidq-o-safa az ummahaat The character of sons are built by their mothers The true spirit of truthfulness and honesty come from the mothers

بتول حاصل را تسليم مزرع

بتول كامل اسوهٔ را مادران

Muzra-e-tasleem ra haasil Butool Maadaraa'n ra uswa-e-kaamil Butool Crop/harvest for the farm of approbation/consent is Butool

For mothers she is a perfect guiding example

سوخت آنگونه دلش محتاجی بهر فروخت را خود چادر یهودی با

Bahr-e-muhtaaj-e dilish aa'n guna sokht[9] Ba yahoodi chaadar-e-khud ra farokht Her heart was so overwhelmed by the needs of the poor,

That she sold her own chadar to a Jew

فرمانبرش آتشی بم و نوری شوبرش رضای در رضایش گم

Noori-o ham aatishi farman barish[10] Gum razaayish dar razaa-e shauharish Both angels and Jinn are in her obedience, (Because) she was obedient to the will of her husband

رضا و صبر پروردهٔ ادب آن سرا قرآن لب و گردان آسیا

Aa'n adab parwurda-e sabr-o-raza Aasiya gardaan-o-lab Qur'an sara She was raised with SABR and submission Her lips would be reading Qur'an while her hands would be moving the hand mill

نیاز بی بالین ز او بای گریم نماز بدامان افشاندی گویر

Girya haaye ou ze baalin bai niyaaz Gauhar afshandai badamaan-e-namaaz She wept for the fear of Almighty Allah She shed tears during her prayers to Him

زمین از جبریل چید بر او اشک برین عرش بر ریخت شبنم بمچو

Asahk-e-oo bar cheed Jibreel az zamin Hamchu shabnam reekht bar arsh-e-barin Jibreel would pick up her tears from the earth So that he may spread dew-drops in Jannah

پاست زنجیر حق آنین رشتهٔ است مصطفی جناب فرمان یاس

Rishta-e aa'een-e haq zanjeer-e-pa ast Paas-e-farmaan-e Janaab-e Mustafa ast I am bound by the law of Islam,

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I am beholden to the sayings of the Prophet

گردیدمی تربتش گرد ورنه پاشیدمی او خاک بر با سجده

Warna gird-e-turbat-ish gardeed mi Sajda ha bar khaak-e-oo pasheed mi Otherwise, I would have gone round and round her gravesite,

And I would have done sajdah on her grave

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