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ISLAMIC MODERNITY, LYRIC AMBIGUITY: MUHAMMAD IQBAL AND THE GHAZAL

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FRANCESCA CHUBB-CONFER

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At every beat
our thinking hews
new gods: freed from one knot,
we loop ourselves
into another.

—Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq*

for my teachers

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

While Arabic, Persian, and Urdu use the Perso-Arabic alphabet, pronunciation varies between certain letters, and some letters in Persian and Urdu have been introduced to represent sounds that are not present in Arabic. All transliterations follow the IJMES guidelines, with a few exceptions. Since such an important part of poetry is its recitation, I have chosen to transliterate Arabic-derived words in Persian and Urdu as they would be pronounced (for example: *va* for *wa*) while retaining the diacritical markers to indicate the Arabic letter being used (for example: *ẓauq* instead of *dhauq*). An underline has been added to the letters of Persian words that could otherwise be mistaken for aspirates in Urdu; *kh*ā*na* (Persian: "house") vs. *khāna* (Urdu: "to eat"). Special characters in Urdu have been transliterated as follows: *ṇ* for the *nūn gh*u*nna*, or nasalized "n," of words like *haiṇ*; *ē* for the Urdu *baṛī yē* as opposed to the Persian "y," and *ō* for the long "o" sounds that is not the diphthong *au* (as in, for an example of all three: *sitārōṇ sē āgē*). Retroflex letters in Urdu, often occurring when English words are transliterated into the Urdu alphabet, are indicated with a diacritical dot underneath the letter (as in *liṭrairī*, "literary").

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to find a figure more controversial or contested in the modern history of the Islamic world than Muḥammad Iqbāl (1877-1938). Iqbal's monumental status among Muslim thinkers in the era typically described as that of "revival and reform" (the late 19th and early 20th centuries) has resulted in a preoccupation in scholarly and popular writing with his status as the *ḥakīm al-ummat*, or "physician/philosopher of the Muslim community," and the spiritual originator of the modern state of Pakistan. While undoubtedly a towering figure in the history of Islamic modernist movements, Iqbal's poetry has received inadequate attention in comparison to his philosophical and political writings—or, more accurately, his poetry has been understood as a vehicle for, or in service to, his philosophical and political commitments, rather than as a mode of expression that sets out its own terms and methodology for negotiating the new demands colonialism made of literature, identity, and the relationship of the Muslim subject to shifting understandings of tradition.

This dissertation explores Islamic poetic forms in the era of political modernity, focusing on the Persian (and to a certain extent Urdu) *ghazal*s of Iqbal. The *ghazal* is a classical lyric form that exists in dozens of languages and is deeply associated with both popular and esoteric Sufi mystical traditions. While the ghazal's form is inextricably bound up with its Islamic heritage, the same formal and rhetorical structures that emerged from that heritage also resist religious identification. Scholars have debated for centuries over how these poems ought to be read: as literal or metaphorical, sacred or profane, with the central figure of contention usually the eroticized figure of the beloved. These debates, however, have both missed the mark and set out an unproductive benchmark for literary analysis: instead, I argue that the *ghazal* advances its own poetic method, through the use of ambiguity, paradox, and textual and referential instability,

in order to call into question the validity of the very kinds of binary categories (universal and particular, aesthetic and political, traditional and modern, religious and secular) to which it is usually subjected in scholarly discourse.

Focusing on the *ghazal* method for Iqbal specifically—a poet whose "message" is always taken to be absolutely unambiguous—allows us to challenge conceptions of modernist Islam that separate "traditional" practices from "modern" innovations, which reduce aesthetic expression to the role of a hollow vehicle for other concerns (theology, philosophy, politics) assumed to be unrelated to and unaffected by the very medium in which they are expressed. For Iqbal, the *ghazal* crafts a key method for negotiating the Muslim subject's encounter with colonial modernity, and this dissertation represents the first scholarship to analyze how genre, rhetoric, and formal structures interact in Iqbal's lyrics to produce (and, at times, resist) new modes of meaning, presenting a new model for how to attend to the intersections of religion, literature, and politics in the writings of Iqbal and other important figures of Islamic reform.

The chapters of this dissertation are grounded in original translations and close readings of select *ghazal*s across the range of Iqbal's use of the form, advancing a broad argument for the benefits of a literary-critical approach to texts that are predominantly read as straightforward manifestos. A close reading demonstrates the benefits of a literary-critical approach, asking not *what* a poem means, but *how* it creates or subverts meaning—and whether the relationship between form and content is always mutually constitutive or can exist in tension. How Iqbal has *been* read, in other words, has not so far given us a workable model for how to productively read him. Far from making a case for what a given *ghazal* "really means," I argue that the search for meaning, for certainty and clarity in Iqbal's poetry, is a problem that has both historically characterized and continues to drag on Iqbal scholarship, known in Urdu as *Iqbāliyāt*. The state

of the field as it relates to Iqbal's poetry in particular is the focus of Chapter 1, "In Search of Uncertainty," which both presents a critical review of the scholarly literature on Iqbal and makes an argument for why so much of it has focused on extracting Iqbal's "message" at the expense of analyzing how his poetry operates *as* poetry, tracing the genealogy of this impulse to the collapsing of poetic practice, religious identity, and political status in the South Asian Muslim community after the failed 1857 rebellion against British colonial hegemony. Additionally, Chapter 1 engages the work of 20th-century literary critics writing in Urdu and Persian on Iqbal, who are practically never cited by scholars writing in English or European languages. While I may disagree with certain of their conclusions, this vast body of scholarship is deserving of serious consideration and engagement, and I hope that by translating parts of their work into English for the first time, their insights can receive some long-overdue scholarly attention.

Chapter 2, "Remnants of Eternal Possibility: A *Ghazal* Between Tradition and Modernity," focuses on Iqbal's use of the Persian *ghazal* to negotiate the inheritances of the Islamic poetic tradition from the classical canon, specifically the work of Ḥāfiẓ, and the demands of colonial modernity. The chapter presents an original translation of a *ghazal* from Iqbal's earliest publication using that form: the 1923 *Payām-i Mashriq*, or "Message of/from the East," intended as a response to Goethe's 1814 *West-östlicher Diwan*, which in turn constituted Goethe's response to an imagined world of the Islamic East in which he wrote poems inspired by pre-Islamic Arabic *qasida*s to the Persian *ghazal*s of Ḥāfiẓ. Through a close reading and analysis of formal and rhetorical features in this *ghazal*, focusing specifically on the use of the imperative voice and apostrophe as theorized by Jonathan Culler in his 2015 *Theory of the Lyric*, I demonstrate that the distinction between tradition and modernity as "rupture" is troubled by the

text's own breaking down of these categories, as the Sufi poetic tradition, Orientalist readings *of* that tradition, and its future possibilities are brought together in simultaneous conversation.

Chapter 3, "Nightingales and Falcons: Iqbal's *Ghazal*s Between Persian and Urdu," compares three *ghazal*s across the two languages in which Iqbal engaged that poetic form. One famous Urdu *ghazal* from *Bāl-i Jibrīl* ("Gabriel's Wing," 1935), and two lesser-known ones from *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* ("Persian Psalms," 1927) together map out the metaphorical possibilities of the nightingale and the falcon as frequently-appearing symbols in Iqbal's oeuvre. After considering the stakes of Iqbal's choice of language in early 20th-century India, as debates over the religious and literary status of Persian and Urdu raged, I move to close readings of *ghazal*s from each language to challenge a dominant narrative in Iqbal scholarship that argues for the falcon as the "favorite" symbolic figure, superceding the traditional nightingale. Instead, I demonstrate how the *ghazal* method resists direct metaphorical equation by invoking traces of each figurative bird with the other, situating them not so much in dissonance as in counterpoint.

Chapter 4, "Peripatetic Poetics: The Wandering *Ghazal* in the *Javīdnāma*," analyzes the structural disruptions of Iqbal's last poetic work: the 1932 *Javīdnāma*, a Persian *masnavī* or narrative epic. Analyzing the points at which this narrative-verse *masnavī*, framed as a spiritual journey of heavenly ascension, is interrupted by lyric *ghazal* interludes, allows us to consider in a more fine-grained manner the capacities of these two different forms as they occur in juxtaposition. I argue that, in this work, the *ghazal* voice marks out a particular ability to access paradox and textual instability that eludes narrative verse, exemplifying linguistic instabilities of striving toward the divine that generate creative power from their inherent incompletion. This juxtaposition of the two major poetic forms of the Persianate Sufi tradition demonstrates Iqbal's

use of the *ghazal* as method in the broader context of his philosophical and theological reconfigurations of Muslim subjectivity.

Poetic translation, in all its pitfalls and possibilities, runs through this dissertation as a guiding practice. All translations from languages other than English, unless otherwise indicated, are my own. Appendix 1 presents the *ghazal*s translated throughout the various chapters as standalone poems in English.

Iqbal: A Biographical Sketch

Muhammad Iqbal was born on November 9, 1877,[1] in Sialkot, Punjab (today located in Pakistan) to a middle-class family of Kashmiri descent.[2] His father, Shaikh Nūr Muḥammad, was well-respected in their community for his skill as a tailor and his interest in Sufi thought. As a young man, Iqbal was tutored in Arabic and Persian by Sayyid Mīr Ḥasan (d. 1929), professor of "oriental literature" at the Scotch Mission College in Sialkot, and workshopped early Urdu lyrics by correspondence with Navāb Mirzā Khān "Dāgh" (d. 1905), a well-known Urdu *ghazal* poet then residing in Hyderabad. Iqbal matriculated at the Scotch Mission College as an undergraduate student in 1893, but transferred after two years to the Government College in Lahore, a more prestigious institution where he also obtained a master's degree in philosophy in 1899. It was during Iqbal's undergraduate and early graduate student years in Lahore that he began to attend *mushāʿira*s, public poetry recitals, and published some poems in newspapers and journals, acquiring a promising reputation. Upon his master's graduation, Iqbal was appointed

[1] There is some controversy as to the exact date of Iqbal's birth, but consensus largely agrees on 1877. For an exhaustively detailed account of the birth-date issue, see "*Tārīkh-i wilādāt ka mas'ila*," in Javid Iqbal, *Zinda-rūd* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2000), 39-64.

[2] This biographical overview is drawn from the detailed account in Hafeez Malik and Lynda P. Malik, "The Life of the Poet-Philosopher," in *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan*, ed. Hafeez Malik (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1971), 3-36.

the Macleod-Punjab Reader of Arabic at the University Oriental College of Lahore, where he continued to work closely with his mentor, Sir Thomas Arnold (d. 1930), a British orientalist who taught at several institutions of higher education in India until his return to England in 1904, at which point he became an educational advisor for Indian students abroad.[3] Iqbal supplemented his teaching job with adjunct positions at other area institutions, but became frustrated with the lack of opportunities for advancement in an educational system in which desirable positions and their associated benefits were only available to British professors. Iqbal attempted to sit for examinations in law and the civil service, but was unsuccessful.

With the assistance of Arnold, Iqbal departed for Europe in 1905 and, wasting no time, simultaneously enrolled as a BA student at Trinity College Cambridge, at Lincoln's Inn London to study law, and at Munich University in Heidelberg to submit a doctoral dissertation in philosophy. At the time, Iqbal was able to take advantage of engaging with several prominent scholars and orientalists lecturing to undergraduates at Cambridge, including John McTaggart, James Ward, E. G. Browne, and Reynold Nicholson. His dissertation, "Development of Metaphysics in Persia," was completed in 1907 (published the next year) under the supervision of Fritz Hommel (d. 1936), Chair of Semitic Languages at Munich University. While little primary source information is available as to Iqbal's time in England and Germany, by all accounts (consisting mostly of reminiscences by acquaintances he made there) the three-year period was a time of great intellectual and personal enjoyment for him, pursuing language study, poetry composition, cultural events, and academic research and writing far from home, which he associated with professional stagnation and an unhappily arranged marriage. Iqbal passed the bar

[3] See B. W. Robinson, "Arnold, Thomas Walker," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/arnold-sir-thomas-walker-british-orientalist-1864-1930

in England in 1908 and shortly thereafter returned to India, starting to practice law while also continuing to teach on an ad hoc basis at the Government College in Lahore. His law practice was never particularly successful, but it provided adequate income and security for him to more aggressively pursue publishing poetry.

Iqbal's first major publication, a Persian narrative verse poem or *masnavī* entitled *Asrār-i Khudī*, was released in 1915, gaining widespread acclaim as well as a certain amount of criticism for its depiction of Ḥāfiẓ. It received exponentially more attention when Nicholson translated it into English as *Secrets of the Self* in 1920, and in 1923 Iqbal was knighted by the British government for his scholarship and poetic skill. The companion piece to *Asrār-i Khudī*, *Rumūz-i Bī-khudī* (Mysteries of Selflessness) was published in 1918, and in 1923 *Payām-i Mashriq* came out (a collection of shorter, lyrical poems intended as a response to Goethe's *West-East Divan* that we will look at more closely in Chapter 2). All three of these initial publications were in Persian, although Iqbal had been writing poetry in Urdu all along, releasing his first Urdu anthology *Bāng-i Darā* (Call of the Caravan Bell) in 1924 (which included early poems written prior to 1905). In 1927, Iqbal published *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* (Persian Psalms), which included a collection of Persian *ghazal*s as well as a short *masnavī* titled *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd* (New Rose-garden of Mystery), framed as a response to Shabistarī's 14th-century *Gulshan-i rāz*, considered one of the greatest texts of the classical Persian Sufi tradition. By 1928, Iqbal's fame had grown to the point where he was invited to give an English lecture series on Islam in Madras; these lectures would be compiled and published in 1930 as *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, his most well-known work and his first philosophical and theological treatise.

In the early 1930s, the British government convened a series of Round Table Conferences in order to solicit the input of leading Indian figures on proposed constitutional reforms. Iqbal

was invited to the second and third of these, and took advantage of the return to Europe after decades to travel through France, Spain, and Italy, meeting with scholars of philosophy and Islam, including Henri Bergson, Louis Massignon, and Miguel Asín Palacios. In 1932, the epic Persian *masnavī Jāvīdnāma* was released (to be taken up in Chapter 4), broadly considered to be his magnum opus. In 1933, the king of Afghanistan, Muḥammad Nādir Shāh, invited Iqbal to Kabul as part of a contingent to consult on the establishment of a new university, a few years after which Iqbal published the Persian *masnavī Musāfir* (Traveler, 1936) as a form of travelogue. Iqbal's major Urdu publication, *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, was published in 1935, and despite rapidly deteriorating health, he produced three more works in both Urdu and Persian (*Ẓarb-i Kalīm* or "The Rod of Moses," 1936; *Pas chih bāyad kard ay aqvām-i sharq* or "What Should Then Be Done O Peoples of the East?," 1936; and *Armaghān-i Ḥijāz* or "Gift of the Ḥijāz," 1938), the last of which was posthumously released. On April 21, 1938, Iqbal passed away; his birth and death anniversaries are now national holidays in Pakistan.

For ease of reference, I have included a table of the major publications of Iqbal's career, ordered chronologically and with indications as to the language and form (prose, poetry) in which they appear. This table excludes minor works such as the short 1903 Urdu economic treatise *ʿIlm al-iqtiṣād*, as well as various publications of individual poems or other articles for newspapers and literary journals. Of note as we prepare to dive into Iqbal's *ghazal*s, in particular his Persian *ghazal*s, is that while he is lauded as a philosophical thinker, the vast majority of his oeuvre consists of poetry; of that, 60% is short, lyric forms (*ghazal*, *rubāʿī* or quatrains, *naẓm*, etc.). While the majority of scholarship on Iqbal focuses on his Urdu poetry, fully 70% of his total literary and scholarly output is in Persian, a language he only ever used to compose verse.

Table 1: Iqbal's Major Works

Year	Title	Language	Form
1908	"Development of Metaphysics in Persia"	English	prose (doctoral dissertation)
1915	*Asrār-i Khudī* ("Secrets of the Self")	Persian	poetry (*masnavī*)
1918	*Rumūz-i Bī-khudī* ("Mysteries of Selflessness")	Persian	poetry (*masnavī*)
1923	*Payām-i Mashriq* ("Message of the East")	Persian	poetry (assorted short forms)
1924	*Bāng-i Darā* ("Call of the Caravan Bell")	Urdu	poetry (assorted short forms)
1927	*Zabūr-i ʿAjam* ("Persian Psalms")	Persian	poetry (*ghazal* and *masnavī*)
1930	"The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam"	English	prose (lecture series delivered in 1929)
1932	*Jāvīdnāma* ("Book of Eternity")	Persian	poetry (*masnavī* with incorporated *ghazal*s)
1935	*Bāl-i Jibrīl* ("Gabriel's Wing")	Urdu	poetry (assorted short forms)
1936	*Ẓarb-i Kalīm* ("The Rod of Moses")	Urdu	poetry (assorted short forms)
1936	*Pas chih bāyad kard ay aqvām-i sharq* ("What Should Then Be Done O Peoples of the East?") with *Musāfir* ("Traveler")	Persian	poetry (*masnavī*)
1938 (posthumously published)	*Armaghān-i Ḥijāz* ("Gift of the Ḥijāz")	Persian and Urdu	poetry (assorted short forms, mostly *rubāʿī*)

CHAPTER ONE

In Search of Uncertainty

Trends in *Iqbāliyāt*: Review and Analysis

This overview cannot hope to offer a comprehensive evaluation of the sheer preponderance of material that constitutes the area of study termed *Iqbāliyāt* (Iqbal Studies).[1] However, I will sketch some broad trends so as to better contextualize what little *has* been written about Iqbal from the point of view of literary criticism, and to trace the colonial genealogy of the dominant critical attitudes towards his poetry.

Secondary literature about Iqbal and his published poetry and prose works emerged relatively early during his lifetime, as his academic sojourn in England and Germany brought him into personal contact with prominent Orientalists of the day. Reynold Nicholson published an English translation of Iqbal's 1915 *masnavi Asrār-i Khudī* as *Secrets of the Self: A Philosophical Poem* in 1920, followed by a 1925 article on *Payām-i Mashriq* in the journal *Islamica* entitled "Iqbal's Message of the East."[2] Just ten years prior to Iqbal's (in)famous statement during his 1930 presidential address to the All-India Muslim League in Allahabad,[3]

[1] The 2000 work *A Descriptive Bibliography of Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938)* lists almost 2,500 entries, and is limited to only those publications written in European languages; if one were to include the material written in Urdu (most publications are from Pakistan, although many are from India, mostly presses of historical Muslim universities such as Aligarh, Osmania, and Kashmir), a conservative estimate would surely reach into the thousands. See: Dieter Taillieu, Francis Laleman and Winand M. Callewaert, eds., *A Descriptive Bibliography of Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938)* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000).

[2] See entries for "Nicholson, R. A." in Taillieu, Laleman and Callewaert, *A Descriptive Bibliography of Allama Muhammad Iqbal*.

[3] "I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India." From: "Sir Muhammad Iqbal's 1930 Presidential Address to the 25th Session of the All-India Muslim League, Allahabad, 29 December 1930," in Latif Ahmed Sherwani, ed., *Speeches, Writings, and Statements of Iqbal*, 3rd ed. (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1977 [1944]), 11.

which has predominantly been read as the moment of genesis of the modern nation-state of Pakistan, Nicholson observes in his introduction to *Secrets of the Self* that:

> On its first appearance the *Asrar-i-Khudi* took by storm the younger generation of Indian Moslems. 'Iqbal,' wrote one of them, 'has come amongst us as a Messiah and has stirred the dead with life.' It remains to be seen in what direction the awakened ones will march. Will they be satisfied with a glorious but distant vision of the City of God, or will they adapt a new doctrine to other ends than those which its author has in view? Notwithstanding that he explicitly denounces the idea of nationalism, his admirers are already protesting that he does not mean what he says.[4]

Indeed, only two years later, Iqbal himself qualified his position in another address given at the All-India Muslim Conference in Lahore:

> I am opposed to nationalism as it is understood in Europe, not because, if it is allowed to develop in India, it is likely to bring less material gain to Muslims. I am opposed to it because I see in it the germs of atheistic materialism which I look upon as the greatest danger to modern humanity. Patriotism is a perfectly natural virtue and has a place in the moral life of man. Yet that which really matters is a man's faith, his culture, his historical tradition. These are the things which, in my eyes, are worth living for and dying for, and not the piece of earth with which the spirit of man happens to be temporarily associated. In view of the visible and invisible points of contact between the various communities of India I do believe in the possibility of constructing a harmonious whole whose unity cannot be disturbed by the rich diversity which it must carry within its own bosom.[5]

The question of Iqbal's political thought—that is, his stance on nationalism, sovereignty, and the idea of an Islamic state—has overwhelmingly preoccupied scholarly and popular writing on his life and works, whether he is lauded as the *ḥakīm al-ummat* (physician/philosopher of the [Muslim] community) and the spiritual father of Pakistan, or decried as a fascist sympathizer and sectarian agitator in India (two extremes of a vast spectrum of views). In Ayesha Jalal's seminal 1985 book *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*, the author emphasizes the contingency of Pakistan's formation and argues that Muhammad Ali Jinnah did not intend to form a new nation, but used the *idea* of a Muslim state as a bargaining

[4] R. A. Nicholson, *Secrets of the Self: A Philosophical Poem* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1920), 25.
[5] Sherwani, *Speeches, Writings, and Statements of Iqbal*, 31.

chip in negotiations with the Indian National Congress to ensure political equality for Muslims in a Hindu-majority independent India, later finding himself forced to accept Pakistan in a "moth-eaten" instantiation divided between east and west. Jalal describes conceptions of Pakistan among the populace as merely "a host of conflicting shapes and forms, most of them vague…given to what remained little more than a catch-all, an undefined slogan."[6] Drawing on Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, she puts forward what has largely become the consensus in scholarly historiographies of Pakistan: that it is a nation "insufficiently imagined"[7] and as such arose out of ideological disjuncture rather than unity between elite politicians and Muslim publics.

The question of Iqbal's role in all this receives more recent attention in Iqbal Singh Sevea's 2012 *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India*. Sevea cautions against anachronistic readings that interpret Iqbal's political thought as part of a teleology oriented towards the modern nation-state of Pakistan, instead drawing attention to the diversity of political aspirations and vibrant contestations among Indian Muslims in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Sevea argues that Iqbal conceived of Islam as a complete and empowering ideology, one that was incompatible with European nationalism and "the idea of the mono-cultural and territorially defined nation-state,"[8] pointing to debates over

[6] Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 4.
[7] The phrase itself is quoted by Jalal from Salman Rushdie's 1983 novel *Shame*. This narrative has been contested by Venkat Dhulipala, "A nation state insufficiently imagined? Debating Pakistan in late colonial North India," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 48: 3 (2011): 377–405. See also Dhulipala, *Creating a New Medina: State Power, Islam, and the Quest for Pakistan in Late Colonial North India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), which in refuting Jalal's thesis rather overstates the case for Pakistan as not only substantive but inevitable. Gail Minault's review of *Creating a New Medina* thoughtfully assesses Dhulipala's claims based on the historical evidence and notes that the question of Pakistan's coherence or incoherence, its status as historical accident or inevitability, remains open. Review available online at http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=43499.
[8] Iqbal Singh Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonia l India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 162.

the meanings of the Urdu terms *qaum* and *millat* as denoting a territorially-defined nation and a nation as a socio-political grouping, respectively. Overall, Sevea argues, Iqbal wished to critique the ideology of nationalism and liberate the idea of the nation from the "centralizing and homogenizing tendencies of the modern state structure."[9]

The majority of Iqbal scholarship clusters around these issues, exacerbated not only by the 1947 Partition of India but also by the competitive nationalist fervor in both India and Pakistan, coming to a head in the wars of 1965 and 1971, and continuing to the present day in border skirmishes and nuclear escalation. The past few years, however, have seen a resurgence in scholarly interest in Iqbal's philosophy, and books such as Sevea's which explore in detail the sources, tensions, contradictions, and connections forged by Iqbal in his philosophical writings mark an important shift away from simplistic characterizations of Iqbal as opportunistically combining aspects of "eastern" and "western," "traditional" and "modern" thought. Other relatively recent scholarly publications that deal, at least in part, with Iqbal's philosophical innovations, particularly his interpretations of Bergson and Nietzsche, include Abdennour Bidar's *L'islam face à la mort de Dieu: Actualité de Mohammed Iqbal* (2010), Naveeda Khan's ethnographic work *Muslim Becoming: Aspiration and Skepticism in Pakistan* (2012), and the edited volume *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought* (2015, eds. Chad Hillier and Basit Bilal Koshul).

Some of the most significant—and most understudied—dynamics in the field of Iqbal studies, however, emerge from the body of work that locates itself in the tradition of literary criticism. The 20th-century critical expedition to discover what Iqbal's poetry means, and how that meaning inheres, was launched from an historically specific set of governing assumptions

[9] Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, 2.

about what poetry is and ought to be that shaped (and continues to shape) articulations of Islam and tradition in South Asia. The following will offer not only an overview of the issues in the current consensus in South Asian literary criticism (mostly, but not entirely, written in Urdu) on Iqbal's poetry, but plot the trajectory of how and why this consensus came about. As we shall see, the problem of "truth" in literary language gets bound up with projects of religious identity and cultural retrieval in the decades following 1857 in the Indian subcontinent.

By way of an initial observation, it is surprising that, despite Iqbal's luminous status as a poet, scholarly work that deals with his poetry as such is comparatively sparse. For example, the aforementioned *A Descriptive Bibliography of Allama Muhammad Iqbal*, which lists works in European languages[10] up to the year 2000, contains a total of 2,468 entries, of which 203 are grouped under the heading "poetry" (or 8.2%), and only 6 under the heading "poetry: lyrical"—0.2%. This number excludes, of course, non-European languages, but not, by and large, non-European scholarship—a great number of book-length publications on Iqbal in India and Pakistan are written in English. The critic, academic, and poet Jagannāth Āzād (d. 2004), in his 1989 lecture series in Urdu at Kashmir University entitled "*Hindūstān meṇ Iqbāliyāt āzādī kē baʿd*" or "Iqbaliyat in India after independence," notes that the very first book on Iqbal, published immediately after Partition, was the English-language *Iqbal: The Poet and his Message* by Sachidananda Sinha (d. 1950).[11] Āzād describes Sinha's book as the first in what would become a certain type of Iqbaliyat in India—a religiously polemical argument that Iqbal's poetry was lacking in aesthetic quality and was intended only for Muslims.[12] The study of Iqbal in the years immediately following independence and Partition, Āzād notes with regret, were

[10] Indicated as English, German, French, Dutch, Italian, Polish, Czech, Portuguese, Swedish, Finnish, Turkish, and Russian.
[11] Sachīdānanda Sinhā, *Iqbal: The Poet and his Message* (Allahabad: Rām Narāyan Lāl, 1947).
[12] Jagannāth Āzād, *Hindūstān meṇ Iqbāliyāt āzādī kē baʿd* (Srinagar: Iqbāl Insṭīṭūṭ Kashmīr Yūnivarsiṭi, 1989), 13.

characterized by "uproar and chaos" (*sannāṭā aur hangāmā*) and that reception of Iqbal's poetry was largely negative as a result of the Hindi and Urdu language politics that had been increasingly polarizing along religio-national lines (i.e., Hindi=Hindu, Urdu=Muslim) since the turn of the century.[13]

Following Āzād's timeline, Iqbal did not fare much better with the Progressive Writers' Association, the most influential group of writers and poets in Urdu in the years leading up to Partition through the 1960s. Advocates of socialist realist literature and politically affiliated with the Communist party, the Progressive movement was seriously wounded by Partition, which not only divided their members across borders but, as one Progressive author described, led "imperialist devilishness and the monster of communalism [to] put out the lamps of culture and literature by flooding the lands of Punjab and Delhi with blood."[14] Indian Progressive luminaries ᶜAlī Sardār Jaᶜfrī and Aḥmad Nadīm Qāsimī initially discounted Iqbal for his conservative and dismissive views on women, and for his perceived encouragement of Muslim separatism (*farqī parastī*),[15] but eventually softened their stance due in no small part to the efforts of Faiẓ Aḥmad Faiẓ[16] in Pakistan as well as the need to create a "broad-based" coalition with Progressives across the border. Outside of Iqbal's treatment by the Progressive Writers' Association, Āzād notes that Iqbal was broadly considered to have created the idea of Pakistan in his 1930 speech and was therefore ultimately responsible for the horrors of Partition.[17] Āzād does draw a distinction between the literary/academic and popular spheres of reception of Iqbal's work, but

[13] See Kavita Datla, *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial Hyderabad* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013), and Peter Gottschalk, *Beyond Hindu and Muslim: Multiple Identity in Narratives from Village India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), among others.
[14] Sajjād Zahīr, *The Light: A History of the Movement for Progressive Literature in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent: a translation of Raushnai*, trans. Amina Azfar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 244.
[15] Āzād, *Hindūstān meṇ Iqbāliyāt* …, 23.
[16] Faiz was greatly influenced by Iqbal, responding to many of his poems and even preparing an Urdu translation of Iqbal's Persian *Payām-i Mashriq*.
[17] Āzād, *Hindūstān meṇ Iqbāliyāt* …, 24.

notes that they often came together in the press as well as in gatherings where poetry and essays would be read aloud, especially at historically Muslim universities such as Aligarh and Osmania.[18] However, the number of published works from these university presses remained few, and Āzād concludes his lecture by noting that in India and in Pakistan as well there is little work being done on Iqbal's thought or poetry.[19]

After 1947 in Pakistan, Iqbaliyat took on a triumphalist tenor. Iqbal was the *ḥakīm al-ummat*, the founding father of the new Muslim nation, and given the honorific *ᶜAllāma*— November 9th was declared "Iqbal Day," a national holiday, and his poetry became part of the state-sanctioned curriculum. While there is a proliferation of titles appropriating Iqbal for almost any subject imaginable, with countless variations of the Urdu title *Iqbal aur* ____ (Iqbal and _____) ranging from theology to scientific discoveries to biographical details to art to, of course, philosophy and politics, emphasis on the Islamic content of Iqbal's work, particularly that which could be pressed into the service of theocratic state power, continues to dominate the field. Iqbal Singh Sevea notes that Iqbal's views are approached as "an expression of the timeless socio-political message of Islam,"[20] and Pakistan as the instantiation of that message. This led critics to interpret Iqbal's poetry in two general directions: either as arguments for religious and national Islamic superiority, or presenting Iqbal as a paragon of cosmopolitan Muslim tolerance. These both arrive at the same effect of claiming a superior status for him by virtue of his Muslim-ness (whatever aspects of that identity are emphasized or de-emphasized in turn).

Before it can be determined whether or not Iqbal's poetry is properly or improperly "Islamic," however (or, perhaps, as a way of testing its religious imprimatur), the overwhelming

[18] Āzād, *Hindūstān meṇ Iqbāliyāt* …, 15-16.
[19] Āzād, *Hindūstān meṇ Iqbāliyāt* …, 43.
[20] Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, 5.

majority of critics are concerned with its "truth." Only by retaining a particular kind of ontologically disclosive power can Iqbal's poetry, specifically his *ghazal* poetry, be considered of a superior rank and have the appropriate moral and emotional effects on the reader. The roots of this critical attitude—the fruit it bears to be assessed below—reach back almost a century prior to 1947.

1857: The *Ghazal* as Battleground

The question of truth and artifice in poetry seems an unlikely political battleground, but, as Aamir Mufti observes,

> In the decades following the 1857 Revolt…the classical tradition of lyric poetry, and in particular the *ghazal* form, became the site of fierce contention about the prospects of a distinct "Muslim" experience in Indian modernity and came to be singled out as the genre par excellence of Muslim decline and decadence, as too decorative, subjective, and impervious to nature and (Indian) reality, incapable of the sober intellectual effort and didactic purpose called for in the "new" world.[21]

While hardly the first uprising against the incursions of the British East India Company, the 1857 rebellion has taken on something of an inaugural importance in the history of British rule in South Asia. Unmatched in brutality (both of the events of the rebellion itself and its suppression) and scale, the ultimately unsuccessful events of 1857 also reconfigured the nature of India's colonial domination in two key ways: dissolving the British East India Company and reconsolidating its governmental power under the auspices of the crown (the 1858 Government of India Act); and discursively locating the rebellion's origins in the Muslim community, even inhering in Islam itself. As Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst has argued, although participation in violent revolt was by no means limited to Muslims, 1857 produced and minoritized the singular category

[21] Aamir Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony: the Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 210.

of "Muslim" and indeed "Islam" itself in colonial India, especially as it was considered in relation to violent jihad, which has had long-lasting effects on how Islam has been constructed in both scholarly and popular discourse.[22] For the British, "if Indians broadly were distinctively religious, Muslims particularly were understood to be religiously legalistic, bound unwaveringly and without exception by religious laws. After the Rebellion, Muslims were seen as uniquely culpable for those events and as posing a threat of repeated revolts; observers collapsed differences among…Muslim communities on the basis of law binding all Muslims to fight for Muslim rule."[23] This perceived fifth column proved to the ruling British administration that India's Muslim population was inherently suspect, and incompatible with such modern political forms as citizenship and nationality. In British literature of the late 19th century, Aamir Mufti argues, we can see the figure of the Muslim

> …as the site for the elaboration of this impermeability…[and] glimpse the contradictions and paradoxes of this colonial discourse. Even as [Kipling and Forster] proceed with a denial of the possibility that India may be considered a nation in the modern sense, they turn the figures of "Muslim" particularity and difference into the ambivalent signs of minority, thus at the same time *nationalizing* the practices of a modern "Hindu" identity. In the decades following the 1857 Rebellion, "the Muslims" come to appear as a group with a paradoxical social existence—on the one hand, as local and particularistic, caught in a time warp outside the temporalities of the modern world, and, on the other, as formed by loyalties and affiliations that violate and exceed the territorial structure of the (colonial) state.[24]

The general attitude of the British towards Indian Muslims in the years after 1857 can be effectively summarized by the rhetorical question used to title the influential civil service member Sir William Wilson Hunter's (d. 1900) 1871 publication: *The Indian Musalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel Against the Queen?*.

[22] See Ilyse R. Morgenstein Fuerst, *Indian Muslim Minorities and the 1857 Rebellion: Religion, Rebels, and Jihad* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017)
[23] Fuerst, *Indian Muslim Minorities*, 49.
[24] Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 93.

If such defiant tendencies among the Muslims were considered an unfortunate by-product of religious commitment, the worst excesses could perhaps be tamped down by the civilizing mission of English education. The study of English and vernacular literature in the colony was deeply imbricated with political coercion. Gauri Viswanathan notes in her seminal postcolonial studies work *Masks of Conquest* that "the history of education in British India shows that certain humanistic functions traditionally associated with literature—for example, the shaping of character or the development of the aesthetic sense or the disciplines of ethical thinking—were considered essential to the processes of sociopolitical control by the guardians of the same tradition."[25] The texts selected and taught, how they were selected and taught, and what moral values they were supposed to inculcate contributed to enduring ideological processes by which hierarchies were established to determine what was "good" literature worth reading or what even constituted "literature" at all.

Returning to Mufti's earlier observation regarding lyric poetry, we can observe this dynamic unfolding at a particularly targeted level that served as a site of convergence for the larger political and cultural dimensions of the "Muslim problem" in British India: the *ghazal*. In *Nets of Awareness*, which remains the authoritative work on the effects of 1857 on the Urdu *ghazal*, Frances Pritchett relates the story of two speeches delivered on the same day at the *Anjuman-i Punjāb*, a civic association, in Lahore:

> On May 9, 1874, [Muḥammad Ḥusain] Azad delivered to the Anjuman his famous lecture on the reform of Urdu poetry. The audience included a number of Englishmen of high official rank (director of public instruction, high court judge, secretary of the Punjab government, colonel, commissioner, deputy commissioner)…there is no doubt about the boldness of his message: he called for a new Urdu poetry and a new poetics, both based on English models…

[25] Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, 25th anniversary edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, 2015), 3. Viswanathan goes on to demonstrate how the very foundations of the English literary canon itself could be found in the colonial classroom; a classic Saidian example of how a European self-understanding was constructed both with and against that of the colonized.

The core of Āzād's lecture, Pritchett describes was "an emotional plea for a radically new vision of the nature and goals of poetry," which would now include a poem's ability to "express and communicate natural feelings…[and] reactions to the world." When Āzād had finished laying out his defense of a new poetry, Colonel W. R. M. Holroyd, the director of public instruction, took the stage:

> Speaking in English, Colonel Holroyd began, "This meeting has been called to discover means for the development of Urdu poetry which is in a state of decadence today."…Colonel Holroyd emphasized the usefulness of poetry as a teaching tool and deplored the dearth of poetry suitable for the classroom. To fill this need, he suggested that verses from Mīr, Żauq, Ġhālib, and others should be compiled, "aiming at moral instruction, and presenting a natural picture of our feelings and thoughts."

"This meeting," Pritchett concludes, "turned out to be the most memorable and controversial in the Anjuman's whole history."[26]

Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād (d. 1910) and Alṭaf Ḥussain Ḥālī (d. 1914) were the two most prominent reformist voices on the post-1857 literary scene. Āzād's 1880 *Āb-i Ḥayāt* ("Water of Life"), and Ḥālī's 1893 *Muqaddama-yi shiᶜr u shāᶜirī* ("Introduction to Poetry and Poetics") remain hugely influential, considered as the first history of Urdu literature and the first work of literary criticism in Urdu, respectively.[27] Mufti has noted the ironies of the process by which Urdu literature gained a "history" in the first place: the "acquisition, by a non-Western and

[26] Frances Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and its Critics* (University of California Press, 1994), 34-35. Pritchett quotes a section of Azad's talk that aptly demonstrates the irony of his eloquent denunciation of eloquence: "Oh gardeners of the Garden of Eloquence! Eloquence is not something that flies along on the wings of exaggeration and high-flying fancy, or races off on the wings of rhyme, or climbs to the heavens by the force of verbal ingenuity, or sinks beneath a dense layer of metaphors. The meaning of eloquence is that happiness or sorrow, attraction of repulsion, fear or anger toward something—in short, whatever feeling is in our heart—should as we express it arouse in the listeners' hearts the same effect, the same emotion, the same fervor, as would be created by seeing the thing itself" (Āzād, *Naẓm-i Āzād*, 45; as translated by Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, 34-35).

[27] See Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*. We should add the caveat that these works are understood to represent these "firsts" to the extent that they are recognizable as such by Western standards of writing about literature; other, older Perso-Arabic traditions such as *tazkira*s and other compositions on poetic theory could very well be thought of precedents.

precolonial body of writing, of the attributes of *its own* unique and singular history,"[28] as well as the "colonial project of 'reform' with respect to the very practices of 'Oriental' writing whose 'discovery' and assimilation into the European literary sphere had been so crucial an element in the very condition of possibility of world literature a century earlier."[29]

This irony is especially salient in the case of the *ghazal*, since it was after all a *ghazal* by Ḥāfiẓ, translated by Sir William Jones in 1772, that instigated European interest in "Eastern" literatures whose translations contributed to the development of literary Romanticism. Yet another ironic plot twist, then, when we see Wordsworth held up as an aspirational paradigm for Urdu poetry to abandon poetic artifice in favor of "natural poetry" (glossed precisely, by high-profile reformers Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān and Alṭaf Ḥussain Ḥālī, as *naicharal pō'itrī*[30]). Ḥālī's *Muqaddama*, in fact, functioned as a counterpart to Wordsworth's "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads," in which Wordsworth sets out his hugely influential definition of poetry: "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility."[31] Ḥālī also makes recourse to Milton's criteria for poetry by way of Coleridge, writing that "the excellence of poetry is that it should be simple (*sāda*), filled with fervor (*jōsh sē bharā hū'ā*), and founded on truth (*aṣliyat par mabnī*)."[32] However, if poetry in the style of Wordsworth was to be the "touchstone of naturalness," then "the whole Indo-Muslim poetic tradition was bound to appear 'unnatural' in comparison—not just literarily decadent, artificial,

[28] Aamir Mufti, *Forget English!: Orientalisms and World Literatures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 133.
[29] Mufti, *Forget English!*, 138.
[30] See Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, 38, 135n13.
[31] Quoted in Stephen Gill, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 109. On the *Muqaddama* and Wordsworth, see Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, 167.
[32] As translated by Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, 149.

and false, but morally suspect as well. And if, as many English writers argued, poetry was inevitably a mirror of society, then the cultural rot must go much deeper."[33]

The denigration of the "unnatural" poetry of the *ghazal*, especially those written in Persian in the *sabk-i hindī* or "Indian style" in the 16th-19th centuries,[34] was aimed at both thematic elements such as erotic encounters (conventionally homosexual), and formal or rhetorical elements such as including striking imagery, wordplay, and cryptic, paradoxical constructions, which contributed to an overall motif of "abstraction, complex metaphoricity, ambiguity and high imaginativeness."[35] Such qualities were not, as scholar and critic Shamsur Rahman Faruqi has noted, approved of by contemporary Victorian tastes, and influential scholars like Shiblī Nuᶜmānī (d. 1914) appeal to English biases in bemoaning the "improper use of imagination" in Indo-Persian poetry. In his history of Persian literature, *Shiᶜr al-ᶜajam*, Shiblī Nuᶜmānī echoes the "cultural rot" argument: "…know that it is a flaw in the culture which has affected the people's taste too, so that they regard hyperbole with approval...one must believe that the civilization's decay has corrupted the taste of both the poet and his audience."[36] This attitude is by no means limited to the consideration of Indo-Persian literature. The idea that "later" or post-classical literatures of the Islamic world (meaning, those synchronous with the

[33] Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, xvi.

[34] While this remained the dominant scholarly view for decades, there has been productive pushback in recent years. Even the term *sabk-i hindī* itself carries something of a pejorative sense, and scholars have supported the use of terms internal to the tradition, such as *tāza-gū'ī* or *shīva-yi tāza* ("fresh-speaking" or "fresh style"). See Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, "The Need for a New and Comprehensive Persian Literary Theory" (inaugural address, Conference on Modern Persian Literature in the 20th Century, Aligarh Muslim University, Aug. 18, 2009, available at: http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00fwp/srf/srf_persianlittheory_2009.pdf); Rajeev Kinra, "Make it Fresh: Time, Tradition, and Indo-Persian Literary Modernity," in *Time, History, and the Religious Imaginary in South Asia*, ed. Anne C. Murphy (New York: Routledge, 2011); Jane Mikkelson, "Worlds of the Imagination: Bīdel of Delhi (d. 1720) and Early Modern Persian Lyric Style," PhD diss., (University of Chicago, 2019); and, seminally, Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1998).

[35] Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, "A Stranger in the City: The Poetics of *Sabk-e Hindi*" (The Annual of Urdu Studies 19, no. 1 (2004): 13.

[36] As quoted in Faruqi, "A Stranger in the City," 12.

onset and spread of the colonial enterprise in the 18th and 19th centuries) represent decadent, moribund cultural mindsets continues to keep its thumb on the scale of Arabic,[37] Turkish,[38] and Persian[39] literary scholarship and criticism.

Iqbaliyat presents us with an instructive convergence point for these vectors of religion, literature, and cultural-imperial politics. As mentioned above, "truth" is a preoccupying question for literary critics writing on Iqbal in the later decades of the 20th century (primarily the 1960s-1990s, but even then work on Iqbal's poetry as such was comparatively sparse, a situation which has only deteriorated to the present day[40]). While Pritchett has amply demonstrated the case for how the *ghazal* was denigrated following 1857 in favor of a Wordsworthian "natural poetry," *Nets of Awareness* characterizes the Urdu poetic garden as irrevocably destroyed. While the aftermath of the rebellion certainly set a new course for (as we have seen) Muslim identity in South Asia and cultural imperialism as expressed in the literary arena, to locate the year as an absolute rupture between pre-modern and modern modes of aesthetic expression and political

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[37] See, for instance, M. M. Badawi's introduction to *Modern Arabic Literature*: "…the Ottoman period marks the nadir of Arabic literature. Although historians of literature may have exaggerated the decline, there is no doubt that the period is characterized by the absence of creativity and loss of vigour…With very few exceptions, the imagery poets used was stock in trade and the language cliché-ridden: in short, it was the literature of an exhausted, inward-looking culture" (M. M. Badawi, ed., *Modern Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3).

[38] See W. G. Andrews, N. Black, and M. Kalpaklı, *Ottoman Lyric Poetry: An Anthology* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2006). Walter Andrews observes the deliberate construction of this narrative of decline in the study of Ottoman literature by Orientalist scholar E. J. W. Gibb. The reception of Ottoman literature in the modern Turkish state parallels in many ways the situation of Indo-Persian literature in India and Pakistan.

[39] In Iran, the *bāz-gasht-i adabī* ("literary return") neo-classical literary movement was so named by Mālik al-shuᶜarā Bahār (d. 1951) in explicit repudiation of the "Indian style" of poetics in favor of the perceived moral and aesthetic benefits of classical Persian poets such as Ḥāfiẓ and ᶜIrāqī. In fact, Bahār extolled the poetry of Iqbal for these merits, although Iqbal was not well-known in Iran until after his death (for more, see Chapter 3). See: William L. Hanaway, Jr., "Bāzgašt-e adabī," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, available online at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bazgast-e-adabi

[40] In a 2017 editorial entitled "The lost verse: Why is Iqbal going out of fashion?" Pakistani intellectual historian Syed Nomanul Haq observes that "…academic and journalistic material on Iqbal continues to be produced but almost none on his poetics, on his metaphors, his symbolism, diction, rhythms and imagery. By far, most of what appears in print ha to do with Iqbal's thought, his 'philosophy', his political ideas, his pan-Islamism, his dream of Pakistan, and his 'message'." See Syed Nomanul Haq, "The lost verse: Why is Iqbal going out of fashion?," *Herald*, November 10, 2017, http://herald.dawn.com/news/1153624

belonging seems excessive, if for no other reason than the simple fact that people continued writing *ghazal*s. Iqbal, considered the consummate modernist (an attitude he too cultivated), excelled in the art and craft of the very poetic form one would think he should despise.

The *Ghazal* Becomes a Lyric

The *ghazal* was not so much killed off in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in South Asia as re-branded. Now, the form was one among many available options (although perhaps not the *best* option) for lyric poetry, a category itself largely constructed out of 19th-century English and German Romanticism. If the *ghazal* had been the representative of Muslim cultural decay, it could now be a way forward as a lyric poem that operated as an "utterance overheard," in John Stuart Mill's famous phrasing, that was both deeply individuated to the poet's felt experience and transcendent in its portrayal of universal truths. The *ghazal* was reconfigured as a lyrical genre that uniquely represented a poet's inner state: "the ghazal is different from the rest of the types of poetic speech (*sukhan*)…[in the ghazal], the poet's thought, poured out from the fire of passion, emerges (*shāᶜir kī fikr jazbē kī ānch sē ḍhal kar nikaltī hai*), and thought and feeling are combined in a heart-ravishing way (*imtizāj-i dil-āvīz*)…that is not possible in other forms."[41] Rather than signifying immoral eroticism and decadence, "the value-life patterns associated with the experience of love give to the sensuous forms of the Ghazal a mythical concrescence owing to which they can symbolize all aspects of human experience."[42] In a keynote address delivered at Kashmir University on July 25, 1977, critic Āl-i Aḥmad Surūr (d. 2002) tellingly frames

[41] ᶜAbd al-shakūr Aḥsan, *Iqbāl kī fārsī shāᶜirī kā tanqīdī jā'iza*, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1977, 2000), 88.
[42] Z. A. Usmani, "Dante and Iqbal as Poets of Love," in *Iqbal: Essays and Studies*, ed. Asloob Ahmad Ansari (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2004), 244.

Iqbal's poetry with language right out of Āzād's and Colonel Holroyd's speeches more than a century earlier:

> The poet has this truth: that he, like Shakespeare or Ghalib, merely holds the mirror up to nature (*ṣirf zindagī kō ā'īna dikhā'ē*) and does not seek from it any unity (*vaḥdat*) or order (*tanẓīm*). It is also true that, like Dante, Milton, Eliot, Tagore, and Iqbal, he constructs a house of mirrors (*ā'īna-khāna*) in such a way that in a flash of any one specific picture of life, and [in] the whole of life itself, a unity appears. It is also true that he should set a particular religious concern (*mazhabī fikr*), social outlook (*samājī naẓarīya*), ethical importance (*akhlāqī qadr*) as the axis of his poetry. In any case, the poet must be anchored by belief (*aīk ᶜaqīdē kē langar kī ẓarūrat hōtī hai*).[43]

Surūr's choice of literary peers for Iqbal—Shakespeare, Ghalib, Dante, Milton, Eliot, and Tagore—suggests a desire to locate him as primarily (if not exclusively) the inheritor of a Western poetic tradition. He also introduces to the valorization of poetry's natural, unadorned "truth" the idea that some fundamental belief (indeed, Surūr uses the Islamically-inflected word "*ᶜaqīda*"), religious or ethical, must "anchor" the poet. Elsewhere, Surūr identifies Iqbal's religious self-assuredness as the hallmark of his poetry's greatness: "…in this age of the breaking and disintegration of beliefs, one mustn't forget that the authoritativeness of [the truth of] personality that is the distinguishing mark of true and unalloyed poetry develops through a taste and joy of certainty (*zauq-i yaqīn*)."[44] A poem, therefore, is inseparable from the poet, inasmuch as the poem represents the interpretation of the poet's own experience such that the reader has the same affective response; as another critic has argued: "style is ruled by two fundamental

[43] Āl-i Aḥmad Surūr, *Iqbāl kē muṭālaᶜē kē tanāẓurāt* (Srīnagar: Idārah-yi Iqbāliyāt Kashmīr Yūnīvarsiṭī, 1978), 11. The author's name is often styled Al-e Ahmad Suroor.

[44] As translated by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, *How to Read Iqbal?: Essays on Iqbal, Urdu Poetry & Literary Theory*, ed. Muhammad Suheyl Umar (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2009), 10. The original Urdu quote can be found in Āl-i Aḥmad Surūr, "*Khiẓr-i rāh, aik muṭālaᶜa*," in *Iqbāl kā fann*, ed. Gopi Chand Narang (Delhi: Educational Publishing House, 1983), 43. The phrase *zauq-i yaqīn* is commonplace in Iqbal criticism in Urdu.

things, thought and experience (*khayāl aur tajriba*)…[to the extent that] the reader too can become aware of the rising waves of the poet's conscious and unconscious."[45]

Aslūb Aḥmad Anṣārī (d. 2016), a critic who has written extensively on Iqbal, approvingly cites Wordsworth in a discussion of Iqbal's *ghazal* poetry, identifying the central motivation of that poetry as a "humanism" (his translation for *bashīrīyat*) that has a universal appeal and application. He goes on to compare selected Iqbal verses to qur'anic verses on the basis of their sublime cultivation of the human spirit.[46] In this vein, Anṣārī quotes American literary critic R. P. Blackmur on Yeats: "Poetry does not flow from thin air but requires always either a literal faith, an imaginative faith, or, as in Shakespeare, a mind full of many provisional faiths."[47] Iqbal's poetry is great, according to Anṣārī,

> …because it has bejewelled artistic embellishment and is moreover the creation of a great mind and consciousness, one which has derived inspiration and benefit from divers intellectual, philosophical, cultural and political streams of the East and the West and has imbibed into the *unity of its inner self* the fruits of such derivation and has transformed them from its own standpoint and has stamped the *impress of its personality* on them. And over and above this, it [the poetry of Iqbal] *distills its light and song from values* which are those of a *world religion and the civilization based on that religion*.[48]

By these criteria, the defining aspect of the merit of Iqbal's poetry is its rootedness in Islam, as mediated through the consciousness and personality of the poet, which assimilates various other modes of poetic inspiration with the qualities of "light and song" ultimately derived from Islamic civilization (although what those qualities might look like, Anṣārī does not elaborate upon). Hāmidī Kashmīrī argues that the poetry of Iqbal was universally true for his historical moment

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[45] "*aslūb meiṇ dō bunyādī chīzeṇ kār-farmā haiṇ, khayāl aur tajriba…qārī bhī shāᶜir kē shuᶜūr aur taḥt al-shuᶜūr sē uṭhtī huʾī maujōṇ sē khabar-dār hō jātā hai*." Shādāb Arshad, "*Allāma Iqbāl kī farsī ghazal-sarāʾī aur unkā aslūb*," in *Jādū-nawā, Iqbāl: Iqbāl kī farsī shāᶜirī par qaumī saiminār meiṇ paṛhē gayē taḥqīqī maqālāt kā majmūᶜa*, ed. Taskīna Fāẓil (Srinagar: Iqbal Institute of Culture and Philosophy at Kashmir University, 2014), 205.
[46] Aslūb Aḥmad Anṣārī, *Iqbāl kī muntakhib naẓmeṇ aur ghazaleṇ* (New Delhi: Ghālib Akaidamī, 1994), 231-35.
[47] Anṣārī, *Iqbāl kī muntakhib naẓmeṇ aur ghazaleṇ*, 3; the original quote is from R. P. Blackmur, *Form and Value in Modern Poetry* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), 34.
[48] Anṣārī, *Iqbāl kī muntakhib naẓmeṇ aur ghazaleṇ*, 3; as translated by Faruqi, *How to Read Iqbal*, 11-12. Emphases added.

because he felt the problems of his time (colonialism, capitalism, industrialization) on a personal level.[49]

The combination of personality and purpose as the foundations for assessing Iqbal appears again for Victor Kiernan (d. 2009), British historian and translator of Urdu poetry:

> Iqbal *like Wordsworth* looked upon himself as first and foremost a teacher. For him *poetry was not entertainment*, but part of the functioning of human life and society. Too obvious a *didactic intent* is likely to defeat itself, and this sometimes happened with Iqbal. When he was thinking most seriously, he wrote as a rule in Persian. More important than the choice of language is the contrast between his long poems, expounding doctrine, and the poetically far superior short ones, whether in Persian or in Urdu, where he felt at liberty to *speak frankly and intimately*, revealing his doubts and uncertainties, his intuitions and conjectures, *as well as his fixed beliefs*.[50]

If the critical attitude, then, is that Iqbal's poetry represented 1) an intimate, natural, unforced disclosure of 2) feelings and beliefs that would resonate with the reader as true because of their 3) expression of (religious) certainty and righteousness, what to do with the irksome fact of his *ghazal* composition? Why would an author so focused on conveying the certainties of life write poems that formally introduce *un*certainty and ambiguity? If the *ghazal* was by this point disavowed by critics for its artificiality, its supposed deliberate distance from lived experience, then how to account for an otherwise "great" poet writing in this manner? As Paul Losensky has argued in the case of the Safavid-Mughal poet Bābā Fighānī, even "plain language" can be quite "rhetorically complex," and that "Fighani's apparent lexical and syntactical simplicity is thus often deceptive, belying an intricately crafted play of tropes and figures of thought. Insisting on the natural quality of Fighani's verse obscures the fact that it is the *combination* of these features

[49] Hamidi Kashmiri, *Harf-e raz: Iqbal ka Mutala'a* (New Delhi: Modern Publishing House, 1983), 17.
[50] V. G. Kiernan, "Iqbal as Prophet of Change: The Message of the East," in *Iqbal: Commemorative Volume*, eds. Ali Sardar Jafri and K. S. Duggal (New Delhi: All India Iqbal Centenary Celebrations Committee, 1977), 43. Emphases added.

that is distinctive…the impression of sincerity or authenticity that it creates is the product of the skillful manipulation of linguistic and conventional means."[51]

S. A. Vahid, in his widely-cited 1948 *Iqbal: His Art and Thought*, admits up front that "there is no getting away from the irrefutable fact that lack of unity robs the *ghazal* of much effect, and the *ghazal* as such does not fully echo the emotions and sentiments which sway the human breast."[52] Iqbal gets around this and truly excels, Vahid argues, by composing *ghazal*s "possess[ing] unity of theme,"[53] or *ghazal-i musalsal*, a sub-form which, while undoubtedly present in Iqbal's work, does not appear to the exclusion of what would be considered *ghazal*s traditionally lacking apparent thematic connection between constituent verses. But even if Iqbal wrote *ghazal*s whose formal constraints would diminish their poetic effects, this would be overcome by the unifying, edifying effects of his own life, character, and message providing a background light for the poem's illumination:

> The causes of Iqbal's greatness as a lyric writer are not far to seek. The foremost cause is the *subjective nature* of Iqbal's poetic art. Iqbal's subjective poetry provides an *eminently suitable vehicle for his songs which treat of his own blissful moments*…His lyric poetry is the consummate expression of either some *supreme moment in his own life*, or of some *rapturous mood*, and it brings back to his readers moments and moods in their own lives…The second reason for the universal appeal of Iqbal's lyric poetry is the fact that *he sings essentially of life*. This gives to his poems the unity of theme so necessary for rhythm and harmony…The third reason for Iqbal's greatness as a lyric poet is his *philosophy of life*. By formulating a life of ceaseless striving and discountenancing all those views of life which advocated renunciation and self-annihilation, Iqbal has *widened the scope of lyric poetry*…Iqbal has also *intense faith* in his poetry enabling mankind to reach the *great goal of his glorious vision*. [54]

The idea that Iqbal introduced a unifying philosophy to his *ghazal*s, therefore, enabling him not only to transcend its aesthetic limitations, but also to repurpose those limitations to new and

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[51] Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 91, 98.
[52] Sayyid ᶜAbd al-Vāhid, *Iqbal: His Art and Thought* (Lahore: Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1948), 185. The author's name is often styled Syed Abdul Vahid.
[53] Vahid, *Iqbal: His Art and Thought*, 186-87.
[54] Vahid, *Iqbal: His Art and Thought*, 187-89. Emphases added.

different ends, also finds purchase for many critics. If, as Vahid argues, "it is clear that the chief characteristic of Iqbal's poetic art is a harmonious synthesis of romanticism and classicism"[55] (more specifically, the introduction of the romantic into the classical), then it is unsurprising that we see variations on the phrase "new wine into old bottles"[56] everywhere in scholarship on Iqbal. He "transform[ed] the classical image of the ghazal…kindling new lamps on the worn path of poetry,"[57] and "reinvigorated the dead veins of the Persian ghazal (*fārsī ghazal kī murda ᶜarūq meiṇ aik tāza jān ḍāl dī*)."[58] Iqbal can rehabilitate the *ghazal* by making it new: "he was the first Persian poet to have widened the scope of Ghazal so as to treat social, political, economic, moral and philosophical matters while preserving, at the same time, its inherent lyricism."[59] The *ghazal* had declined from an older model, as Yūsuf Ḥusain Khān describes it, which contained "subjects [that were] diverse and refined. But when passion's dwelling-place was destroyed, then instead of ardor and intoxication fixed rhyme (*qāfiya-bandī*), slavish imitation (*taqlīd-parastī*), and apportioning of words (*lafẓī munāsabat*) became the ghazal's goal in and of itself."[60] Iqbal, on the other hand, manifested the secret condition of his self through allusion and metaphor, placing "new meaning" (*nāyi maᶜnī*) into "old words" (*purānī alfāẓ*): "he [Iqbal] proves the truths of the universe upon the touchstone of his heart, and tests the light of knowledge and wisdom as well as the darkness of the unconscious with his heart, meaning passion and ecstasy."[61] Even if, as Muḥammad Riyāẓ argues, the form of Iqbal's *ghazal*s appears to be shared with that of the classical Persian poets, "from the point of view of the words and meaning Iqbal's style is totally

[55] Vahid, *Iqbal: His Art and Thought*, 152.
[56] See, for instance, the translator's introduction in V. G. Kiernan, *Poems from Iqbal* (London: John Murray, 1955).
[57] Anṣārī , *Iqbāl kī muntakhib naẓmeṇ aur ghazaleṇ*, 236.
[58] Arshad, "*Allāma Iqbāl kī farsī ghazal-sarā'ī*…," 198.
[59] Sayyid Muẓaffar Ḥusain Barnī, *Iqbal's Contribution to Indo-Persian Literature* (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1987), 39. The author's name is also styled S. M. H. Burney.
[60] Yūsuf Ḥusain Khān, *Rūḥ-i Iqbāl* (New Delhi: Ghalib Academy, 1976), 108.
[61] "*…woh kā'ināt kī ḥaqīqat kō apnē dil kī kasauṭī par kastā aur ᶜilm u shuᶜūr kī raushnī aur lā- shuᶜūr kī ẓulmat kō bhī apnē dil yaᶜanī jaẓba u wajdān sē parakhtā hai* ." Khān, *Rūḥ-i Iqbāl*, 111, 113.

unique and unequaled (*kāmilan munfarid va bī-ᶜadīl ast*)…Iqbal expressed in *ghazal*s for the first time all sorts of subjects: literary, amatory, historical, political, philosophical, social, etc."[62] Writing on the relationship between Iqbal and Rumi, Sayyid Muḥammad Akram argues that Iqbal differs from classical poets such as Rumi and Hafiz in the "special goal" (*hadaf-i makẖṣūṣ*) of his poetry, which is "combative" (*mubāriz*) and "revolution-seeking" (*inqīlāb-khvāh*).[63] Iqbal, Akram claims, never used a customary or old subject in his poetry without changing the meaning to something new; this critic specifies that when he discusses Iqbal in terms of *taqlīd*, or literary imitation, he is referring only to Iqbal following a particular rhetorical style and not the content, since the subject matter of Iqbal's poetry is completely "fresh and innovative" (*tāza va badīᶜ*).[64] This view, however, has led to factually incorrect assertions concerning Iqbal's incorporation of classical *ghazal* mechanics: "Iqbal is not limited by the mannerisms of the classical ghazal. He did not place importance on the number of verses, the *maṭlaᶜ*, or the consistency of *radīf* and *qāfiya*…and he rarely uses a *takẖallus* in the *maqṭaᶜ*. In this way, having excluded the classical requisites and ornamentation, Iqbal made the Persian *ghazal* a companion to his own message."[65] With the exception of the observation concerning the *takẖallus*, or nom de plume usually included in the penultimate line of a *ghazal*, this list of formal conventions Iqbal supposedly ignored is simply not borne out by the evidence of his *ghazal*s themselves, as we shall see in the following chapters. The overstatement, however, is instructive in that it demonstrates the extent to which critics are willing to stretch or distort the textual evidence to support the claim that he is

[62] Muḥammad Riyāẕ, *Iqbāl-i Lāhaurī va digar shuᶜarā-yi fārsī-gū'ī* (Islamabad: Iran-Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, 1977), 16-17.
[63] Sayyid Muḥammad Akram, *Iqbāl dar rāh-i maulavī* (2nd ed., Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1982), 102.
[64] Akram, *Iqbāl dar rāh-i maulavī*, 113.
[65] "*Iqbāl ghazal rā bā īn manẕūr az lavāzim va ārā'ish-hā-yi klāsikī maḥrūm sākẖta kih ān rā qarīn-i paighām-i khvīsh kunad*." Riyāẕ, *Iqbāl-i Lāhaurī*, 18.

doing something fundamentally innovative in his poetry to the exclusion of any engagement with poetic tradition.

Poetry or Philosophy?

This quality of newness is tied not only to the supposed abandonment of the *ghazal*'s "articifial" formal and thematic elements, but also to the infusion of philosophy in lyric poetry. While it is something of a truism to note that the blending of these categories (the philosophical and the literary) was not just present in the Islamic tradition but indeed a hallmark of Sufi thought, the work that the distinction performs in Iqbal criticism tells us a great deal about how his poetry is subordinated to his philosophy, however that may be defined. Poetry—especially the lyric—is considered a vehicle or handmaiden to Iqbal's "real" concern, which was his "message" of modern Muslim dynamism, power, and self-knowledge. Annemarie Schimmel, one of the most prominent scholars of Iqbal in particular and of Islamic literature in general, claims that "Iqbal is first of all not so much a poetic as a philosophical spirit,"[66] even as she provides appreciative, deeply knowledgeable translations and analyses of his poetry. In framing Iqbal as first and foremost an Islamic reformer for whom poetic art was a secondary consideration, Schimmel replicates many of the colonial arguments concerning the related conditions of Islam and literary expression in late 19th-century India:

> Indeed, the situation of Islam in India had deteriorated very much. Life was spent mostly in the blind acceptance of accustomed symbols which were taken erroneously for reality, a situation which led to fundamentalism, whereas these symbols—be it the creed, be it the traditions about the life of the Prophet—had become void of their true religious significance. The task for Iqbal, and his fellow-reformers, was to come to a re-interpretation of the traditional symbols, so that the outworn forms were filled again with life. And that was possible only through participation in that power which once had given

[66] "*Iqbal ist, primär gesehen, nicht so sehr ein poetischer al sein philosophischer Geist*." Annemarie Schimmel, *Persischer Psalter, Ausgewählt und übers. von Annemarie Schimmel* (Köln: Hegner, 1968), 13.

> birth to the symbols: through the religious experience of the God of the Qur'an thanks to which, then, a re-actualization of religion could be expected.[67]

Here, Schimmel binds together the fate of Islam with the fate of its "symbols," which by the time of Iqbal had become desiccated, empty husks. Iqbal's success as a revivalist, then, lay in the extent to which he was able to rejuvenate these symbols and in so doing "re-actualize" the religion of the Qur'an. Given what we know about the history of the *ghazal* as such a symbol, however, we can ask of this claim: by whose criteria had Islamic symbols become "void of their *true* religious significance"? How was the truth or untruth of their religious significance determined? What was the basis of comparison for considering symbols "outworn" or "accustomed," and whence the valorization of their presumed origins as opposed to their current usage?

"The supreme goal of Iqbal's aesthetics," Schimmel notes in her main work on Iqbal, *Gabriel's Wing*, is "poetry as active history and history-making prophecy."[68] Because Iqbal's poetry does not contain "any personal allusion to erotic subjects," he is "indeed more an exponent of prophetical thought than a poet in the classical sense…Iqbal is concerned only with his doctrine of Self and his strife for the new life of Islam in India."[69] It is interesting that Schimmel links being a "poet in the classical sense" with "personal allusion to erotic subjects" and *not* "prophetical thought" or (political) "strife." Here, rather than marking a modern lyric sensibility, the personal is relegated to a pre-modern realm of poetic themes and it is the abstraction of "doctrine" that distinguishes Iqbal as a poet. The invocation of prophecy also links Iqbal's poetry to a sense of revelation, to a divine message communicated through poetry but

[67] Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1989), 74-75.
[68] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 72.
[69] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 70.

ultimately both separate from and antecedent to it. The critic Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī (d. 1984) echoes this elevation of Iqbal to a prophetic level (even as he also notes an oppositional viewpoint):

> I have said in a speech that Iqbal fundamentally came about as a message (*paighām*) to the world, and for this reason his status (*haisiyat*) is that of a prophet (*paighambar*). Because he presented that message in the clothing of poetry, we include him in the ranks of the poets; doubtless he is a very grand poet but poetry is his secondary capacity (*shāᶜirī un kī ẓimnī haisiyat hai*). Following me, Dr. Yūsuf Ḥusain Khān stood up for his speech and said that fundamentally Iqbal is a poet: philosophy and message were his secondary capacities. Alas that now this conversation remains only in dreams and the imagination![70]

Chishtī characterizes Iqbal's oeuvre as "philosophical poetry" (*falsafiyāna shāᶜirī*), which he defines as follows: "…owing to being a poet, those thoughts (*afkār*) are presented in the clothing of verse (*naẓm*), which he [the poet] on account of being a poet feels in the heart. When he does so in his thought the elements of burning and melting (*sūz u gudāz*) are included and in this way those thoughts in their true meaning become poetry (*ḥaqīqī maᶜanī meiṇ shiᶜr ban jātē haiṇ*).[71] For Chishtī, thoughts naturally come to poets dressed in verse, and the passion and intensity of feeling (the "burning and melting") is what makes those thoughts poetic—but the philosophical contemplation comes first, only *becoming* poetry through this process. Maqbūl Ḥasan Khān elides the distinction by instrumentalizing Iqbal's poetry as a vehicle (not poetry, but "poetic *formulations*") for his "creed," which becomes a unifying, underlying factor for all of his work: "…the numerous poetic formulations of his aesthetic creed are integrally related to the core of Iqbal's vision and life."[72] This tendency, however, has been argued to be a deliberate effect of Iqbal's craft—as Javed Majeed argues, "…this creation of poetry which prioritised an extractable

[70] Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī, *Jāvīdnāma maᶜ sharḥ*, vol. I (Delhi: Iᶜtiqād Publishing House, 1975), 101.
[71] Chishtī, *Jāvīdnāma maᶜ sharḥ*, 99.
[72] Maqbool Hasan Khan, "Iqbal's Poetics," in *Iqbal: Essays and Studies*, ed. Asloob Ahmad Ansari (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2004), 145.

'message' was itself a carefully crafted formal device," which caused commentators to "focus on the ideas contained in his verse" at the expense of "the poetic techniques and strategies which made possible the extractability of those ideas in the first place."[73]

It is ironic that authors writing on the presumed unity of the political and philosophical aspects of Iqbal's work frequently cite verses from his poetry as evidence for their arguments, but in brief snippets—a few lines here and there from across the spectrum of Iqbal's oeuvre, without attention to the contexts of poem, language, genre, or register of writing. Quotations from Iqbal are pulled from sources as disparate as poems, letters, speeches, and reported comments without differentiation or attention to the differences in audience. Such a decontextualized approach to Iqbal's poetry makes sense, however, if we consider it to speak to the need for consistency: for there to be a fundamental message underlying all his writings that can shine through any one or any one part. If poetry is not *really* poetry, but just another expository option for an extractable truth, then differences of language, genre, form, and register will be elided in service of some identifiable essence that both permeates and supercedes them. This drive for unity, for coherence, is attributable in part to the fact of Iqbal's multitude of contradictory attitudes and statements on various issues, and the diversity of viewpoints for which he has been taken up as a standard-bearer. After all, as Annemarie Schimmel puts it in her entry on Iqbal for the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*,

> He has been appropriated by almost every faction inside Indo-Pakistan for its own purposes: he has been regarded as the unsurpassable master of every virtue and art; he has been made a forerunner of socialism or an advocate of Marxism; he was anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist; he was the poet of the elite and of the masses, the true interpreter of orthodox Islam and the advocate of a dynamic and free interpretation of Islam, the enemy of Sufism and a Sufi himself; he was indebted to Western thought and criticized everything Western mercilessly.[74]

[73] Javed Majeed, *Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, Aesthetics, and Postcolonialism* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009), 3.
[74] Annemarie Schimmel, "Iqbal, Muhammad," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iqbal-muhammad

The resistance of Iqbal's body of work—particularly, as I will argue, of his *ghazal*s—to neatly defined categorization represents less of a problem for scholars to solve than an opportunity for rethinking why such a "solution" seems necessary at all. When the question of what the underlying, unified, transmissible ideology of Iqbal's work is can be answered in so dramatically varied a fashion, the terms of inquiry deserve closer scrutiny. As will become clearer in the following chapters, literature, philosophy, and politics did not operate in Iqbal's poetry as separate spheres; instead, these areas were co-constitutive and irreducible to formulations that presuppose our ability to identify one from the other, as in "are Iqbal's poems actually about political events?" or "is Iqbal a philosopher first, or a poet?" Such questions could always be answered with both yes and no based on the same textual evidence.

Iqbal's poetry, then, is both poetry and *not* poetry, almost as if his verse is considered to be at its apex when it transcends itself to become a pure, natural expression of philosophical truth. This underlying contradiction or anxiety in Iqbal criticism—that his poetry, representing the best of natural, forward-thinking aesthetics, must also be distanced from the fact of its traditional literariness, its textuality—stems not only from the cultural-political aftermath of 1857, as we have seen, but also from contemporary problems of criticism in Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. How text relates to truth, and to what degree philosophy has the power to access truth, was a major concern for criticism and philosophy at this time. The problem is most forcefully taken up by post-structuralist thinkers, notably Derrida, in the later decades of the 20th century, writing on how literary discourse interrupts the very process of thinking about the relationship between text and truth. The forerunner for these debates, however, is Nietzsche, a thinker Iqbal was deeply interested in (although whose conclusions he did not fully endorse), citing him frequently across the genres of his writing, and whose work he

would have been conversant with from his time spent studying philosophy in England and Germany.[75] Parts of Iqbal's first Persian publication, the *masnavī Asrār-i Khudī*, are clearly derived from *Thus Spake Zarathustra*,[76]and Nietzsche appears as a character or addressee across Iqbal's oeuvre, most famously in the *Jāvīdnāma*.[77] While Iqbal does not specifically reference Nietzsche's reflections on truth in literature and philosophy,[78] the issue animates so much of Nietzsche's thought that we can safely assume his familiarity with it, even more so given Iqbal's blurring of the category distinctions in his own poetry.

Nietzsche, in the essay "On Truth and Lies in a Non-moral Sense," argues for the utility of the idea of truth as a social construct. He notes that the concepts of truth and falsehood arise in tandem and are mutually dependent; however, the maintenance of an orderly society relies on the (perceived) distinction between them. "Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions," Nietzsche claims, and that what we think of as given truths are nothing more than "a movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms...a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified...and which, after long usage, seem to be fixed, canonical, and binding."[79] Not only are the conceptual categories of "truth" and "lie" re-examined here, but the very avenue by which we come to consider them at all: language. Language itself is thoroughly metaphorical, Nietzsche argues (and literature self-consciously so);

[75] In his autobiography, Nehru observed that Nietzsche was very much in vogue at Cambridge in the early 1900s. See Sevea, *Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*, 20n72.
[76] Stephan Popp, "Muhammad Iqbal—Reconstructing Islam along Occidental Lines of Thought," *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* 5, no. 1 (2019): 219.
[77] See Chapter 4 of this dissertation.
[78] Much of what has been written on Iqbal and Nietzsche looks at the similarities (or lack thereof) between Iqbal's *mard-i mu'min* and Nietzsche's *Ubermensch*, even though this is not a comparison Iqbal himself makes; or on his interpretation of the eternal recurrence. See Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, ed. M. Saeed Shaikh (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 2013), 90-92.
[79] Sander L. Gilman, Carole Blair, and David J. Parent, ed. trans., *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 250.

we have no way of getting at the thing itself through words, and in fact forget that what we take to be original or true is itself a lie or illusion, since to be truthful in society is "to use the usual metaphors": "It is this way with all of us concerning language: we believe that we know something about the things themselves when we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers; and yet we possess nothing but metaphors for things—metaphors which correspond in no way to the original entities."[80] If all language is inherently figurative, literature is that which exposes it as being so, since literary language draws attention to its own artificiality, its own falsehood.

Here, Nietzsche's critique of philosophy arises, since philosophical language orients itself unproblematically towards the quest for truth. This makes philosophy a deceptive mode of thinking, since one is doubly engaged in trying to discern underlying "truths" which are in fact contingent, with the use of language that claims to correspond directly to what it means to say, while it is in fact metaphorical. If literature in this way has the unique ability to call our attention to the failings of philosophy, Nietzsche calls for the newly "liberated intellect" to inhabit a world in which stability and certainty are constantly in question. Literature in its role as semblance can relate to truth by virtue of demonstrating the very unreachability of truth and its illusory quality, instead of the dissimulation of philosophy, which in its striving for truth disavows and yet enacts this semblance at the same time. This advocacy of literature as a corrective to philosophy (in that literature demonstrates the metaphorical nature of language and the interdependence of the concepts of truth and lies), however, seems to make of itself the very kind of truth claim it would destabilize: that literature is paradoxically seeking a kind of deeper truth to human relations that can be recognized once we do away with the conception of truth as philosophy would have it.

[80] Sander L. Gilman, Carole Blair, and David J. Parent, *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language*, 249.

With this detour into Nietzsche, I do not intend to suggest that Iqbal is pursuing the same project, or even that he would agree with Nietzsche's proposed way of thinking about the problem of truth. The critics cited earlier would agree that Iqbal valorizes "certainty" (*yaqīn*). However, it is worth noting that a hermeneutic Iqbal often uses when discussing Nietzsche is the paradox presented by the *shahada*, or declaration of faith: *lā ilāha illā allāh* (there is no god but god). In Sufi discourse, the phrase is invoked to illustrate the necessity of negation (*lā*, "no")—of the self, the world, all transitory attachments—in order to reach affirmation (*illā*, "except")—of the unity and transcendence of the divine. Nietzsche, as Iqbal characterizes him in the *Jāvīdnāma*, is in the station of *lā*, having risen above and beyond the spheres of the observable universe, but is unable to enter *illā*, and therefore must remain forever separated from heaven and the divine presence. This liminal position, however, is a powerful one, perhaps even more powerful than those who have fully realized *illā*, since it is only in the state of eternal longing-in-separation that the soul can strive for divine union. To map this onto the issue of truth and literary vs. philosophical expression, we might consider that Iqbal affirms the existence of a transcendent, divine, and ultimately knowable truth (Nietzsche would be more skeptical)—the *illā*—but that in order to access, or seek to access, this truth we must first pass through the *lā*, the refusal or deferral, embodied in literary language, of that truth. Only by inhabiting the paradox can we come to understand it.

The *Ghazal* as Method: Paradox, Ambiguity, and Textual Resistance

This brings us to a central argument of this dissertation concerning the *ghazal* itself, and what it means for Iqbal to write in this poetic form. The *ghazal* represents the traveling form of Islam *par excellence* and exists in dozens of languages, deeply associated with both popular and

esoteric Sufi mystical traditions. While the *ghazal*'s formal qualities and thematic parameters inextricably link it to its Islamic heritage, those same structures also resist religious identification. Much ink has been spilled on debating whether or not these poems are meant to be read as "divine" or "worldly," "metaphorical" or "literal," with the object of contention primarily the figure of the eroticized beloved. Such debates, however, miss the mark: the *ghazal*, I argue, advances its own poetic method through ambiguity and paradox in order to call into question the validity of the kinds of binary categories (universal and particular, aesthetic and political, traditional and modern, religious and secular) to which it is usually subjected.

The *ghazal*'s origins are usually indexed to the *naṣīb*, an "amatory elegy" constituting the introductory section of the pre-Islamic Arabic *qaṣīda* in which the poet, journeying in the desert, reflects on the ephemeral traces of the elusive beloved's previous departure from his location and reflects on the impossibility of ever finding her again. This conventional introit accompanied the Arabic *qaṣīda*, as well as contributing to the stand-alone love lyrics of the *ʿudhrī* poets, as it shifted into an urban, courtly genre of poetry flourishing in Abbasid Baghdad.[81] It began to appear as a defined form around the 11th century in Persian, although the extent to which the Persian *ghazal*, the incarnation that most concerns us here, developed from the Arabic tradition or from an indigenous Iranian folk poetry is unclear (most likely a mixture of the two).[82] As the Persian *ghazal* hit its stride in the 13th century, it developed a distinct set of formal and thematic features; as Franklin Lewis has observed, "The classical Persian ghazal as a prosodic form is more closely associated with specific topoi and motifs and with a certain rhetoric of presentation than any other Persian form, and therefore has a more sharply delimited horizon of expectations

[81] See R. Blachère, "Ghazal i. The Ghazal in Arabic Poetry," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0232
[82] See J. T. P. de Bruijn, "Ḡazal i. History," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/gazal-1-history

than perhaps any other Persian poetic convention."[83] This rhetoric of presentation includes formal elements such as consistent monorhyme through the *radīf* (end-rhyme) and *qāfiya* (penultimate rhyming word or sound) in both hemistiches of the opening line, or *maṭla^{c}*, and in the final hemistich of each line thereafter; a *maqta^{c}*, or closing verse, in which the poet includes their *takhalluṣ* or pen-name, usually as a direct addressee; and a generally shorter length, ideally around 7-9 total lines of verse. Elements of theme and imagery conventionally include the arrival of spring and the inhabitants of the vernal garden (rose, nightingale, tulip); wine-drinking and the figure of the wine-bearer (*sāqī*) in a convivial gathering of friends; and the experience, memory, or anticipation of an erotic encounter with a (grammatically neutral but conventionally male) beloved who delights in flirtatious cruelty, and the descriptions of that beloved's physical beauty, often with violent metaphors (dark curls of hair waiting to ensnare, arrow-like glances, etc.).The range of expressive possibilities for the *ghazal*, however, is theoretically endless: "While Bacchus and Eros may dominate the ghazal, it is important to note that they do not confine it…a single ghazal may contain abstract reflection, social commentary, pious exhortation, elegy, flattery of a royal patron, the poet's self-praise or self-deprecation, humor, or satire, as well as punning and other, more complex forms of word- play…In theory, ghazal poets can say anything—and in practice, at one time or another, they have."[84] Or, as Julie Scott Meisami has observed, "perhaps more than any other genre of Persian poetry, the *ghazal* is, paradoxically, both highly conventional and highly flexible."[85]

[83] Franklin D. Lewis, "Reading, Writing and Recitation: Sanāʾi and the Origins of the Persian Ghazal," Ph.D. diss., (University of Chicago, 1995), 12.
[84] Shamsur Rahman Faruqi and Frances W. Pritchett, "Lyric Poetry in Urdu: Ghazal and Nazm," *Journal of South Asian Literature* 19 no. 2 (1984): 113.
[85] Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 241.

The variety of poetic moods and topoi a *ghazal* can contain is made possible in part by its formal qualities; the end-rhyme necessitates that each verse come to a complete semantic stop. The impossibility of enjambment between verse-units means that each constituent verse can be read as a distinct, coherent statement that may or may not have any apparent relationship to the verses before or after it. When Sir William Jones first translated Hafiz into English in 1772, he coined the phrase "Orient pearls at random strung" in the course of his rendering, a phrase which has had remarkable staying power in discussions of the unity or disunity of the *ghazal* as a poem or as a sequence of separable verses.[86] Arberry strongly objected to Jones' "Orient pearls" formulation, partially on the basis of the mistranslation of Hafiz which inspired it: "Like orient pearls *at random* strung! An unfortunate, a most regrettable translator's gloss…Hafiz, who as using a most apt and happy (and indeed, most customary) image to describe his own meticulous craftsmanship, was by Jones misrepresented as confessing himself a casual, careless jeweller of words."[87] This questions has provoked wide-ranging and oppositional interpretations, from viewing the *ghazal* as an inherently holistic lyric to arguing that it is essentially atomistic and that the only possible unit of analysis is the individual verse (each "pearl," as it were), and has largely focused on Hafiz's *ghazal*s (often, the same one translated by Jones, the "Shirazi Turk" *ghazal*) as exemplary of either tendency. The *ghazal*'s unity problem—its supposed incoherence—was another of the factors in its colonial-era devaluation amidst accusations of decadence and meaninglessness. Even the 19th-century philologists who pursued a textual-critical approach in assembling critical editions of the "Eastern" poets conveyed an "attitude of

[86] For a detailed overview of the scholarly history of this question, see Lewis, *Reading, Writing, and Recitation,* 14-37.
[87] A. J. Arberry, "Orient pearls at random strung," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 11 no. 4 (1946): 703.

mental or logical superiority to the author whose literature was under investigation, such that, if the critic did not himself appreciate a given poem, it might be assumed that the reputation for beauty it enjoyed (either within the tradition itself or among the European Romantic poets who had translated versions of it) was either not fully deserved or must be viewed through the lens of a deficient 'oriental' concept of what poetry is."[88] In more recent decades, the *ghazal*'s "deficiencies" of unity have seen attempted remedies, such as that the form *is* essentially atomistic but that understanding and appreciating it as such partakes in its emic Perso-Arabic tradition;[89] or that the repeated rhyme itself creates a certain unity of sound or mood,[90] or as a function of the *ghazal*'s traditional performance context and the specificities of its intended audience.[91]

Attempting to solve the question of unity or disunity, however, bypasses engagement with why such a question has become so contested and salient in the first place. What is it about the *ghazal* that causes these kinds of demands to be made of it? One observation we *can* make is that whether or not a given *ghazal* is considered unified or disparate, sacred or profane, stable or unstable in meaning, are questions occasioned by the *ghazal* itself. As a form, it has so frustrated readers and critics precisely because it refuses the demand of straightforward categorization:

> ...the descriptive, erotic and bacchic imagery of the ghazal developed into a symbolic vocabulary capable of being read allegorically (and leading to an often mechanical interpretation of many poems, even if their original intent was not mystical, according to this "lexical code")…One result of such transformations is that the language of the ghazal

[88] Lewis, "Reading, Writing, and Recitation," 18.
[89] See Frances Pritchett, "Orient Pearls Unstrung: The Quest for Unity in the Ghazal," *Edebiyat* 4 no. 1 (1993):119-135.
[90] "The *ghazal* with its numerous images, which are apparently kept together only by the rhyme, reminds the reader often of a very finely woven garden carpet whose pictures, flowers, and arabesques should be seen against a larger background: each of them is meaningful, and yet the whole of its beauty is more than the sum of its parts." See Annemarie Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 36.
[91] See Lewis, "Reading, Writing, and Recitation."

> becomes increasingly polysemous, lending itself to varied, often contradictory readings simultaneously encoded into the poem.[92]

This polysemy and ambiguity has been identified in the art of *maᶜnī āfirīnī*, or meaning-creation, a central quality of the *ghazal* in the Indo-Persian tradition. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, in fact, names Iqbal as "our greatest modern *maᶜnī āfirīn* (meaning-maker) poet…writing as he did at a time when the Urdu poet was under constant pressure to abandon his native love of metaphor and work away from his tradition that valued abstractness and complexity."[93] The defining feature of *maᶜnī āfirīnī* is the creation of multiple, often contradictory interpretive possibilities on the level of the word, phrase, verse, or poem made manifest by text that performs its own productive instability of meaning. The *ghazal*'s verses may present a variety of referents, moods, and imagery, but they will always end on the same rhyme—which at the level of sound fulfills the reader or listener's expectation but on the level of meaning may well subvert how we expected the line leading up to it to get there. The figure of the beloved is not so much human in one verse and divine in the next, but always already bringing both interpretations into play. The *takhallus* of the final verse, in its second-person invocation, both is and is not the presumed author.

The *ghazal* not only presents these paradoxical orientations, but creates them at the level of form and meaning, setting forth the tools for its own interpretation and presenting us with a poetic method. An interpretive perspective that locates itself, as the *ghazal* does, within these tensions will be better able to assess how meaning inheres in a particular verse and poem. For Iqbal, I argue, the *ghazal*'s performances of ambiguity, paradox, and textual instability works as a method for negotiating between Islamic poetic tradition and the demands of colonial modernity, modeling how to think beyond binary terms of inquiry through subverting them.

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[92] Julie Scott Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Lyric Poetry: Orient Pearls* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 48-49.
[93] Faruqi, *How to Read Iqbal?*, 28-29.

These *ghazal* features, which will be analyzed through close readings of Iqbal's *ghazal*s in the following chapters, allow for a reconsideration of the importance of uncertainty for a thinker who has always been characterized as the epitome of certainty.

CHAPTER TWO

Remnants of Eternal Possibility: A *Ghazal* Between Tradition and Modernity

Introduction

In 1915, Iqbal's first Persian publication – a *masnavī*, or long narrative poem, entitled *Asrār-i Khudī* – was largely met with wild acclaim. When Reynold Nicholson translated *Asrār-i Khudī* into English as *Secrets of the Self: A Philosophical Poem* five years later, he noted in his introduction that "on its first appearance the *Asrar-i-Khudi* took by storm the younger generation of Indian Moslems…'Iqbal,' wrote one of them, 'has come amongst us as a Messiah and has stirred the dead with life.' It remains to be seen in what direction the awakened ones will march."[1]

One particularly polemical section of the *masnavī*, however, attracted such a severe backlash that Iqbal chose to omit the verses in question in subsequent editions. The 36-line philippic begins: *hushyār az Ḥāfiẓ-i ṣahbā-gusār / jām-ash az zahr-i ajal sarmāya-dār* ("Beware of Ḥāfiẓ the wine-drinker / his cup is rich with the poison of death").[2] Here, the wine in Ḥāfiẓ's cup is not the commonplace metaphor of spiritual intoxication and enlightenment in the Persianate Sufi poetic tradition, but poison, served up surreptitiously to weaken the drinker to the point of death. The outcry over Iqbal's indictment of one of the most enduring figures of classical Persian poetry and popular Sufism occasioned public denunciation[3] as well as personal letters from other major contemporary poets such as Akbar Allahabadi, who urged Iqbal to change his mind. In defending himself, Iqbal insists upon the literary, rather than historical or

[1] Nicholson, R. A. *Secrets of the Self: A Philosophical Poem* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1920), 25.
[2] Muhammad Iqbal, *Masnavī-yi Asrār-i Khudī* (Lahore: Union Steam Press, 1915), 66.
[3] For instance: Fīrūz al-dīn Aḥmad, *Lisān al-ghaib* (Amritsar: Steam Press, 1937).

political, basis for his denunciation: "what I wrote in *Asrār-i Khudī* was a critique based on literary intention (*aik liṭrairī naṣb al-ᶜain kī tanqīd thī*)." In another letter, Iqbal identifies the criticism as oriented around the question of art for art's sake: "if the literary principle (*liṭrairī uṣūl*) is that beauty is beauty, whether its consequences are useful or harmful, then Khwaja [Ḥāfiẓ] is one of the world's best poets."[4]

Upon closer inspection, however, the wall Iqbal seems to erect between between social and ethical benefit and rhetorical beauty shows signs of structural weakness. Aside from his own identification of the issue as inherently *literary*, the language used to denounce Ḥāfiẓ partakes of Ḥāfiẓ's own symbolic vocabulary and phrasing, to the extent that he incorporates verses from Ḥāfiẓ into the section.[5] The Urdu critic Yūsuf Ḥusain Khān argues that Iqbal has something of a "divided personality" (*us kī shakhsiyat-i taqsīm*) on the question of Ḥāfiẓ's influence: while Iqbal attempts here to set apart poetic art and socio-political engagement in terms of their harmful or beneficial effects on ethical improvement, the distinction is ultimately unsustainable in his own work, which freely integrates these supposedly oppositional tendencies. Even as he criticizes Ḥāfiẓ, Iqbal makes extensive and organic use of Ḥāfiẓ's style and rhetoric elsewhere in his poetic corpus; in particular, in his Persian ghazals.[6] Khān demonstrates the deep intertextual relationship of Iqbal's poetry to that of Ḥāfiẓ, and suggests that the force of Iqbal's attack stems from Iqbal's initial concern that his poetry would be seen as *too* similar to Ḥāfiẓ. The need to

[4] Quoted in Yūsuf Husain Khān, *Ḥāfiẓ Aur Iqbāl* (Delhi: Ghalib Academy, 1976), 13-15.
[5] Khān, *Ḥāfiẓ Aur Iqbāl*, 13. One is reminded of Paul de Man on Locke: "nothing could be more eloquent than this denunciation of eloquence." Paul de Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor," in *On Metaphor*, ed. Sheldon Sacks (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 13.
[6] Khān, *Ḥāfiẓ Aur Iqbāl*, 11. This point is also made, with specific reference to the ghazals of *Payām-i Mashriq* and *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*, in Taskīna Fāẓil, *Muṭālaᶜa-yi masnavī Asrār-i Khudī* (Srinagar: Iqbal Institute Kashmir University, 2000), 91-100. In her essay "Hafiz in the Poetry and Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal," Natalia Prigarina concludes by observing generally that "Iqbal found the beauty of Hafiz's style too dangerous for the 'common' reader, at the same time he couldn't help drawing inspiration from Hafiz." Natalia Prigarina, "Hafiz in the Poetry and Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal,"in *Urdu and Indo-Persian Thought, Poetics, and Belles Lettres*, ed. Alireza Korangy (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2017), 82-83.

demonstrate his own originality in his first publication on the scene, then, stemmed from this anxiety of influence, as Iqbal strove to position himself as an inheritor, not imitator, of Ḥāfiẓ for his own time and place.[7] If Iqbal's intention was to warn readers off Ḥāfiẓ's poisonous intoxicants—and by extension a model of quiescent, detached Sufism—in the service of propagating a new sort of literary engagement, we would hardly expect him to order up another round of vintage poetics. Yet this is precisely what he does.

From West-East to East-West

In 1923,[8] Iqbal followed up *Asrār-i Khudī* and its sequel *masnavī*, *Rumūz-i Bīkhudī* ("Secrets of Selflessness), with a collection of Persian poetry entitled *Payām-i Mashriq*, or "Message of/from the East." Iqbal explicitly intended *Payām-i Mashriq* to be a response one century later to Goethe's 1823 *West-östlicher Diwan*, which in turn constituted Goethe's response to an imagined world of the Islamic East characterized for the most part by Goethe reading of the Persian *ghazal*s of Ḥafiz. Iqbal had spent three years in Europe from 1905 to 1908, during which time he studied law and philosophy at Cambridge and gained a doctorate from Munich, with a dissertation on *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. He also studied German in Heidelberg, and developed a lasting interest in Goethe, as well as Nietzsche, Wordsworth, Milton, Bergson, and Hegel, frequent interlocutors across the genres of his writing (sections of *Payām-i Mashriq* present individual poems on these thinkers among others, as well

[7] Khān, *Ḥāfiẓ Aur Iqbāl*, 11, 26, 412, passim. Khān deviates from the usual insistence on the radical innovation of Iqbal by stating, "No poet says anything absolutely new. They give a new foundation to old things through their own arrangement and fashioning (*aslūb u ṭarz-i adā*). The human experience in thought and art is complicated (*pīchīda*) most of the time. Sometimes thought (*fikr*) prevails, and sometimes passion and ecstasy (*jazba u wajdān*). Sometimes imagination (*takhayyul*) is strongest, sometimes intellect (*taᶜaqqul*). A great artist takes all these elements of interior life (*nafsiyātī ᶜanāṣir*) and combines and assembles them" (26).

[8] This would be the third of Iqbal's Persian publications; see Table 1.

as an imagined conversation between Goethe and Jalāl al-dīn Rūmī in heaven) in both harmony and counterpoint with figures from the Islamic philosophical and poetic tradition.

There are three distinct sections of *Payām-i Mashriq*: an opening set of 163 *rubā'īyyāt* or quatrains entitled *Lāla-yi ṭūr* or "The Tulip of Sinai"; a concluding section of assorted poems that do not include *ghazal*s entitled *Naqsh-i firang* or "Images of the West"; and nestled in the middle, *Afkār* or "Reflections," which among occasional poems incorporates its own subsection of 45 *ghazal*s entitled *Mai-yi Bāqī*. The ghazal subsection, I argue, represents the most significant and complicated engagement of the work as it mediates tradition and modernity. To begin with, the *ghazal*s are centrally placed between the Omar Khayyam-inspired quatrains of *Lāla-yi ṭūr*, and the thematically and stylistically modern poems, dealing frequently with European individuals, of *Naqsh-i firang*. One could read this positioning as a chronological statement on the development of Persian poetic form and content, with the *rubā'īyyāt* and *ghazal* sections delimited as precursors to modern concerns, but the nesting of the *ghazal* subsection among the poems of *Afkar* and *Naqsh-i firang*, which largely break from classical forms and genres, suggests the *ghazal*s have something to say in concert with the sections explicitly treating issues of colonial modernity.

The layers of address in the dialogue of the *West-östlicher Diwan* and the *Payām-i Mashriq* are multiple and overlapping; as we shall examine shortly, the referents of the *ghazal*s in Iqbal's collection can shift at each reading in a similar way. *Mai-yi Bāqī* as a piece of the larger project can be read as:

1) A representation of the "East" responding to the cultural, historical, literary, and political incursions of the "West"
2) A conversation between two poets: Iqbal's response to the text of Goethe's Diwan itself
3) A conversation between three poets: Iqbal's response to Goethe's response to Ḥāfiẓ
4) A conversation between four poets: Iqbal's refiguring of his own understanding of Ḥāfiẓ in response to the Ḥāfiẓ imagined by Goethe

5) A tradition in conversation with itself and with its reflection in the eyes of an other: Iqbal's ghazals both embracing and resisting Ḥāfiẓ as an exemplar of the Persianate Sufi tradition, and as Goethe's imagined representative of Islamic tradition.

While all these layers are sustained by the text simultaneously, I will focus on the last two, since, for Iqbal, I argue that the ghazal form constitutes a unique site for holding in tension paradoxical or contradictory possibilities between the demands of tradition and the cultivation of a modern Muslim subjectivity.

The *ghazal*s of *Mai-yi Bāqī* help us to think through the apparent contradiction raised by Iqbal's initial criticism of Ḥāfiẓ in *Asrār-i Kẖudī*. If he excoriates Ḥāfiẓ for his poisonous wine, why would Iqbal write a series of 45 such ghazals, which partake in the very style of symbolic imagery he warns the reader against? The first key point here is one of genre. *Asrār-i Kẖudī* is a *masnavī*, and as such is structured by narrative progression, explanation, and didacticism. Abd al-Shakur Ahsan notes in his analysis of Iqbal's Persian poetry that "the ghazal is different from the rest of the types of poetic speech (*sukẖan*) because it does not have a logical progression (*manṭiqī tasalsul*) or a coherence of meaning (*maᶜnavī rabt*) that for instance is found in the *masnavī*."[9] The *ghazal* as a lyric form distinct from a narrative one allows a kind of reflexivity and receptiveness towards the tradition of Sufi poetry it exemplifies, since its strict rules of engagement in terms of formal structure, rhyme, and parameters of thematic and rhetorical elements bind the poet to the tradition and its expectations. Iqbal's critique of Ḥāfiẓ notwithstanding, Ahsan argues that "the form of these ghazals mirrors this truth, that in Iqbal's

[9] ᶜAbd al-shakūr Aḥsan, *Iqbāl kī fārsī shāᶜirī kā tanqīdī jā'iza*, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1977, 2000), 88. For more on the *ghazal* vs. the *masnavī*, see Chapter 4. Ahsan goes on to identify the qualities of the *ghazal* as we have seen other Urdu critics do—lauding it for its ability to disclose interiority: ")…[in the ghazal], the poet's thought, poured out from the fire of passion, emerges, and thought and feeling are combined in a heart-ravishing way…that is not possible in other forms…the ghazals of Payam-i Mashriq are living proof of this truth, that in the hands of a great artist—to whatever extent they claim to distance themselves from the art of poetry—profound and soaring thoughts are poured into a lyrical mold with remarkable success; and weighty truths, through the ghazal's subtle language, imagination, and fresh voice, reveal themselves in their full meaning in the hearts of readers" (88).

view Ḥāfiẓ was a great artist and his lyrical forms were a portfolio of bewitching beauty and impressions…Allama [Iqbal] creates in these ghazals this very blossoming and gracefulness, this very harmony of pleasure and style of contentedness, which is throughout Ḥāfiẓ's speech."[10] Indeed, the *ghazal*s in this collection closely resemble those of Ḥāfiẓ, with a certain number meeting the technical requirements for *istiqbāl* poems, or responses to Ḥafizian *ghazal*s in the same meter and rhyme scheme.[11] Overall, the ghazals in this collection partake in the stylistic, rhetorical, and thematic dynamics of the Persian classical tradition, with a receptive and regenerative attitude towards it. Poetry in this dialogic mode, as Paul Losensky has argued, is "one of the best forums for studying how the poet interprets and recreates the literary tradition [as] the responding poet actively attempts to remake the earlier poem in a new voice for a new time."[12]

Secondly, the title itself—*Mai-yi Bāqī*—situates this *ghazal* collection firmly in the realm of the classical master. The titular reference is to a line in one of Ḥāfiẓ's most well-known *ghazal*s, "*bi-dih sāqī mai-yi bāqī*" or "Saqi [cupbearer], pour the remaining wine."[13] This remaining (*bāqī*) can be interpreted to mean the last drops or dregs of wine remaining in the jug, or the wine of pre-eternal subsistence or "remaining" in union with the divine. As a title, *Mai-yi Bāqī* can indicate either (or simultaneously) that these *ghazal*s are but the dross left over from Ḥāfiẓ, or a recapitulation of what can persist of the primordial wine handed down through the Persianate poetic tradition.

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[10] Aḥsan, *Iqbāl kī fārsī shāᶜirī kā tanqīdī jā'iza*, 86.
[11] See Stephan Popp, *Muhammad Iqbal's Romanticism of Power: A Post-Structural Approach to His Persian Lyrical Poetry* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2004).
[12] Paul Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1998), 100-01.
[13] For a discussion of the use of this symbolic phrase more generally in Iqbal and Ḥāfiẓ, see Khān, *Ḥāfiẓ Aur Iqbāl*, 317.

A salient feature of lyric poetry, as Jonathan Culler argues us in his 2015 *Theory of the Lyric*, is its epideictic discourse—its attempt to tell a truth about the world, of articulating certain values, in such a way that the poem is itself an event rather than a fictional representation of one. Lyric, Culler argues, always involves a tension between what he terms "ritualistic" and "fictional" elements, or "between formal elements that provide meaning and structure and serve as instructions for performance and those that work to represent character or event."[14] Iqbal's *ghazal*s in *Payam-i Mashriq*, as I will show through a close reading of a characteristic *ghazal*, exemplify this tension through the language of potentiality and becoming, mediated through poetic convention and metaphorical associations from the Persianate Sufi poetic tradition.

A *Ghazal* in Action

In the following translations and close readings of *ghazal* #16 from *Mai-yi Bāqī*,[15] I do not intend to put forward a stable interpretation of the often Sufi-inflected valences of key words and metaphorical pairings. For instance, one interpretation that immediately presents itself in these *ghazal*, based in historical context, is that of a call for the development of a new political subjectivity through anti-imperial resistance. Such a reading, however (as is usually put forward for much of Iqbal's Urdu and Persian poetry), must also ask of itself the reasons for its supposed efficacy, whether the poem does in fact succeed at cultivating such a sensibility, and why it is presented in the lyric *ghazal* mode to begin with. The Persianate poetic art of *maᶜanī-āfrīnī* or

[14] Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 7.
[15] To date, the *ghazal*s of "*Mai-yi Bāqī*" have only been translated into English once in the nearly a century since their publication. See M. Hadi Hussain, *A Message from the East: A Translation of Iqbal's Payam-i Mashriq into English Verse* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1977). Translations of isolated verses occur in Stephan Popp, *Muhammad Iqbal's Romanticism of Power: A Post-Structural Approach to His Persian Lyrical Poetry* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2004), and a German translation is presented in Annemarie Schimmel, *Botschaft des Ostens: als Antwort auf Goethes West-östlichen Divan* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963). While *Payam-i Mashriq* has been translated several times, the *ghazal* section is left out of almost all editions due to its perceived difficulty for an audience unfamiliar with the web of intertextual references it weaves.

"meaning-creation" in which Iqbal excelled rests on crafting verses that elicit multiple meanings at once, uncertainties producing meanings that can enrich and complement one another as often as they may contradict or form a logical paradox. Particularly in the case of the various metalepses of this *ghazal*, the instability of the referent(s) itself is what sounds their resonances through the Sufi poetic tradition and opens up proliferating levels of interpretation, be they mystical, philosophical, political, historical, or lyrical, which any given line may or may not engage or may engage all at once.

The proliferating imagery of this *ghazal*, with each of its eight constituent verses presenting a new set of metaphors with deep intertextual roots, is almost disorienting. The apostrophic, second-person imperative rhyming refrain of *āmūz*—"learn!"—demands that we identify who is being addressed, but when the referent shifts with every new couplet, the *ghazal* both frustrates this impulse and, in so doing, presents a variety of possibilities for who this "you" might be that can be read simultaneously. These potential referents range widely—someone praying with the ritual instruments of idolatry; the morning breeze; a dewdrop on a tulip; a thorn on a rose; a flower plucked from the garden; well-aged wine; a captive bird; a tavern regular—but are all drawn from within the parameters of the traditional *ghazal* universe. As we will see, the *ghazal*'s method turns here on the paradox sustained in the act of the command, which occupies a tense, liminal position between the call for transformation and the acknowledgement of the failure of that call at the moment it is made, staging a performance of a fraught negotiation between the inheritances of poetic tradition and their uncertain futures.

Ghazal #16

1 *dāna-yi sabḥa ba zunnār kashīdan āmūz*
gar nigāh-i tu du-bīn ast na-dīdan āmūz

Learn to string the prayer bead

on the sacred thread.
If your sight's two-seeing,
learn to unsee.

2 *pā zi khalvat kada-yi ghuncha birūn zan chū shamīm*
bā nasīm-i saḥar āmīz va vazīdan āmūz

Set foot outside the bud's
secluded place. Like perfume,
diffuse into the morning breeze
and learn to breathe.

3 *āfrīdand agar shabnam-i bī-māya tu rā*
khīz va bar dāgh-i dil-i lāla chakīdan āmūz

If you were created
worthless dew, rise—
and on the tulip's scarred heart
learn to drop.

4 *agar-at khār-i gul-i tāza rasī sākhta-and*
pās-i nāmūs-i chaman dār va khalīdan āmūz

If you were formed
a fresh-blooming rose's thorn,
protect the garden's honor:
learn to prick.

5 *bāghbān gar zi khiyābān-i tu bar-kand tu rā*
ṣifat-i sabza digar bāra damīdan āmūz

If the gardener uproots
you from your flowerbed,
once more, verdantly,
learn to blossom.

6 *tā tu sūzanda-tar va talkh-tar āyī bīrūn*
ʿuzlat-i khum-kada'ī gīr va rasīdan āmūz

So that you come out
more burning, bitter still,
withdraw into the cask
and learn to age.

7 *tā kujā dar tah-i bāl-i digarān mī bāshī*
dar havā-yi chaman āzāda parīdan āmūz

How far will you remain
enfolded in others' wings?
In the air of the garden
learn to fly free.

8 *dar-i but-<u>kh</u>āna zad-am mu<u>gh</u>-bachagān-am guftand*
ātishī dar ḥaram afrūz va tapīdan āmūz

I knocked on the door of the tavern.
The young Magi said to me:
light a fire in the sanctuary,
learn to flare hot.

The opening couplet, or *maṭlaᶜ*, introduces the first instances of a vast assortment of contrasting conceptual pairs[16] that recur in each of the remaining verses of the *ghazal*:

1 *dāna-yi sabḥa ba zunnār kashīdan āmūz*
gar nigāh-i tu du-bīn ast na-dīdan āmūz

Learn to string the prayer bead
on the sacred thread.
If your sight's two-seeing,
learn to unsee.

Islamic prayer beads (*tasbīḥ*) are typically set in poetical opposition to the *zunnar* of infidelity, which can refer either to the sacred thread of Brahmanical Hinduism or to the waist-belt or cord of Eastern Christianity.[17] In Persianate poetic traditions, the prayer beads are associated with the excesses of legalistic piety; while the *zunnar* represented the opposite extreme of idolatrous

[16] Annemarie Schimmel notes Iqbal's "tendency to think in polar conceptual pairs" ("*Iqbals Neigung zum Denken in polaren Begriffspaaren*") in her introduction to her translation of *Payam-i Mashriq*. Schimmel, *Botschaft des Ostens*, xxi-xxii.

[17] See Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English dictionary, including the Arabic words and phrases to be met with in Persian literature* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1892), 623. Given Iqbal's Indic context and frequent references to Hindu tradition, the Christian symbol is unlikely the primary referent here, but a well-known pairing with the Christian *zunnar* occurs in the story of Shaikh Samᶜān in Farīd al-dīn ᶜAṭṭār's *Manṭiq al-ṭair*:
guft tasbīḥ-am biufkandam zi dast / tā tawānam bar miyān zunnar bast
He said: "I fling the beads away from me; / The Christian's belt is my sole sanctuary"
As translated in Farīd al-dīn ᶜAṭṭār, *The Conference of the Birds,* trans. Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis (London, New York: Penguin, 1984), 61.

Hindu priests, the two items of religious practice are frequently juxtaposed to critique outwards shows of religiosity and emphasis on the material over the spiritual in both traditions. In Sufi-inflected verse, the metonymic *zunnar* also connotes infidelity that, in fact, indicates the pursuit of the transcendent unity underlying all religious traditions merely appearing as different.[18] This couplet, however, takes things a step further—it does not describe the *tasbīḥ* as such but rather one of its constituent beads (*dāna-yi sabḥa*), which the addressee must learn to thread onto the *zunnar*. In order to complete this as-yet-unfulfilled action (the second-person present imperative *āmūz*, or "learn!"), the rosary would have to be broken, its beads scattered, as well as the *zunnar* untied from the body, for recombination into a new form.

The second hemistich draws out these concepts of religious non-delimitation with a remarkable meditation on duality, packing dense intertextual resonances with Sufi apophatic writings in condensed and pithy wordplay. Three different words for sight or seeing—*nigāh*, look/glance; *-bīn*, a suffix for seeing/discerning; *dīdan*, the infinitive "to see"— develop the vision of the addressee (here specified as *tu*, singular "you") from *dū-bīn* or two-seeing to the final command to learn *na-dīdan*, not to see or no-seeing. The pairing of *dū-bīn* with *na-dīdan* is striking, since the expected juxtaposition of two-ness would be with one-ness, duality with unity, a poetic one-two punch well attested in mystically inclined verse of the Persianate world.[19] Instead, two-ness pairs with nothingness: rather than learning to discern unity from duality, the

[18] See Annemarie Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 117-19, *inter alia*.

[19] For instance, two (to continue the theme) of Iqbal's most important interlocutors tackle the opposition thusly:
usē kaun dekh saktā kih yagānah hai woh yaktā / jo dū'ī kī bū bhī hotī to kahīṇ do chār hotā
Who could have seen him?
That oneness is one.
If there were any trace of twoness,
somewhere the two of us would have met. (Ghālib)
ān yakī'ī zān sū-yi waṣf-ast wa ḥāl / juz dū'ī n-āyad ba maidān-i maqāl
That unity is beyond description and condition / only duality comes into the arena of speech. (Rūmī)

addressee is told to learn not to see at all. This mode of negation, along with the visual semantic micro-field of the hemistich, echoes similar dynamics in the writings of Ibn ᶜArabī, particularly in the paradoxical infinite regress that occurs as a consequence of affirming the unity of the divine (*tawḥīd*): "As long as anything other than the Essence is envisaged, the term *tauḥīd* requires an affirmation of Oneness, and affirmation in turn demands duality: one who affirms and something affirmed."[20] By contrasting two-seeing with *un*-seeing instead of one-seeing, the verse subverts the expectation of a duality-unity pairing by introducing nothingness into the dialectic, rather than re-duplicating the act of differentiation by contrasting two with one.

2 *pā zi <u>kh</u>alvat kada-yi <u>gh</u>uncha birūn zan chū shamīm*
bā nasīm-i saḥar āmīz va vazīdan āmūz

Set foot outside the bud's
secluded place. Like perfume,
diffuse into the morning breeze
and learn to breathe.

If the first couplet introduced imagery from the realms of theology and philosophy, the second plants us directly into the abundant garden of the Persian poetic tradition. Usually evocative of the gardens of paradise described in the Qur'ān, the garden serves as fertile ground for an almost endless array of symbols from the natural world, frequently paired in a lover-beloved relationship with multiple layers of inversion and multivalent deployments of that relationship.[21] For our purposes in looking closely at this couplet and for the next five couplets of this *ghazal*, the semantic field contains: the rose (*gul*), rosebud (*<u>gh</u>uncha*), thorn (*<u>kh</u>ār*), to prick (*<u>kh</u>alīdan*),

[20] William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989), 356. Interestingly, for Ibn ᶜArabī seeing double represents all-encompassing rather than limited sight. "As the insight of the spiritual traveler is gradually illuminated by the light of faith and unveiling, he comes to see God from various perspectives, all of which go back to incomparability or similarity. On every level, he sees God as one or the other; rarely does he see Him as both. Only the perfect gnostics transcend the limitations of vision and see God with every eye and in every object of vision. When the gnostic attains this highest station, he deserves to be called the 'Possessor of the Two Eyes' (*dhu'l-'aynayn*)" (Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 361-62).
[21] For an exhaustive list of examples of garden imagery in Persian poetry, see Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 188-202.

tulip (*lāla*) and its blackened center (*dāgh*), dew (*shabnam*), to trickle or drop (*chakīdan*), breeze (*nasīm*), to blow (v*azīdan*), fragrance (*shamīm*), to mix (*āmīkhtan*), gardener (*bāghbān*), flowerbed (*khiyābān*), to cut or uproot (*bar kardan*), greenery (*sabza*), to bloom (*damīdan*), birds, suggested metonymically by wings (*bāl*) and flying (*parīdan*), air or wind (*havā*, also "desire"), and of course the garden itself (*chaman*).

The couplet's first hemistich presents images of stillness, isolation, and inaction: *khalvat-kada* and *ghuncha*, a place of seclusion and the rosebud. *Khalva* is a term with a long history of use across Islamic traditions; it specifically intimates the voluntary retreat undertaken by the Sufi adept incorporating meditation and spiritual exercises, and constitutes a fundamental principle of the practice of *zuhd* or asceticism.[22] The concept will reappear in the sixth couplet of our *ghazal* as *ʿuzla*, a common synonym, but with a very different assessment of its value. *Khalva* frequently appears in a conceptual pairing with *jalva*, brilliance, unveiling, and manifestation.[23] While *jalva* is not mentioned specifically, the couplet implies its co-presence with *khalva* both through the density of established associations with the word as well as through the contrasting imagery in the second hemistich of opening, spreading, and outward motion.

The simile *chū shamīm*, like perfume, prepares us for the spilling-over into the second hemistich—the mixing of fragrance with the blowing of the morning breeze. This breeze (*nasīm-i saḥar*) also marks an image with a well-established use from the earliest pre-Islamic poetry in which the dawn wind acts as a messenger from the lover to the absent beloved, or conversely, is asked to bring news of the beloved to the lover, who pines in separation. The role of the

[22] Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2000), 314-17.
[23] For a discussion of *khalwa* and *jalva* in Iqbal generally, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1989), 105-09. For Ibn ʿArabī, *jalva* and its derived forms (such as *tajallī*) indicate the self-disclosure of the divine entity. See William Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabi's Cosmology* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998), and Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 19.

ghuncha, bud, can be either that of the beloved folded away from the lover's sight whom the breeze coaxes into unfurling and in so doing releasing fragrance (as in Ḥāfiẓ's line "The rose of your desire will lift its veil / the moment you can serve it like the wind of dawn"[24]); or the lover, anxiously awaiting the news of the beloved the breeze will bring (as in another line also from Ḥāfiẓ, "Say to the rosebud, "Don't despair that you are tightly folded, / for the dawn wind's breath will bring you life"[25]).

Iqbal may well have had these verses in mind, but this couplet presents a wholly different conception of the relationships within the metaphorical pairings as well as how they relate to the addressee. To begin with, the implied "you" of address is given three imperatives: to (as fragrance) abandon the secluded place of the rosebud, to set foot outside (*pā…birūn zan*) in order to mingle with the breeze (*bā nasīm-i saḥar āmīz*) and learn to blow (v*azīdan āmūz*), the consonance of "z" sounds following long vowels aurally tying these actions together. The action flows in at least two directions—fragrance escaping the bud before it's opened, rather than waiting for the breeze to open it, and diffusing into the breeze and learning to blow, effecting its own release from the bud (and therefore the precondition of the bud's blossoming) in the first place.[26]

3 *āfrīdand agar shabnam-i bī-māya tu rā*
khīz va bar dāgh-i dil-i lāla chakīdan āmūz

If you were created

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[24] *gul-i murād-i tu āngah niqāb bu-gshāyad / kih khidmat-ash chū nasīm-i saḥar tawānī kard*. Persian text and translation in Elizabeth Gray, *The Green Sea of Heaven: Fifty ghazals from the Diwan of Hafiz* (Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 1995), 91, 157, with her explanatory note: "The dawn wind serves the rose, the object of its desire, and in response the rose drops the green of its outer bud and blossoms. The lover serves his beloved in this way, as does the disciple his master."

[25] *ghuncha gū tang-dil az kār-i firū-basta ma-bāsh / k-az dam-i subḥ madad yābī wa infās-i nasīm*. Gray, *The Green Sea of Heaven*, 135.

[26] Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī's commentary for this verse privileges theological interpretation: "This means: O Muslim! Come out from your chamber and illuminate the world with the message of Islam. The official duty of the Muslim is this: that he causes its benefits to reach people of learning and, having increased the benefit to the world from Islam, requires no more than this."Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī, *Sharḥ Payām-i mashriq* (ᶜIshrat Publishing House, Lahore: 1961).

worthless dew, rise—
and on the tulip's scarred heart[27]
learn to drop.

The third couplet continues the overall motif of contrasting inward/outward, inaction/action movement that pervades this *ghazal*, but here we see a poetic reversal. The dewdrop (*shabnam*) must first rise in order to learn to fall (or drip, *chakīdan*) onto the tulip (*lāla*), the descent actualizing the ascent. The very first word of this couplet, however, demands attention— *āfrīdan*, or "to create," carries a strong connotation of divine Creation, as well as meaning-creation (*maᶜanī-āfrīnī*) in the poetic tradition. The active third-person plural conjugation, "they created," is conventionally equivalent to the passive voice. We could read the agent of creation of the dew as either a divine entity, an impersonal fate in which agency is assigned without a specific actor behind it, or the Persianate lyrical tradition itself, with the implied "they" referring to the centuries' worth of poets who have previously engaged with this metaphor.

If "you" (*tu*, the first instance of the second-person singular pronoun) are created as worthless or indigent[28] dew, then, the second hemistich insists, you must rise (*khīz*) and learn to drop onto the scarred heart of the tulip, referring to the center of the red flower that in its blackness appears metaphorically as a burn-mark or *dāgh*. The tulip, with its flame-like appearance, is an important image in Iqbal's oeuvre, at times appearing with Moses and the burning bush, and often understood by critics as a symbol for his philosophy of the self: "…the tulip owes its splendor not to an outside source but to the 'scar' inside its heart, its glow being

[27] For a description of the symbol of the tulip, see Khān, *Ḥāfiẓ Aur Iqbāl*, 307-09; Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 131.
[28] *Māya* is a multivalent word that can also connote value, origin, essence, or capital. See Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, 1148.

indigenous to it as befits a flower with a *khudi* [selfhood] of its own."[29] Drawing from the lyric tradition, however, the shape and color of tulips can additionally suggest a cup of wine, which in its redness, warmth, and strong taste is in turn also likened to fire; in this reading, dew gathering in the tulip's "cup" can become burning drops of fiery wine. In yet another instantiation of these richly variant metaphors, dew on garden flowers can be tears shed by the lover (often represented by the nightingale). This line supports simultaneous, proliferating interpretations of the metaphorical tulip/dew relation, as well as the relation between the "you" who is said to be created as that dew and the agent of that creation—a mark of skillful *maᶜanī-āfrīnī*. The action of dew rising and falling on the tulip takes place between the verbs at either end of the couplet, the past "created" and the present imperatives "rise" and "learn." The commanding voice behind these imperatives seems to suggest that the dew has neither risen nor learned to fall, but that the act of doing so will take it beyond its "worthless" creation. Whether this generative act for the dew in the role of addressee is an activation of unrealized potential in or a complete transformation of the original divine creative act, the established metaphors of the poetic tradition, or its instantiation in this poem itself, the line continually reenacts its own creative power at every reading.

4 *agar-at <u>kh</u>ār-i gul-i tāza rasī sā<u>kh</u>ta-and*
pās-i nāmūs-i chaman dār va <u>kh</u>alīdan āmūz

If you were formed
a fresh-blooming rose's thorn,
protect the garden's honor:
learn to prick.[30]

[29] Mustansir Mir, *Tulip in the Desert: A Selection of the Poetry of Muhammad Iqbal* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 7.
[30] Chishtī also gives a rather dull religious interpretation to this line: "Whether rich or poor, all must fulfill their religious duty; on the day of judgment God will not ask the poor man why he did not complete hajj." Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī, *Sharḥ Payām-i mashriq*.

The fourth couplet continues the language of challenge towards creation, invoking a re-creative act in which the thorn can actualize its creative purpose by learning to prick. The implied recipient of this action is someone who attempts to pluck the rose from the garden—presumably the gardener, setting the scene for their appearance in the following couplet. The rose and the thorn in the Persianate poetic tradition, like the other conceptual pairings that have arisen in this *ghazal* so far, often signify the fusion of oppositional attributes in union with the divine beloved: "For Jalāl-al-Dīn Rūmī, the garden becomes a symbol of divine beauty which both displays and conceals the eternal beauty of the archetypal gardener, God. The mystical lover and his divine beloved are like a rose and its thorn. When the lover becomes one with the beloved, the rose becomes one with the thorn and all duality is resolved."[31] In this verse, however, the thorn develops a separate agentive identity—while it may have been created already linked to the rose (the *iẓāfa* construction grammatically preventing us from reading either *khār* or *gul* separately from one another), the imperatives "protect" (*pās… dār*) and "learn to prick" (*khalīdan āmūz*) are addressed to the "you" of the thorn alone. Rather than the thorn serving the rose as a means to union with it, the union is pre-existing but must be jealously guarded from those who would disrupt it. Paradoxically, the line calls for the thorn to learn to use its distinctive attribute from the rose (the ability to prick) as an act of service in order to preserve its union, which would eliminate this very distinction.[32] If the implied gardener is read as the deity, however, this presents an unexpected state of affairs: why would they attempt to

[31] William L. Hanaway, Jr., "*bāgh iii"* in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bag-iii

[32] The thorn and its constant pricking elsewhere in Iqbal's poetry are related to the figure of Iblīs, or Satan, who imparts to humankind their creative capacity by effecting the expulsion from paradise; in one of Iqbal's well-known Urdu poems, Iblīs' poetic riposte to Jibrīl (Gabriel) consists of comparing himself to a thorn: "Whose blood colored the story of Adam? / I rankle in God's heart like a thorn" (*qiṣṣa-yi ādam kō rangīn kar gayā kis kā lahū / maiṇ khaṭaktā hūṇ dil-i yazdān meṇ kāṇṭē kī taraḥ*), from *Bāl-i Jibrīl*.

disrupt the kind of primordial union the rose and thorn were created to enjoy? The next line takes the action farther still:

5 *bāghbān gar zi khiyābān-i tu bar-kand tu rā*
ṣifat-i sabza digar bāra damīdan āmūz

If the gardener uproots
you from your flowerbed,
once more, verdantly,
learn to blossom.

In the fifth couplet, the gardener (*bāghbān*), and their divisive action, is introduced from the implication of the previous line. The uprooting of the rosebush, personified as the addressee, and their subsequent separation from the garden, is immediately reminiscent of the reed or *nāy* from the opening lines of Rūmī's *Masnavī*: cut from its reed-bed and formed into a flute, the reed sings of separation from the union of pre-eternity, rending the hearts of all who hear it.[33] The closing command of the verse, however, as in the previous verses, subverts the expectation of a lament and exhorts the addressee to learn to grow or blossom (*damīdan āmūz*) another time (*digar bāra*) with a new—or perhaps regenerated—quality of greenness (*ṣifat-i sabza*). *Digar bāra*, once more/again, suggests that this post-pruning growth is not radically new, but a return to or re-awakening of an original quality. *Sabza* is a multivalent term that can indicate general verdure or grass/weeds, so the second hemistich could be read either as urging a self-initiated

[33] "Listen
as this reed
pipes its plaint
unfolds its tale
of separations:
Cut from my reedy bed,
my crying
ever since
makes men and women
weep"
Translated in Franklin Lewis, *Rumi – Past and Present, East and West: The Life, Teaching, and Poetry of Jalal al-Din Rumi* (London: Oneworld, 2008), 271. See also Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 300.

rebirth in the original floral form, or of abandoning the garden altogether to take root elsewhere as a weed. The use of the word *ṣifat* is suggestive, reflecting the use of the word to describe the attributes of the divine and by extension the divine names, which in Ibn ᶜArabī's cosmological drama were willed into existence by the Real after they complained of the tension inherent in their desire for instantiation.[34] This possible valence of separation from primordial union—and the imperative for its newly conceptualized re-invocation—continues to be taken up in the next couplet, which also introduces a new set of symbolic images from the mystically inclined Arabo-Persianate poetic tradition.

6 *tā tu sūzanda-tar va talkh-tar āyī bīrūn*
ᶜuzlat-i khum-kada'ī gīr va rasīdan āmūz

So that you come out
more burning, bitter still,
withdraw into the cask
and learn to age.

Wine and intoxication, as discussed, are cornerstone tropes of lyrical expression from pre-Islamic poetry, absorbed into the Sufi tradition and continually used in *ghazal* poetry to the present day. In the first hemistich of the sixth couplet, no word for wine is used, but the identification of the addressee with wine is metonymically invoked through the use of qualities commonly associated with the taste of good, strong wine: burning (*sūzanda*, hence the frequent wine : fire relation) and bitterness (*talkh*). It's not enough, however, that the wine just be burning and bitter—in order for "you" to emerge (*āyī bīrūn*) even *more* so (the *–tar* suffix of comparison), the command is to retreat or withdraw into the wine-cask or jug[35] and learn to age,

[34] See Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 5 and Michael Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 71.
[35] The *khum-kada* could be read as a wine-cellar or even a tavern, but *khum* may also refer to the wine-jar or cask itself (see Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, 474-75). Particularly with the burning adjective of the first hemistich, I read this as referring to the cask in the fermentation process. I am indebted to Jane Mikkelson for suggesting this interpretation: "In premodern oenology, wine would have been poured into a clay

mature, or ripen (literally, to arrive, *rasīdan āmūz*). The concept of undertaking seclusion in the wine-cask, *ʿuzlat-i khum-kada'ī giriftan*, echoes the *khalvat* within the rosebud of the second verse, but here the inward/outward movement is reversed. While the second verse urged the addressee to burst from the rosebud into the wind like perfume, this verse encourages voluntary isolation and stillness as a prerequisite for developing improved vigor upon pouring forth. The closing *rasīdan āmūz* forms a clever pun in which the verb of forward motion is used in its alternative sense of maturing or ripening, paired with the present imperative "learn!" to suggest that this state of being has yet to arrive.

Introducing the trope of wine to the movement-quiescence dialectic that has so far characterized this *ghazal* may also obliquely reference the *mai-yi bāqī* of the collection's title and previous poetic instantiations, in Ḥāfiẓ and others, of the wine of pre-eternity drunk by souls at the moment of the primordial covenant. The potentialities sealed in the wine-cask of this verse can only flow out if the addressee remains within it to ferment; the subjunctive mood introduced by the opening particle *tā* and the closing present imperative refrain *āmūz* bracket the action in as-yet-unrealized time. This extra-temporal wine of *bāqī* or remaining, persistence—a state implied by the sealed cask—resonates with the qur'ānic story frequently re-told in Persianate poetry of the "banquet of *alast*," in which all souls were intoxicated with the pre-eternal wine of love. The ghostly presence of *baqā* in this verse invokes the other half of its conceptual pair—*fanā*, annihilation or passing away—as well:

> As a correlative pair of notions, in which fanā logically precedes baqā, it is applied to two levels of meaning, the passing away of human consciousness in the divine and the obliteration of imperfect qualities of the soul by substitution of new, divinely bestowed

cask and sealed tightly, then put over a fire and brought to a boil, then left to ferment. Hence, "*do-ātisha*" wine is doubly strong because it is put over fire twice."

> attributes…This non-existence, however, equals the state of original existence humanity possessed in the presence of God at the primordial covenant of *alast* prior to creation.[36]

The qur'ānic question-and-answer between the divinity: "Am I not your Lord?" (*alastu bi rabbikum*) and the souls' enthusiastic "yes!" (*balā*), has been subject to countless retellings in Sufi poetry,[37] not least in the *ghazals* of Ḥāfiẓ ("Last night I saw angels knock on the tavern door. / They kneaded the clay of Adam and molded it into a cup")[38] and foundationally in the celebrated Arabic wine-ode or *khamriyya* of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, in which the poet "…praises a wine in existence before creation. Clearly, then, the first intoxication occurs in pre-eternity, where humanity bore witness before God. …This blissful state is now lost, while the beloved is veiled by creation. None of the miraculous wine is left to drink; only its fragrance lingers. But this is enough for those who seek it; even its mention…will intoxicate the spiritually sensitive while arousing others who have forgotten its very existence."[39]

Returning to the verse of Iqbal's *ghazal* in question, the burning and bitterness that give the wine its uniquely intoxicating flavor are qualities that can only be achieved by remaining within the cask to ferment. The wine is, perhaps, already being enjoyed by drinkers in the existent world, but to make itself into an even more powerful vintage (*sūzanda-tar*, *talkh-tar*) it

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[36] G. Böwering, "*Baqā wa Fanā*," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/baqa-wa-fana-sufi-term-signifying-subsistence-and-passing-away.

[37] Qur'ān 7:172; for a examples of its retellings in Persianate poetry, see Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 84-85.

[38] *dūsh dīdam kih malāyik dar-i mai-khāna zadand / gil-i ādam bisirishtand wa ba paimāna zadand*. Translated in Gray, *Green Sea of Heaven*, 99. In his introduction to this same work, Daryush Shayegan notes concerning this verse that "If then the angels have mixed the clay of man with the wine of mercy, man carries within himself the quintessence of that first drunkenness and, drinking from the cup in the tavern of the Magi, he does not but receive from the cup-bearer what was destined for him from the beginning" (24-25).

[39] Th. Emil Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al- Fāriḍ, His Verse, and His Shrine* (Cairo, New York: The American University of Cairo Press, 2001), 11. Homerin's translation of the opening verse of the *khamriyya* is as follows:

"We drank in memory of the beloved
a wine—
we were drunk with it
before creation of the vine."

sharibnā ʿalā dhikri-l-ḥabībi mudamata / sakirnā bihā min qabli an yukhlaqa-l-karmu

must paradoxically learn to return, seclude itself, and mature in the cask of pre-eternity, so that when it emerges it has the ability in turn to bring drinkers back to the state of *alast*.

7 *tā kujā dar tah-i bāl-i digarān mī bāshī*
dar havā-yi chaman āzāda parīdan āmūz

How far will you remain
enfolded in others' wings?
In the air of the garden
learn to fly free.

The seventh couplet repeats the opening *tā* of line 6, but reworks it into a question: *tā kujā*, "how far?" or "how long?" (literally, "until where?") will the addressee, here appearing as a bird, stay underneath others' wings? The dynamic contrast of inward and outward motion, enclosure and escape, is again repeated with the description of the addressee's current state in the first hemistich leading to the imperative in the second hemistich to learn to fly freely (*parīdan āmūz*) in the garden's air or breeze.

8 *dar-i but-<u>kh</u>āna zad-am mu<u>gh</u>-bachagān-am guftand*
ātishī dar ḥaram afrūz va tapīdan āmūz

I knocked on the door of the tavern.
The young Magi said to me:
light a fire in the sanctuary,
learn to flare hot.

Finally, in the eighth couplet of the *ghazal*, an "I" emerges—whether this persona is the same one that has been delivering imperatives in the previous seven verses or a new speaker is undetermined. The introduction of another voice in the last line of a *ghazal* is traditionally expected through the insertion of a poet's pen-name or *ta<u>kh</u>allus*; in this case, we do not hear from an "Iqbal" but from the "I" of the first hemistich and then the reported speech of the young Zoroastrian tavern-keepers (*mu<u>gh</u>-bachagān*) in the second and final hemistich, who now issue

the "I"-voice imperatives in a twist of the structure we've been brought to anticipate throughout the preceding lines of the *ghazal*.[40] It is as though the speaker-self takes the place of the "you" of address, and the *mugh-bachagān* assume the role of the voice behind the previous imperatives.

This verse plays upon the linked imagery of idolatry and intoxication: *but-khāna* connotes both a temple for idol-worshipping and a tavern,[41] and the *mugh-bachagān* who answer the speaker's knock describe young Zoroastrians who figure in the Persianate poetic world as both idolaters (crucially, fire-worshippers) and as the owners of wine-houses/cup-bearers.[42] As we have seen in lines 3 and 6, wine is also lyrically related to fire, both for its "burning" taste and the resulting intoxication, which casts the drinker into the all-consuming blaze of transcendent love. This is true as well of the imagery of idol-worship (*but-parastī*), in which the worship of idols acts as a metaphor for both the allure of the beloved (frequently called *but* or *ṣanam* in Arabic), so overpowering that it causes the lover to abandon the most fundamental aspect of Islamic belief, and for this action itself, which in disregarding of the strictures of organized religion leads the lover to the realization of the sublime beloved beyond all external form. The command the "I" of this line receives from the idolaters is to set fire to the *ḥaram*, or the holy precincts of Mecca and Medina, and learn to continually agitate, or grow hot (*tapīdan*), to unceasingly destroy even the most sacred locales of Islam. The images of idolatry and the destruction of delimitation echo the first verse of the *ghazal*, in which both the prayer-beads and

[40] Stephan Popp notes in *Muhammad Iqbal's Romanticism of Power* that "The function of Iqbal's name as a signature is very rare in his gazals. Of the 45 gazals of Mai-i Baqi, only eight show Iqbal's name in the last verse, and of the 126 gazals of Zabur-i Ajam only four." Popp, *Muhammad Iqbal's Romanticism of Power*, 57.
[41] See Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, 155.
[42] See Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 143: ""The 'magus' or fire-worshipper, and the *mugh-bacha*, the young Zoroastrian, appear in poetry not so much as real persons but rather as ciphers and symbols…These figures came to represent the wise master and the lovely cupbearer who introduce the seeker into the mysteries of spiritual intoxication. They are integral to that group of images with which poets try to indicate the contrast between law-bound exterior religion, or narrow legalism, and the religion of love, which transgresses the boundaries of external forms."

the Brahmanical thread are broken and reconfigured, and two-sightedness must be replaced by unseeing. In this verse, then, the transcendence of idolatry is paradoxically only effected through the practice of idolatry and the command of the idolaters themselves. The overwhelming desire that draws the speaker to the door of the *but-kh̲āna* finds its fullest manifestation in the burning down of the Islamic sanctuary, an external housing that believers have made the error of worshipping but which is nothing more than an instantiation. This commanded action, as with the other infinitive-imperative verbs of this *ghazal*, must be reenacted by the addressee—the "you" at the close collapsed into the speaking "I"—at every moment.

Imperative and Apostrophe

The prevailing grammatical mood of the imperative in this *ghazal* lends it an overall air of anticipation and possibility, in contrast with the description of past creative events. In combination with the extended conceit of apostrophe—calling out to the addressee who has variously taken on the form of fragrance, dew, thorns, flowers, wine, birds, and finally a speaking first-person voice—the *ghazal*'s constitutive couplets mark themselves as events of address and voicing unfolding in the present. The "you" of address is ambiguous: it might be the reader/object, or addressing the poetic tradition personified in its own topoi, calling upon the metaphors created in the *ghazal* itself to resist the traditional expectations by virtue of which they have been invoked.

In *Theory of the Lyric*, Jonathan Culler identifies apostrophe as a distinguishing quality of lyric poetry: "The strategy of positing an addressee is a way of securing particular effects, producing distinctive impressions of voice through unusual utterance, while in fact writing for the reader…In foregrounding the lyric as an act of address, lifting it out of ordinary

communicational contexts, apostrophes give us a ritualistic, hortatory act, a special sort of linguistic event in a lyric present." [43] While the act of apostrophe (defined by Culler as "to invoke or address something that is not the true audience, whether a muse, an urn, Duty, or a beloved")[44] and direct address to the second person are distinct, our *ghazal* collapses this distinction by positing an addressee that is or may become the object of apostrophe—"if you are created as a thorn," "set foot outside the bud like perfume," "withdraw into the cask," etc., combining the identity of the second-person pronoun with the object to which it is metaphorically linked. The "you" of address then also inhabits the universe of apostrophe, in which "potentially responsive forces…can be asked to act, or refrain from acting, or even to continue behaving as they usually behave. The key is not passionate intensity, but rather the ritual invocation of elements of the universe, the attempt, even, to evoke the possibility of a magical transformation." Address to, for instance, the rose or the wine, personifying it as an entity with interior life, creates "an I-thou relation between poetic subject and natural object, work[ing] to create the poetic "I" as a bardic, visionary"—or perhaps prophetic—"voice, inscribing the poem in the tradition of poetry that seeks to make things happen by acts of naming." [45] This *ghazal*'s imperative refrain and didactic command of *āmūz* or "learn!" does not so much evoke the possibility of transformation as demand it, but in so doing places the completion of the action in the future. This suggests not certainty or fulfillment but contingency and potentiality—after all, we have no guarantee that the entities in this *ghazal* will learn to fulfill their commands, just the act of commanding itself. It is also worth noting that the image of the addressee in this ghazal is never stable. Who "you" might be shifts in each couplet through a

[43] Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, 211-13.
[44] Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, 187.
[45] Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, 216.

series of ever-changing symbolic analogues (dew, thorn, wine, etc.) and is assimilated in the final couplet into the "I," collapsing the didactic relationship suggested by "you" as the object of command in the previous verses.

Apostrophe as a rhetorical strategy distinctive to the lyric not only establishes relations between poetic subjects and objects, but between the poem and the poetic tradition of which it is a part. "In an operation that sounds tautological, the vocative of apostrophe is a device which the poetic subject uses to establish with the object a relationship that helps to constitute the subject itself as poetic, even vatic. Apostrophic address works to establish a relationship to the poetic tradition…as if each address to winds, flowers, mountains, gods, beloveds, were a repetition of earlier poetic calls."[46] In the case of Iqbal's *ghazal*, this call foregrounds the very question of its intertextual relationship to poetic tradition as well as to the self-referential cross-currents flowing between his poetic, philosophical, and political writings.

The use of apostrophe, as Culler also points out, is intimately related to what he describes as the "lyric present," the *raison d'être* of lyric poetry itself:

> The fundamental characteristic of lyric…is not the description and interpretation of a past event but the iterative and iterable performance of an event in the lyric present, in the special "now," of lyric articulation. The bold wager of poetic apostrophe is that the lyric can displace a time of narrative, of past events reported, and place us in the continuing present of apostrophic address, the "now" in which, for readers, a poetic event can repeatedly occur.[47]

Indeed, each couplet in this *ghazal* contrasts a narrative past—an already existent or ongoing state of being, a completed act of creation—with the immediacy of each closing imperative, placing the reader in a liminal, continually reenacted state somewhere between present command and future fulfillment, stillness and motion, interiority and externalization. It performs its own

[46] Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, 216-17.
[47] Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, 226.

language of anticipation, urgency, and possibility, performatively setting out to accomplish what it declares. Nothing actually *happens* as such in the *ghazal*: as mentioned above and at times in the close reading, the imperative "learn to ___!" places the addressee in a present in which their already-ongoing actions or qualities are questioned by virtue of the command to do something different—in fact, to *learn* to do something different, emphasizing the process of actualizing the command over its actualization—but the results of this command have yet to be manifested. The refrain is forcefully didactic, but the imperative voice contains the both the completion and undoing of its own urging at the moment of each iterative performance. The poem unfolds upon its own event horizon.

Tradition and Modernity in Practice

I would like to conclude by offering a model for thinking about Iqbal's lyric poetry as a practice constitutive of Islamic poetic tradition through the concept of tradition presented by moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, as contrasted with the influential concept of Muslim tradition offered by Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori in their 1996 *Muslim Politics*. Eickelman and Piscatori's book, in particular the second chapter entitled "The Invention of Tradition in Muslim Politics," argues against the modernization theories ascribed to Islamic societies in which the contrast between "Mecca or mechanization" saw Islam relegated to the category of "tradition" and therefore inimical to progress and to productive confrontation with modern issues. While the authors rightly demonstrate through a series of case studies that claims to Islamic tradition facilitate political engagement and modern innovation, they also present tradition as itself fundamentally political and even manipulative.[48]

[48] Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 28, 57 *inter alia*.

Conceiving of politics as "intimately connected with the process of symbolic production" and the past as a repository of symbolic resources, the authors define claims to tradition as always and essentially contestations over the interpretation of particular symbols, which can be marshaled in support of any agenda. "All traditions," Eickelman and Piscatori note, "are created…through shared practice, and they can be profoundly and consciously modified and manipulated under the guise of a return to a more legitimate earlier practice."[49] Extending Hobsbawn's idea of "invented tradition," the authors seek to complicate the dichotomy between "tradition" and "modernity" but in so doing present a view of tradition that is instrumentalist and manipulative—that the appeal to tradition can convince people to accept innovations as part of a tradition that in fact have no relation to it. This also tells us less about what a definition of tradition might looks like than the uses for which the concept is strategically deployed for political interests. This conception of tradition as a repository of symbols of the past that can be re-appropriated and re-interpreted to justify modern innovation casts tradition as a tool or instrument for forwarding a particular agenda, as a means to modernity that still remains distinct from it. Here, we can map the similarities to much of what has been written on Iqbal's poetry—that he selected particular symbolic resources (indeed, since we are discussing poetics, literal symbols) from the Islamic poetic tradition and manipulated them to mean something different in a modern context, and in this way justified his project of Islamic reform through recourse to an authorizing traditional discourse. This model does not, however, satisfactorily answer the question of why such a strategy (if we instrumentalize it so) might prove effective. How, for instance, would a new interpretation of a symbol be intelligible *as* new without being organically generated from that symbol's traditional meaning?

[49] Eickelman and Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, 28.

In *After Virtue* (1984), moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre posits an initial definition of tradition (later developed in his 1988 *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*) that is rooted in the development of goods internal to its constitutive practices, and how best to extend both goods and practices into future iterations of the tradition that draw from its past and attempt to provide them with a narrative unity. While Eickelman and Piscatori see tradition as a view of the past as symbolic resource open for manipulation, MacIntyre sees it as a source of inherited practices. A practice, according to MacIntyre, is:

> …any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.[50]

The crucial distinction between internal goods and external goods in the cultivation of a given practice leads into his critique of what he terms emotivism, which hinges on instrumentalist relations. Goods internal to a practice are those in which the ends and means are by necessity characterized in terms of one another: an individual initiated into a practice engages in a constant endeavor to achieve excellence, the standards for which are both set by past authorities and extended by the present individual in the process of striving to achieve them. In this way, a practitioner of a tradition enters "into a relationship not only with its contemporary practitioners, but also with those who have preceded [them] in the practice,"[51] and the pursuit of goods internal to a practice benefits not only the individual pursuing them but their community as a whole, and becomes a social endeavor. Goods external to a practice, on the other hand, are those which can be derived outside of the means of the practice, and are subject to manipulative and instrumentalist means of procurement. MacIntyre gives the example of a child learning to play

[50] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 187.
[51] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 190.

chess to illustrate the difference: if the child is offered candy as an incentive to win, they will cheat in order to obtain this external good; if they are taught the strategies, history, and standards of the game, they will learn to strive for excellence not for external reward but for the internal goods inculcated by their initiation into the practice and tradition of chess-playing. In this way, MacIntyre's concept of tradition based on goods internal to practices precludes the instrumentalism implied by Eickelman and Piscatori. Furthermore, because those involved in a practice must cultivate the virtues needed to perform excellence therein, MacIntyre's concept of practice entails a fashioning of the self, of its roles and identities in relation to others in a community, that Eickelman and Piscatori's model cannot account for. Additionally, in MacIntyre's model, symbols would derive their authority within the parameters of the practices that set the standards of authority for them. Abstracting symbols from practices—assigning them inherently instrumentalist value—also abstracts them from the authority they might carry.

It is as this kind of practice—indeed, for Iqbal, a symbolic practice—that I would locate his *ghazal* poetics. An instrumentalist reading of the above *ghazal* forecloses analysis of the intertextual and rhetorical dexterity which ground it in the Persianate Sufi tradition of lyric poetry; the symbolic analogues of the "you" are not comprehensible without their rootedness in the tradition of metaphorical lover-beloved pairings, and it is the understanding of this tradition that Iqbal's intended audience would bring to the poem that enables the innovation of the demand to become something new, a demand that nonetheless constantly doubles back into the very authority of the symbols that make it possible. Apostrophic address itself in this ghazal serves to inscribe the verse into the poetic tradition and to create a subject-object relation that blurs the dichotomy between speaker and addressee in a way that exceeds an instrumentalist reading of the didactic imperative and casts both as practitioners striving for fulfillment within

the parameters of the *ghazal* poetic universe. Culler notes that "lyric can be a form of social action, which contributes to the construction of a world and works to resist other forms of world-making carried out by *instrumental rationality* and reified common sense,"[52] and in this sense, Iqbal's practice of the Persian lyric as a tradition exemplifies his ability to create worlds of meaning that remain meaningful to his readers.

[52] Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, 8. Emphasis added.

CHAPTER THREE

Nightingales and Falcons: Iqbal's *Ghazal*s Between Persian and Urdu

Introduction

A CGI falcon swoops and screeches across the screen, followed by fighter jets in formation as patriotic music swells: on November 9, 2019, the Pakistan Air Force released a 24-minute "docudrama" in honor of Iqbal Day, a national holiday in Pakistan celebrating the anniversary of Iqbal's birth. "Shaheen ka Jahan" ("The Falcon's World"), as the video is titled, was posted to the Pakistan Air Force's various official online outlets (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, etc.) and described as "a docudrama to pay Tribute to the greatest Philosopher Poet of this era, Dr. Allama Mohammad Iqbal. Iqbal presented a vision which became the code of conduct for Pakistan Air Force and his concept of Shaheen became the core value for the PAF Pilots."[1] The featurette contains interviews with retired and active Air Force personnel about what Iqbal means to them, as well as a music video mashup of Iqbal's verse interspersed with shots of jets roaring across the sky. The *shāhīn*, or falcon, is presented as both a defining feature of Iqbal's "vision" and of Pakistani national and military pride: indeed, when Pakistan developed a new nuclear ballistic missile in 2015, it was named the "Shaheen-III."[2]

While, as we have seen, Iqbal's poetry incorporates a range of imagery from the Persianate *ghazal* universe and beyond, the appearance of the falcon in his verse has attracted inordinate attention and signification. The falcon is associated particularly with Iqbal in the popular imagination as well as in scholarship; considered to be his "favorite" or "preferred"

[1] "Shaheen Ka Jahan | Iqbal Docudrama by PAF | Iqbal Day 2019 | Pakistan Air Force |," YouTube video, 23:54, posted by "Pakistan Air Force," November 9, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atx-D8lzNnI
[2] The Editorial Board, "Nuclear Fears in South Asia," *New York Times*, April 6, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/06/opinion/nuclear-fears-in-south-asia.html

motif, the bird of prey is taken to symbolize independence, vigor, and noble ferocity, especially in the context of Islamic revival. Iqbal's preference for the falcon is contrasted with his supposed disavowal of its symbolic opposite: the nightingale, fated to sing plaintively in the garden to the silent, unresponsive rose. Despite such claims (a number of which we will examine below), no sustained analysis of Iqbal's use of these avian symbols has yet been carried out. In this chapter, I offer a new interpretation of how the nightingale and the falcon function in Iqbal's *ghazal* poetry, re-casting the two not so much as oppositional symbols, but ones that exist in counterpoint, in supporting roles to one another, such that their attributes, capabilities, sympathies, and metaphorical relationships shift across and within individual *ghazal*s.

Since the nightingale and the falcon reappear across multiple genres and languages in Iqbal's poetry, these symbols also present us with an opportunity to broaden our examination of Iqbal's *ghazal*s by bringing Urdu into the conversation with Persian. The *ghazal* is the only major form that Iqbal substantially engaged in both languages. While the *ghazal* has inextricable roots in Persian Sufi traditions, its status in Urdu in the early 20th century was, as we have seen, fraught with issues of political, religious, and cultural identity for India's Muslim communities. What was at stake for Iqbal in the choice to write in both Urdu and Persian when he did, and how would the difference in presumed linguistic audience affect the conditions of a *ghazal*'s reception? Can we productively compare poetic metaphors across the same form written in different languages? Do the *ghazal*'s particular formal and evocative qualities operate across languages, or is there a point at which linguistic difference erects a barrier?

In this chapter, we will analyze the nightingale and the falcon as they appear in three *ghazal*s—two from Iqbal's 1927 Persian collection *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* ("Persian Psalms"), and one from his 1935 *Bāl-i Jibrīl* ("Gabriel's Wing"), widely considered to contain his Urdu poetic

masterpieces. As an exclusively Persian publication, *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* came on the heels of *Payām-i Mashriq* (1923), discussed in the previous chapter, and was in turn followed up by the *Jāvīdnāma* (1932), the *ghazal* sections of which we will examine in the next chapter. *Bāl-i Jibrīl* was Iqbal's second Urdu collection, with *Bāng-i Darā* published almost a decade earlier in 1924. After *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, two more works were published during Iqbal's lifetime, one in Urdu and one in Persian. We can see from this chronology that Iqbal's literary career cannot meaningfully be periodized or divided on the basis of language alone; he wrote poetry in both Urdu and Persian from beginning to end.[3] However, the choice of language carries significant ramifications. At a time when, as we have seen in Chapter 1, the classical traditions of Persian and Urdu poetry were denigrated as incompatible with modern concerns and sensibilities, why would Iqbal continue to write *ghazal*s in both languages? With Persian in particular declining in usage in the later decades of the 19th century, why would Iqbal choose to write in this language at all? We can draw out two aspects of these linguistic issues with a shift in emphasis: on the one hand, why would Iqbal write ghazals *in Persian*; and on the other, why would Iqbal write *ghazals* in Urdu? Given his mastery of literary registers and wide range of poetic form and genre in both languages, these questions resist straightforward solutions. In this chapter, I propose that we focus on the falcon and the nightingale as rhetorical figures that populate Iqbal's *ghazal*s across the Persian/Urdu language divide, situating each in the respective poetic contexts of three representative *ghazal*s in which they appear. This synchronic analysis allows us to analyze how the symbols function in support of the deliberately calibrated ambiguity and instability of Iqbal's *ghazal* method.

[3] English, of course, would be included in a long view of Iqbal's publications, but *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1930), as a series of lectures delivered in English on theology and philosophy, is not within our purview here in terms of its aims, audiences, and literary qualities.

The Politics of Language in Late Colonial India

To begin with, let us return to one of our starting questions: why would Iqbal write ghazals *in Persian*? By the turn of the 20th century, this choice is at the least somewhat unusual. For centuries the *lingua franca* of commerce, governance, scholarship, and literature in the eastern Islamic world, Persian had been adopted as an official, courtly language in India as early as the 11th-century Ghaznavids. It was under the Mughal empire, however, that Persian reached the height of prestige, especially across northern India: "the age of the first six Mughal rulers (1525-1707) represented the heyday of Indo-Persian literature; it was replenished by fresh waves of talented émigrés from Safavid Persia and by increasing Hindu participation in Persian writing."[4] The *sabk-i hindī* style of Indo-Persian poetics flourished in the 16th-18th centuries, multiple translation projects between Sanskrit and Persian were launched during the reign of Akbar (1556-1605), and a thriving epistolary and poetic culture of the Hindu scribal groups known as *munshi*s who populated the Mughal administration took shape. Cosmopolitan, transnational, and inter-confessional, Persian as a Mughal imperial language developed its own multi-cultural ecumene, to the extent that, even for non-native speakers, the language "practically became the first language of culture in north India. Those steeped in Persian appropriated and used Perso-Islamic expressions…just as often as their Iranian and non-Iranian Muslim counterparts did. They would also look for, and appreciate, Persian renderings of local texts and traditions."[5] Initially preferred as the language of politics and governance by the British as the East India Company consolidated its influence, Persian was eventually supplanted by local vernaculars and English in the early 19th century. The reasons for the decline of Persian,

[4] Mario Casari, "INDIA xiv. Persian Literature," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: https://iranicaonline.org/articles/india-xiv-persian-literature-in-india

[5] Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Making of a Munshi," in *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 63.

which had served as the language of empire in the subcontinent from 1582 to 1835,[6] have to do both with the ascendancy of Urdu and British colonial policy. As Muzaffar Alam has observed, the "death knell" for Persian was sounded when the language was "divorced from power—first under the East India Company and then under direct British rule." In his (in)famous "Minute on Indian Education" in 1835, Thomas Babington Macaulay allowed for vernaculars to contribute to a system of English education, "for he did not perceive it as a threat to the scheme of cultural and political transformation he had in mind. On the other hand, he wrote in the same document, 'To teach [the Indians] Persian, would be to set up a rival, and as I apprehend, a very unworthy rival, to the English language.'"[7] From an imperial point of view, Persian was both inferior and threatening to British interests in India. While writing in Persian was not, of course, completely demolished after 1835 (as Iqbal himself is ample evidence), it never really made a full recovery. Its dissociation from political power, and the "dismantling of the cultural coordinates within which it had functioned for the greater part of the second millennium meant that by the twentieth century it would have a more arcane and secondary character than it had once possessed. Persian became, in these circumstances, the language of Iran, and in India came to be associated above all with a certain register of Urdu."[8]

The association of Persian with Urdu in the literary sphere would also have consequences for its future in South Asia. In the period between 1857 and 1947, Persian was increasingly marginalized in favor of Urdu. As Urdu poetry was exhorted by colonial officials and reformers alike to abandon traditional forms and topoi, most notably the *ghazal* and its allusive network of

[6] Casari, "INDIA xiv. Persian Literature."
[7] Quoted in Muzaffar Alam, "The Culture and Politics of Persian in Precolonial Hindustan," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 188-89. See also Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India 1200-1800* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004).
[8] Alam, "The Culture and Politics of Persian in Precolonial Hindustan," 189.

imagery, the language and poetic tradition—Persian—from which those same elements had been derived also occasioned moral misgivings. Writing in Persian and/or using the *ghazal* form in either Persian or Urdu would have been to resist the prescriptions for a new poetry based on English models of romantic lyric expounded by reformers such as Āzād and Ḥālī, as we saw in Chapter 1. As the Indian independence movement gained a foothold in the early years of the 20th century, Urdu and its Persian influences were associated with the Muslim community, a suspect minority in terms of presumed loyalty to a secular nationalist (albeit Hindu-majority) polity. Persian, and the Urdu literary culture it had in part produced, represented an imperial past that must be cast off in favor of democracy; a religion foreign to India that had enabled British colonial ascendency; a solipsistic, elite culture and literature incapable of inspiring modern citizens. Urdu, as Kavita Datla has argued, is an apt example of how languages that were once considered flexible and cosmopolitan were

> …transformed over the course of the modern era to be the objects of an impassioned populist politics of difference…The identification of separate languages (each possessing a fixed script, grammar, and literary tradition) with distinct communities of people produced over the course of the nineteenth century an increasing acceptance of the idea that Hindi and Urdu were separate and competing languages, belonging to Hindus and Muslims, respectively…Even though Urdu has never *in fact* been an exclusively Muslim language, from the turn of the twentieth century, writers, educators, and literary critics had certainly to address the assumption that it was.[9]

Writing in either Persian or Urdu in the 1920s and 1930s, the apogee of anticolonial nationalist politics in India, was a choice fraught with identitarian assumptions.

> With the arrival of the British and the growing need for a native response to the encounter with European culture, Indo-Persian poetry gradually left its role, which passed into the hands of Urdu literature, by that time more popularly rooted in the new social context. Mirzā Asad-Allāh Khan Ḡāleb, "the last classical poet of India," whose work is an "uninterrupted elegy on the end of the Mogul power in India," wrote both in Persian and

[9] Kavita Datla, *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2013), 7-8.

> Urdu, as did the progressive thinker Moḥammad Eqbāl, the incarnation of the final phase with his deeply political poems.[10]

Here, Urdu is configured as the solution to a "growing need for a native response" to colonialism, due to its rootedness "in the new social context." Persian, therefore (evoked by "Indo-Persian poetry"), is implicitly non-native and disconnected from society. Iqbal's work is specified to be "deeply political," as opposed to the "elegiac" Persian writings of Ghālib (whose most famous Persian prose work, *Dāstānbū'ī*, recounts the events of the 1857 rebellion—hardly apolitical).

Whether Iqbal wrote in Persian or Urdu, therefore, was not merely a stylistic preference but a commentary on a contested tradition. While his first major publication was the Persian *masnavī Asrār-i Khudī* ("Secrets of the Self," 1915), Iqbal had been writing, publicly reciting, and publishing individual poems in Urdu periodicals for the decade or so prior. In his first Urdu published collection, *Bāng-i Darā* ("Call of the Caravan Bell," 1924), poems are chronologically divided into three parts: pre-1905, 1905-1908, and post-1908. The Urdu preface to *Bāng-i Darā*, written by Shaikh ᶜAbd al-Qādir (d. 1950), editor of the literary journal *Makhzan* in Lahore, states that two major changes in Iqbal's thinking occurred during the period between 1905-1908, when both he and Iqbal were pursuing higher education in London. As for the first, Shaikh ᶜAbd al-Qādir relates an anecdote in which himself and the orientalist Thomas Walker Arnold (d. 1930, an early mentor to Iqbal who was then working as an educational advisor to Indian students in Britain)[11] convinced Iqbal to continue writing poetry after he had expressed a desire

[10] Casari, "INDIA xiv. Persian Literature."
[11] See B. W. Robinson, "Arnold, Thomas Walker," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/arnold-sir-thomas-walker-british-orientalist-1864-1930.

to abandon it.[12] The second, he claims, was Iqbal's decision to write in Persian, which he identifies as motivated by an inclination towards philosophical writing, which could be better expressed in Persian than in Urdu. Supposedly, after attending a dinner party where he was asked to recite Persian poetry, Iqbal was moved to begin writing his own and presented ᶜAbd al-Qādir with two new *ghazal*s the very next morning. Furthermore, for Iqbal "Persian did the work that Urdu could not. Iqbal's speech reached the whole of the Muslim world where Persian is more or less current, and contained the kind of thought for which this wide spread was necessary. And through this medium Europeans and Americans also became aware of our worthy author."[13]

In this interpretation, three features of Iqbal's decision to write in Persian are noteworthy: its relationship to philosophical (as implicitly opposed to *poetic*) discourse; his own almost miraculous ability to produce poetry in the language literally overnight; and its ability to attract a wider readership not only in other countries in the Muslim world, but among Orientalists in Europe and the United States as well. The portrayal of Iqbal as having made the decision to compose poetry in Persian only *after* his arrival in Europe also imparts a certain foreign or affected quality to the language—that it was not his own exposure to Persian and Indo-Persian literature in India that inspired the choice, but the study of classical Persian texts mediated through a Western academic setting. Muḥammad Riyāẓ has also noted Iqbal's time in Europe as a catalyst for his writing in Persian, but points out the existence of Persian verses in Iqbal's unpublished notebooks and correspondences that indicate he was composing poetry at least occasionally in Persian as well as Urdu before the publication of *Asrār-i Khudī*.[14]

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[12] In ᶜAbd al-Qādir's telling, he and Arnold convinced Iqbal that "it was possible that the impact of his poetry could cure the diseases of our helpless nation (*hamārē dar-mānda qaum*) and our unfortunate country (*hamārē kam-naṣīb mulk*)." See Shaikh ᶜAbd al-Qādir, "*Dībācha*," in: Muhammad Iqbal, *Bāng-i Darā* (Lahore: Karimi Press, 1924).
[13] Shaikh ᶜAbd al-Qādir, "*Dībācha*."
[14] Muḥammad Riyāz, *Iqbāl-i Lāhaurī va digar shuᶜarā-yi fārsī-gū'ī* (Islamabad: Iran-Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, 1977), 1-3.

In his short monograph *Iqbal's Contribution to Indo-Persian Literature*, Sayyid Muẓaffar Ḥusain Barnī provides an overview of a few theories about why Iqbal "switched" from Urdu to Persian (relying mostly on Shaikh ᶜAbd al-Qādir's preface to *Bāng-i Darā*), and concludes that, "in my view Iqbal adopted Persian for his poetical works for the reason that the genre Masnavi in Persian lends itself admirably to exposition of philosophical ideas as is amply illustrated by the Masnavi of Jalaluddin Rumi."[15] R. A. Nicholson reiterates this logic in the introduction to *Secrets of the Self*, his English translation of *Asrār-i Khudī*. "His message is not for the Mohammedans of India alone, but for Moslems everywhere: accordingly he writes in Persian instead of Hindustani—a happy choice, for amongst educated Moslems there are many familiar with Persian literature, while the Persian language is singularly well adapted to express philosophical ideas in a style at once elevated and charming."[16] The association of Persian with philosophy or "philosophical ideas" as opposed to poetry introduces a further distinction into the broader debate among critics, explored in Chapter 1, about whether Iqbal's poetry is really *poetry* as such or a means of expression for *philosophy*. Here, Persian is linked to philosophy, suggesting that it in his Urdu verse that Iqbal is perhaps most concerned with socio-political issues.

The point about attracting a wider readership in Persian underscores another difference in the perceived audiences of Iqbal's poetry: if writing in Urdu could amplify local concerns but only be accessible to Indian readers, writing in Persian would afford Iqbal an international platform. Annemarie Schimmel has also argued that this was the reasoning behind Iqbal's choice of Persian—that he wanted "to be read and understood by the Afghan and Persian Muslims as

[15] This author's name is also stylized as S. M. H. Burney. See Sayyid Muẓaffar Ḥusain Barnī, *Iqbal's Contribution to Indo-Persian Literature* (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1987), 10.
[16] R. A. Nicholson, *Secrets of the Self: A Philosophical Poem* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1920), ix.

well as by the Indian intelligentsia, and by European Orientalists."[17] On this, Iqbal himself interestingly reverses the assumption in a passing comment in a 1931 speech in London:

> It seems appropriate that I should unravel the secret of why I started composing verses in Persian. Some people have been expressing the view that I chose the Persian language so that my thoughts might be accessible to wider circles. However, my intention was the opposite. I had originally written my *masnavī Asrār-i Khudī* for Indians only, and there were very few people in India who could understand Persian. In doing so my object was that my ideas should be disseminated amongst a limited circle. At this time I couldn't have imagined that this *masnavī* would spread beyond the confines of India, or even to Europe. It is true that after this, without a doubt I was drawn to Persian and continued writing poetry in this language.[18]

Iqbal's description of the origins of his Persian writing hint at a little false modesty in this context (a speech delivered when he was already internationally recognized), creating a narrative in which his first Persian work achieved fame and popularity despite his own humble intentions. Even if this were the case, the fact of *Asrār-i Khudī*'s success demonstrated to him that poetry in Persian would be well-received outside of India, and solidify his reputation as a poet and thinker of both local significance and global prominence.

Ironically, one place where Iqbal remained essentially unknown during his lifetime was Iran. Barnī describes this as a "great pity," and argues that the primary reason for "this studied neglect of Iqbal" is "linguistic chauvinism in Iran…[which] precluded proper appreciation of the merits of the earlier Indian poets of Persian too."[19] The first Iranian work on Iqbal—a commemorative issue of the literary journal *Dānish*—was published in 1951, containing articles and poems read the previous year on the anniversary of Iqbal's birth. In the decades to follow, Iranian interest in Iqbal would increase, particularly after Ali Shariati, a leading ideologue of the

[17] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 43.
[18] Modified translation from Barnī, *Iqbal's Contribution to Indo-Persian Literature*, 9-10. The original Urdu speech, also cited by Barnī, can be found in Muḥammad Rafīq Afẓal, ed., *Guftar-i Iqbāl* (Lahore: Idāra-yi Taḥqīqat-i Pākistān, Dānishgāh-i Panjāb, 1969), 250-51. This portion of Iqbal's speech is also cited, along with ᶜAbd al-Qādir's anecdotes, in ᶜAbd al-shakūr Aḥsan, *Iqbāl kī fārsī shāᶜirī kā tanqīdī jā'iza*, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1977, 2000), 1-14.
[19] Barnī, *Iqbal's Contribution to Indo-Persian Literature*, 47.

1979 Islamic revolution, and the Ayatollah Khomeini endorsed Iqbal's poetry.[20] Iqbal and other Persian poets of Indian origin, however, remain to a certain extent provincialized by Iranian intellectual discourse; one need only compare the grandiose sobriquets current in Pakistan (*allāma*, *ḥakīm al-umma*, *shāᶜir-i mashriq*) with that used in Iran—*Iqbāl-i Lāhaurī*, or "Iqbal of Lahore."

While the various theories for the origin of Iqbal's decision to write in both Persian and Urdu are illuminating inasmuch as they bear out certain presuppositions concerning the audiences (cosmopolitan and transnational vs. local and vernacular) and aims (philosophic vs. societal and political) of his poetry, a closer look at *ghazal*s in both languages reveals a more complex relationship. There could be multiple grounds for comparison of Iqbal's Urdu and Persian work, but the *ghazal* presents an instructive example in specific ways. First of all, it is practically the only consistent form used between both languages in his oeuvre. *Masnavī*s, for instance, are only ever in Persian. *Rūbāᶜīyyāt* or quatrains are present in both Persian and Urdu, as well as *naẓm*s (short forms that, while adhering to standards of rhyme and meter, do not formally constitute a traditional structure), but they vary so much in subject matter, length, rhyme and other formal qualities that a literary comparison would not go very far. The *ghazal*s predominate in terms of number and formal consistency, with key rhetorical and structural features adhered to in both Persian and Urdu. Both languages, then, are positioned as inheritors of poetic tradition—but do *ghazal*s configure their relationship to that tradition differently across language? Conveniently the same word in Urdu and Persian—*shāhīn*—the metaphor of the

[20] In his article "Muhammad Iqbal: A Manifestation of Reconstruction and Reformation" (available online at: http://www.shariati.com/english/iqbal.html), Shariati described Iqbal as "perform[ing] the jihad for the salvation, awareness, and liberation of Muslim people." See also: ᶜAbd al-ḥamīd ᶜIrfānī, *Iqbāl Irānīyōṇ kī naẓar meiṇ* (Karachi: Iqbal Academy, 1957); Ali Shariati and Ali Khamenei, *Iqbal: Manifestation of the Islamic Spirit, Two Contemporary Muslim Views, Translated from the Persian by Mahliqa Qara'i and Laleh Bakhtiar* (Albuquerque, NM: Book Designers and Builders, 1991).

falcon in Iqbal's lyric poetry presents a useful case study for a comparative approach. Before we analyze how the falcon and its invoked counterpart, the nightingale, function in Urdu and Persian *ghazal*s, however, let us survey the avian vistas of Persian tradition Iqbal has in sight.

Nightingales and Falcons: Birds of a Feather?

Generally speaking, birds have long served symbolic functions in Islamic literature, particularly in Sufi discourse, from the qur'anic tale of Solomon's hoopoe messenger to the four birds that inhabit Ibn ᶜArabī's universal tree to Farīd al-dīn ᶜAṭṭār's allegorical spiritual quest narrative *Manṭiq al-ṭair* or "Conference of the Birds." The nightingale (*bulbul*, at times also suggested by synonyms such as *murgh-i chaman*, "bird of the garden or meadow"[21]) in particular plays a leading role in the *ghazal*'s dramatic universe, as the love-intoxicated nocturnal singer, the harbinger of spring, and "as the figure of the impassioned human lover addressing the unattainable beauty of the divine rose,"[22] which conventionally remains silent and unresponsive to the nightingale's musical laments. As a metaphor for the human soul yearning for the eternal beauty of the divine,[23] the nightingale has been both positively and negatively coded in poetry influenced by Sufi traditions. The nightingale's unrequited love for the rose has been interpreted as the highest state of longing, which produces the creativity and beauty that constitute lyric poetry (*ghazal*s especially are rarely merely read or recited but sung), itself only possible from

[21] For instance, "The Persian poet Khwadjū Kirmānī…in a work entitled *Rawḍat al-Anwār*, represents the bird of the meadow (murgh-i čaman) as a bird tried by passion and desire, that sings at night and drives away sleep." A. N. Tarlan, "Bulbul," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, *Second Edition*, available at: http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1521

[22] Carl W. Ernst, "The Symbolism of Birds and Flight in the Writings of Ruuzbihaan Baqlii," in Carl W. Ernst, *It's Not Just Academic!: Essays on Sufism and Islamic Studies* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2017), 267. See also Annemarie Schimmel, "*Rose und Nachtigall*," *Numen* V (1958), 85–109.

[23] For more on the bird-as-soul motif in Sufi literature, see Annemarie Schimmel, *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 75–76; Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalāloddin Rumi* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), 113–24.

the experience of separation rather than union. If the rose ever responded to the nightingale, after all, why would the bird keep on singing—and how would we know about its plight? It is "love-in-longing" that "results in creativity and is, therefore, far superior than union, which brings about silence and annihilation."[24] The nightingale is a singer, narrating to the natural world of the garden (a habitat it never strays beyond) its own tale of longing, just as the poet stirs their audience through the metaphorical language of the nightingale's unwavering devotion. As Schimmel notes with reference to Iqbal, "for thought the rose's beauty can never be described in words, the nightingale, rendered eloquent by the pain of separation (an idea emphasized by Iqbal), resembles the poet who ventures again and again to describe something that cannot be expressed."[25] In this sense, the nightingale does the instructive work of a teacher or guide at a spiritual-literary limit, modeling the paradox of constantly seeking to describe the ineffable even as the act of doing so eternally defers the sought-after experience.

The nightingale can also, however, be interpreted as a warning symbol about the pitfalls of earthly attachment. In these readings, the nightingale's pining for the rose represents infatuation or fixation rather than love of a higher order, with its insistent song a mark of immaturity in contrast to the silent self-sacrifice of the moth, which immolates itself in the flame of its own beloved-figure, the candle. Saᶜdī, for instance, despite speaking "of the nightingale fairly often…treats the moth as the real lover," and the Indo-Persian poet Ḥazīn "makes clear the contrast of the nightingale and the moth, saying, 'the nightingale complains because it has only just learnt of love. We have never heard a sound from the moth.'"[26] In ᶜAṭṭār's *Manṭiq al-ṭair*,

[24] Ali Asani, "'Oh that I could be a bird and fly, I would rush to the Beloved': Birds in Islamic Mystical Poetry," in *A Communion of Subjects: Animals In Religion, Science, And Ethics*, eds. Kimberley C. Patton and Paul Waldau (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 171-72.
[25] Annemarie Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 206.
[26] A. N. Tarlan, "Bulbul."

the nightingale has its shortcomings: the hoopoe, responding to the nightingale's excuses over why he cannot set out on the grand journey with the rest of the birds, characterizes the love for the rose as a delusion, clinging to ephemeral, outward forms rather than realizing transcendence, since the moment the rose blooms, its beauty begins to fade.[27]

The falcon (*shāhīn*[28]), then, would seem to be set opposite to the qualities of the nightingale in every way: large and fearsome vs. small and charming; nesting vs. soaring; dedicated to its own survival vs. devoted to another; preferring mountaintops, deserts, and the open air vs. remaining among the flowering branches of the garden. Another possible distinction might be drawn between the nightingale and the falcon as mystical and prophetic types, respectively, particularly for Iqbal. While the nightingale seeks divine union, the falcon has the ability to ascend into the heavens and still return to earth—a quality reflected in one of its Persian names, *bāz*, "called thus because he returns, *bāz āyad*, to his owner—an image very natural in a civilization where falconry was and to some extent still is a favorite pastime."[29] As Ali Asani puts it, "unlike the nightingale that is limited to lamenting in the rose-garden, the falcon is free to soar high in the heavens, only to return to the outstretched hand of its master when it is summoned...Rumi sees the falcon as the noble soul that returns from its earthly exile to

[27] "The hoopoe answered him: "Dear nightingale,
This superficial love which makes you quail
Is only for the outward show of things.
Renounce delusion and prepare your wings
For our great quest; sharp thorns defend the rose
And beauty such as hers too quickly goes." Farīd al-dīn ʿAṭṭār, *The Conference of the Birds*, trans. Dick Davis and Afkham Darbandi (London, New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 46. ʿAṭṭār's *Bulbul-nāma*, however, has the nightingale successfully defend himself to Solomon against accusations from the other birds of excessive singing.

[28] While I have used "falcon" for the sake of consistency, the terminology here is a little less precise. Iqbal used *shāhīn*, *bāz*, *ʿuqāb*, and other words for birds of prey such as the falcon, eagle, and hawk more or less interchangeably in terms of the metaphorical qualities (power, vision, soaring, etc.) they were meant to impart rather than the actual species. For other poets, the difference between tamed raptors (like the falcon, which would sit on the arm of the king) and wild ones could be significant depending on the poetic context.

[29] Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 208.

God (the falconer) when it hears the call of His drum."[30] While Iqbal has been described as "the first poet in the Islamic—perhaps in the world—literary tradition to make an elaborate and consistent use of the eagle to represent character,"[31] the falcon/eagle also stakes a claim to a significant amount of Rumi's imagery, for whom the bird of prey is often symbolic of prophecy and the power of love: "the falcon is often the symbol of Love or, in Rumi's verse, of that ecstasy which tears out one's heart like a weak pigeon or partridge and carries it away."[32]

One of the most well-known "facts" about Iqbal is his great affinity for the falcon. Frequently described as his "favorite" poetic symbol, its flight path through his poetry is usually tracked as a replacement of or improvement on the nightingale-and-rose motif, in the context of his alteration of the traditional storehouse of metaphors:

> [Iqbal] uses the vocabulary of traditional poetry very skillfully: roses and nightingales, the cupbearer and the tavern, are found as much in his lyrics as in those of earlier mystical poets. However, Iqbal tried to change the content of this inherited vocabulary: the nightingale *must* remain separated from the rose in order to become active in its singing, i.e., to become creative; for creativity, the highest proof of personality, dies in union…The nightingale is often replaced by the falcon, *šāhin*, which becomes the symbol of man: soaring high, never mixing with lovely but lowly birds such as partridges, and resting only on the wind above the highest mountain peaks.[33]

In this reading, Iqbal is engaged in both the transformation of extant metaphors and in the creation of new ones. While it is commonly agreed-upon that the falcon is Iqbal's preferred poetic image, its precise referent is less clear, and perhaps shifts from instance to instance. Other than the "symbol of man," scholars have identified the falcon in Iqbal as a symbol of love:

> If the Persians, and those Oriental poets who came after them never tire of singing of the longing of the nightingale for the rose, symbolizing the desire of the human soul for eternal divine beauty, then Iqbal has preferred the tulip over the rose, and the falcon over

[30] Ali Asani, "'Oh that I could be a bird and fly, I would rush to the Beloved'…," 172.
[31] Mustansir Mir, *Tulip in the Desert: A Selection of the Poetry of Muhammad Iqbal* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 93.
[32] Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 209; see also John Renard, *All the King's Falcons: Rumi on Prophets and Revelation* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994).
[33] Annemarie Schimmel, "Iqbal, Muhammad," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/iqbal-muhammad

> the nightingale…the falcon, which Maulana Rumi especially loved as an emblem of the human soul, becomes for him [Iqbal] the symbol of audacious, bold love, which does not grieve over the meager provisions on earth, but soars, higher and higher, towards the sun.[34]

As strength of character:

> For Iqbal, the falcon is the model of a strong character: he dwells on lonely rocks and does not mix with the rank and file, nor is he satisfied with lowly prey. He is the independent, heroic "man" who does not want to owe gratitude to anyone and will open his wings to conquer farther and farther horizons.[35]

As the human self and the spirit of humanity:

> Perhaps the most famous example of human-bird identification in modern Muslim poetry occurs in the work of the poet-philosopher Sir Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938), commonly identified as the 'spiritual father' of the nation state of Pakistan...A major theme in Iqbal's reformist poetry is redefining conceptions of the human self so that its noble and spiritual nature is realized. For this purpose, Iqbal's favorite symbol is the *shahiin*, falcon or eagle, a bird with which he was so enamored that among his admirers it has become an emblem of his personality. For Iqbal, the falcon is the independent spirit of humanity which is able to soar to ever-increasing heights in its creativity and the development of its potential as it searches endlessly for the Infinite Beloved.[36]

As a self-help figure:

> The very word 'eagle,' when mentioned in connection with Iqbal's poetry, conjures up a whole set of distinctive physical, moral, and behavioral traits with which Iqbal endows the bird. Among its qualities that he admires and writes about are sharp vision, the ability to soar into the air and rule the skies, swift movement, daring, and love of freedom and action. The cultivation of aquiline traits is thus a prerequisite for success in life.[37]

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[34] *Wenn sich die persischen und die von ihnen abhangigen orientalischen Dichter nicht genugtun konnen, um die Sehnsucht der Nachtigall zur Rose zu singen und ihr das Verlangen der menschlichen Seele nech der ewigen gottlichen Schonheit symbolisieren, so hat Iqbal der Rose die Tulpe, der Nachtigall den Falken vorgezogen…Und der Falke, den schon Maulana Rumi besonders als Sinnbild der menschlichen Seele geliebt hatte, wird fur ihn zum Symbol der himmelsturmenden, kuhnen Liebe, die sich nicht um die kummerliche Nahrung auf Erden gramt, sondern hoher und hoher, der Sonne zu, sich schwingt*. Annemarie Schimmel, *Botschaft des Ostens: als Antwort auf Goethes West-Östlichen Divan, aus dem Persischen übertragen und eingeleitet von Annemarie Schimmel* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963), xxix.

[35] Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 209.

[36] Ali Asani, " 'Oh that I could be a bird and fly…," 173-74.

[37] Mustansir Mir, *Tulip in the Desert*, 93.

And, finally, of forceful action: "Iqbal's favourite symbol is eagle (*shāhīn*) which is redolent of power."[38] Mustansir Mir has argued for the multivalent uses Iqbal makes of the falcon—"Iqbal uses the eagle motif in several ways: to offer observations on life and society…to elucidate certain aspects of his own philosophy…and, above all, to exhort and motivate his audience to action"[39]—but none of these things tell us how the falcon functions *poetically* in the contexts in which it appears. Other than decontextualized examples from Iqbal's poetry, the most common source for these kinds of assessments is a comment from Iqbal himself in one of his letters: "The simile of the falcon is not just a poetic simile. In this animal, one can find all the qualities of Islamic pride: it is self-assured and zealous such that it does not eat that which is killed by someone else's hand; independent such that it does not build nests; high-flying; prefers solitude; is sharp of vision."[40] Iqbal certainly finds much to approve of in the falcon as a poetic device, but he does not enumerate its special qualities in such a way as to negatively compare them with those of the nightingale. It is of course true that Iqbal frequently makes use of the falcon in his poetry, and with fairly consistent attributes, but is its presence always signifying the same thing (which, as seen above, is not even specifically agreed upon by critics) across genres, poetic forms, modes of writing, and even languages? Is the falcon's relationship to the nightingale inevitably one of supersession? As Paul Losensky has observed concerning Fig<u>h</u>ānī, the poet "certainly prefers some tropes and images to others, but such quantitative speculation leaves

[38] Barnī, *Iqbal's Contribution to Indo-Persian Literature*, 40.
[39] Mustansir Mir, *Tulip in the Desert*, 92.
[40] *Shāhīn kī tashbīh maḥẓ shāᶜirāna tashbīh nahīṇ hai. Is jānvar meiṇ islāmī faqr kē tamām <u>kh</u>uṣūṣiyāt pā'ē jātē haiṇ (i) <u>kh</u>ud-dār aur <u>gh</u>airat-mand hai kih aur kē hāth kā mārā hu'ā shikār nahīṇ khātā (ii) bī-taᶜalluq hai kih āshiyāna nahīṇ banātā (iii) buland parvāz hai (iv) <u>kh</u>alvat-pasand hai (v) taiz-nigāh hai*. In Sayyid Muẓaffar Ḥusain Barnī, ed., *Kulliyat Makatib-i Iqbal, vol. 4: janvari 1935 ta april 1938* (Delhi: Urdu Academy, 1998), 415; also quoted in Yūsuf Ḥusain <u>Kh</u>ān, *Rūḥ-i Iqbāl* (New Delhi: Ghalib Academy, 1976), 125-26, in a discussion of Iqbal's use of the nightingale vs. the falcon.

open the question of what makes [his] use of them distinctive."[41] Shamsur Rahman Faruqi has also argued that, as critics, especially when considering the Indo-Persian tradition, we must "ask about the use that the metaphor was put to, the task that it was made to perform. In a literary tradition where modes (even new modes) of composing poetry are like territories to be worked by all-comers, the important thing to map is not the territory, but the manner of the working of it."[42] Analyzing how the falcon and nightingale operate synchronically in the poems in which they appear will demonstrate for us how they function in support of a *ghazal*'s method.

Birds That Sing and Soar: Three Persian and Urdu *Ghazal*s

With this symbolic aviary in view, let us turn first to one of Iqbal's most well-known Urdu *ghazal*s, invoked by state power and protest movements alike,[43] and a favorite for memorization and recitation by schoolchildren in Urdu-speaking spaces. First published in *Bāl-i Jibril* (1935), it is hardly the only poem in this collection to make use of the falcon as a notable (although not, as we shall see, a consistent or reoccurring) image, but it is one of the few *ghazal* poems to do so, and in this particular lyric context introduces more ambiguity into the figure of the falcon than its usual readings would suggest. Popularly known as "*Sitārōṇ sē āgē*" or "Beyond the stars," based on its opening phrase, the *ghazal* is untitled in the original, coming in at #40 out of 77 in the series of (almost entirely *ghazal* poems) that constitute the first part of

[41] Paul Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1998), 94.
[42] Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, "A Stranger in the City: The Poetics of Sabk-e Hindi," *The Annual of Urdu Studies* 19 no. 1 (2004): 17.
[43] Other than the Pakistan Air Force commemorative video mentioned above, another recent appearance of the *shāhīn* as it relates to Iqbal is from India in early 2020. In February, a collaborative art piece celebrating women and the LGBTQIA+ community at the India Art Fair in Delhi was the object of an anonymous complaint: "The police, acting on the complaint, came to the fair to enquire about the intention behind the work and were concerned with an Urdu couplet used in the work: "Tū shāhīñ hai parvāz hai kaam terā / tire sāmne āsmāñ aur bhī haiñ." The couplet is actually from an Iqbal ghazal" (Shailaja Tripathi, "India Art Fair: An Iqbal Couplet, the Word 'Shaheen' and the Delhi Police," *The Wire*, February 3, 2020, https://thewire.in/the-arts/india-art-fair-anti-caa-protest-delhi-police.

Bāl-i Jibril.[44] While the falcon provides the basis for the *ghazal*'s much-beloved and quoted metaphorical phrase (*tu shāhīṇ hai parvāz hai kām tērā*: "You are a falcon. Your task is to fly"), especially in the context of demonstrating the centrality of the falcon to Iqbal's thought, it occurs as only one of many rhetorical figures in the poem as a whole which, as per *ghazal* rules, may or may not share any intrinsic connection. The *ghazal* operates overall in the declarative simple present, with the verb "to be" conjugated in the plural ("[there] are," or *haiṇ*), qualified by the deceptively simple particles *aur* and *bhī*, together creating a refrain of three long monosyllables suggesting increase, excess, and profusion (*aur bhī haiṇ*), especially with the additional repetition of the long "a" sound preceding each refrain (the *qāfiya*).[45]

The imagery shifts across each verse, but retains a sense of possibility and forward motion, enabled by the multivalence of *aur*, suggesting both surplus and difference. A second-person singular addressee appears most explicitly in connection with the falcon, but is also invoked in other verses through the imperative voice. Significantly, this "you" is figured not only as the falcon, but also, through the associative matrix of the *ghazal*'s metaphorical landscape, as the nightingale. The relationship between the two, both metaphorically cast as the addressee, is left ambiguous, but with a similar exhortation made to each based on their poetic qualities and capacities.

Ghazal #40, *Bāl-i Jibrīl*[46]

1 *sitārōṇ sē āgē jahāṇ aur bhī haiṇ*
abhī ᶜishq kē imtiḥāṇ aur bhī haiṇ

Beyond the stars there are even more worlds;

[44] *Bāl-i Jibrīl* consists of 77 short poems, almost all *ghazal* (16+61); 40 *rubā'ī*; and 61 others, including some of Iqbal's famous Urdu long-form poems such as *Masjid-i qurṭubā* ("The Mosque of Cordoba"), *Lainin khudā kē ḥuẓūr meiṇ* ("Lenin in the Presence of God"), and *Sāqīnāma* ("To the Saqi").
[45] While there is some discrepancy in printed editions, the "n" in the "-ān" of this *qāfiya* is frequently nasalized, which creates a sonic echo with the strong nasal ending of *haiṇ*. For this reason, I have chosen to indicate the letter as nasalized (ṇ) in my transliteration.
[46] Text from Muhammad Iqbal, *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl Urdū* (Aligarh: Educational Book House, 1997), 353.

there are now even more tests of love.

2 *tihī zindagī sē nahīṇ yih faẓā'eiṇ*
yahāṇ saikaṛōṇ kārvāṇ aur bhī haiṇ

These wide spaces are not empty of life:
there are hundreds more caravans here.

3 *qanāᶜat na kar ᶜālam-i rang-u-bū par*
chaman aur bhī āshiyāṇ aur bhī haiṇ

Don't content yourself with the world of color and scent:
there are even more gardens, more nests.

4 *agar khō gayā ik nashēman tō kya gham*
maqāmat-i āh-u-fighāṇ aur bhī haiṇ

Why grieve for the loss of one nest?
There are even more places to sigh and lament.

5 *tu shāhīṇ hai parvāz hai kām tērā*
tire sāmnē asmāṇ aur bhī haiṇ

You are a falcon. Your task is to fly.
Before you are even more horizons.

6 *issī rōz-u-shab meiṇ ulajh kar na rah jā*
kih tērē zaman-u-makāṇ aur bhī haiṇ

Don't stay in the snare of this day-and-night:
your time and place is even more.

7 *gayē din kih tanhā thā maiṇ anjuman meiṇ*
yahāṇ ab mire rāz-dāṇ aur bhī haiṇ

The days of my solitude in the assembly are gone.
The ones who understand are even more, here, now.

In his Urdu commentary on this *ghazal*, critic Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī notes that it is one of Iqbal's most "famous and agreeable" (*mashhūr aur maqbūl*) poems, due to its musical (or "song-like," *tarannum kā rang*) rhythm and unity of vision:

> The entire *ghazal* is *musalsal*, meaning there is only one fundamental vision (*ṣirf aik bunyādī <u>kh</u>ayāl hai*), which *ḥaẓrat* Iqbal presented in different ways. [This vision] is that is that human life is not limited to only the life of this world (*ṣirf is duniyāvī zindagī tak maḥdūd nahīṇ*), but that after this world there is a second world, and after that a third, and this sequence will never come to an end, because there is no end to the grace and favors of God (*yeh silsila kabhī <u>kh</u>atam nahīṇ hōgā kyuṇkih allāh kē faẓl u karam kī kō'ī intihā nahīṇ hai*). Trials will continue to be given to the believer (*mu'min imtiḥān dīyē jāyēgā*), and the destinations of spiritual progress will continue to unfold (*rūḥānī taraqqī kī manzileṇ ṭai kiyē jāyēgā*)…Iqbal's goal in this poem is to certify to the Muslim (*musalmān kō is bāt par yaqīn rakhnā*) that there is life after death."[47]

Mustansir Mir argues that this *ghazal* is "an exhortation to the eagle to discover new worlds by soaring ever higher...[it] is evidently addressed to an eagle that has lost its nest, and consoling it Iqbal says that there are other realms to explore and conquer."[48] Taken together, these two commentaries suggest that the *ghazal* has one addressee—the falcon (or eagle in Mir's reading), intended to represent the individual, specifically the Muslim individual; and one unified message—that there are other worlds, realms, or experiences lying in wait for the adventuresome soul.

While the "you" being addressed is taken as a presence throughout the *ghazal*, direct address does not actually occur until verse 3, and any explicit metaphorical formulation ("you=falcon") is not made until verse 5. If we take the second-person addressee to represent a consistent entity that each couplet of the *ghazal* speaks to, the *ghazal* demands its own re-reading once we reach the last few verses—and even then, in the final verse, we are introduced to an "I" voice for the first time. The *ghazal* opens with two verses exemplifying Jonathan Culler's conception of lyric epideixis: there is no speaker, no addressee, but a statement on the condition of reality, a "public poetic discourse about values in this world."[49] These statements—"Beyond the stars there are even more worlds;/there are now even more tests of love"—introduce our

[47] Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī, *Bāl-i Jibrīl ma^{c} sharḥ* (New Delhi: I^{c}tiqād Publishing House, 1997), 437-38.
[48] Mustansir Mir, *Tulip in the Desert*, 93.
[49] Jonathan Culler, *Theory of the Lyric* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 115.

deceptively simple rhyming refrain (…*aur bhī haiṇ*). The plural present conjugation *haiṇ* ("are") suggests a declarative confidence about what is and is not that is undermined by *aur* and *bhī*, small, monosyllabic Urdu particles that carry a wide range of meanings. *Aur* could mean both "more of the same" and "something different," connoting surplus or excess.[50] *Bhī* serves to emphasize, intensify, specify, or qualify what precedes it. If we are told that "beyond the stars there *are* worlds" (*sitārōṇ sē āgē jahāṇ...haiṇ*) or that there *are* "tests of love" (*ᶜishq kē imtiḥāṇ...haiṇ*), the insertion of *aur bhī* introduces ambiguity to the supposedly straightforward statement. Should we read *aur bhī* as suggesting repetition, that beyond the stars there is more of the same? Or does it point us beyond the current scope of our experience? Are these "worlds," these "tests of love" qualitatively different from those we have already encountered? Or does *aur bhī*, translated here as "even more," function akin to the English phrase "something more," in which the excess has an unspecified, mysterious nature? This ambiguity carries over to verse 2: *tihī zindagī sē nahīṇ yih faẓā'eiṇ* / *yahāṇ saikaṛōṇ kārvāṇ aur bhī haiṇ* ("These wide spaces are not empty of life: / there are hundreds more caravans here." Where are *these* (*yih*) specific *faẓā'eiṇ*, or spacious, open expanses? Do they refer to the worlds beyond the stars, or are they before us, potentially suggested by the "here" (*yahāṇ*) beginning the second hemistich? The image conjured up by the mention of "hundreds more caravans" together with "wide spaces" is that of open stretches of desert that only seem empty or lifeless from a distance; if the first verse makes an epideictic statement about what is and is not in the world, this second verse implies a certain quality of attention and discernment necessary to apprehend reality.

[50] "*Aur*—And, also, for the rest, besides, again, moreover; but, yet, still; over, else; and lo!; — another, other, different; more, additional…aur-bhī, And again, and more, still more, also, moreover"; "*Bhī*—Also, too, even, and, with; yet, still, besides, likewise, moreover, furthermore." John T. Platts, *A dictionary of Urdu, classical Hindi, and English* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1884) 104, 198.

The third couplet provides the first clue towards an apostrophic referent for this *ghazal* with the second-person singular imperative "don't be content" or "don't content yourself" (*qanāᶜat na kar*) with the "world of color and scent"(*ᶜālam-i rang-u-bū*), indicating the phenomenal world of ephemeral attributes of the garden. Why the addressee should not be content or complacent with their surroundings is answered in the next hemistich: "there are even more gardens, more nests" (*chaman aur bhī āshiyāṇ aur bhī haiṇ*). The description of the addressee as currently living among the flowers in a garden, in a nest (since, as we have seen in the *ghazal* analyzed in Chapter 2, the imperative voice urges a future against the present), heavily suggests that, at least at this point, they are a *nightingale*, not (or not yet) a falcon, since by poetic definition falcons do not reside in gardens or make nests. It is also worth noting that the command "don't content yourself" with the present environment does not exclude gardens or nests from future consideration—there are even more, *aur bhī*, gardens and nests out there. The nightingale is not being told to abandon the garden as such, but rather to seek out more or different kinds of habitations that would still fall under the same semantic boundaries; we might read this line as a means of carrying forward the parameters of poetic tradition (the garden and nest) without allowing our attention to be distracted by the outer, apparent meanings of conventional metaphors (the world of color and scent). The fourth verse continues in a similar vein, extending the imagery of the nest (here, a synonym, *nashēman*) and adding another nightingale-esque poetic quality: sighing and lamenting (*āh-u-fiġẖāṇ*), or the melancholy of its song to the rose. The rhetorical question "Why grieve for the loss of one nest?" seems to be the origin of Mir's interpretation of the *ghazal* as a whole indicating consolation towards an eagle that has lost its nest, although, as in the previous verse, the implied metaphorical addressee is more likely the nightingale. The tone, however, is ambiguous: depending on how the line is read,

the insistence that there are more stations over which or in which to sigh and lament could be consolation or castigation. The use of the word *maqāmat*, stations, in the second hemistich creates a strong association with the stations of the Sufi path as well as with the nightingale's song as a guide to those stations in its role as spiritual instructor. Ḥāfiẓ, for instance, connects the two in a well-known line: "Last night, from the cypress branch, the nightingale / sang, in Pahlavi notes, the lesson of spiritual stations" (*bulbul zi shāk<u>h</u>-i sarv bih gulbāng-i pahlavī / mī-<u>kh</u>ānd dūsh dars-i maqāmāt-i maᶜnavī*[51]).

The fifth verse brings us to the falcon. The opening breaks into two complete declarations: "you are a falcon" (*tu shāhīṇ hai*) and "your task is to fly/your task is flight" (*parvāz hai kām tērā*), with the first explicit mentions of "you" and "your" bracketing the start and end of both hemistiches (*tu… tērā* / *tirē*). The famous, direct metaphor opening this verse—"you are a falcon"—if we read it together with the previous verses suggesting a nightingale "you," introduces more ambiguity than clarification. Is the addressee the same across the verses so far, or has a shift occurred? Are a nightingale and a falcon addressee spoken to separate? Or is this declaration meant to establish that the addressee, previously a nightingale, has now become a falcon, or *should* become one? Any or all of these readings are kept in play at once—the potential for continuity or discontinuity between the individual verses exploits one of the *ghazal*'s key features of textual instability. Even within the two statements of this first hemistich, there is ample space for a sense of uncertainty. The simple present tense suggests not so much a status quo as a need for transformation; especially when taken with the second hemistich, "before you are even more horizons" (*tire sāmnē asmāṇ aur bhī haiṇ*), the suggestion is that the falcon-addressee has not yet taken flight but must be encouraged or exhorted to do so. The falcon

[51] As translated in Julie Scott Meisami, "Allegorical Gardens in the Persian Poetic Tradition: Nezami, Rumi, Hafez," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17 no. 2 (May, 1985), 246.

has not yet realized the integral aspects of their nature or is behaving in a manner inconsistent with them; implicit in the necessity of reminding the addressee that "you are a falcon" is the sense that you are not, or have not so far adequately become, a falcon yet. On this line, Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī writes:

> Meaning: the Muslim's idea of life (*taṣavvur-i ḥayāt*) is not still, but in motion (dynamic) (*sukūtī nahīṇ hai bal-kih ḥarakī (dynamic) hai*). Islam interprets human life as successive journeys (*musalsal safar sē taᶜbīr kartā hai*). From the point of view of Islam, quiescence and stability, meaning stagnation (*sukūn aur qiyām yaᶜnī jumūd*), is the message of death (*maut kā paighām hai*). Iqbal interpreted this way of life as an incomplete burning (*sūk̲h̲tan-i nā-tamām*). Keeping this fundamental idea in mind, study this ghazal, and the meaning of each verse will become clear (*har shiᶜr kā maṭlab vāẓiḥ hō jāyēgā*).[52]

Here, verse 5 is read as an interpretive key that will unlock the meaning of the whole poetic text. Chishtī, as before, reads the *ghazal* almost as a sermon on how to live as a Muslim with the certainty of forward motion throughout human existence into the afterlife.

Verse 6 parallels verse 2 in its invocation of specificity—*these* wide spaces, *this* day-and-night (*issī rōz-u-shab*)—juxtaposing illusory, ephemeral temporality with a "time and place" (*zaman-u-makāṇ*) that, while mirroring the verbal construction of "day-and-night," is something more. The final couplet introduces a first-person singular (*maiṇ*) change in voice, a lyric "I," paradoxically invoking solitude (*tanhā'ī*) in the assembly (*anjuman*). The days are gone (*gayē din*), this speaker claims, when he (the verb *thā*, "was," is conjugated for the masculine singular) was alone amidst the crowd, and here, now (*yahāṇ ab*) the ones who understand him (*rāz-dāṇ*, lit. "secret-knowers") are even more, *aur bhī*, multiplied in number or some other mysterious quality. The two hemistiches of verse 7 contrast past and present temporality, with the simple past tenses of "gone" and "was" (*gayē*, *thā*) giving way to the insistent immediacy of "here," "now," "are" (*yahāṇ*, *ab*, *haiṇ*). This closing line opens a space of invitation, unfolding the "here

[52] Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī, *Bāl-i Jibrīl maᶜ sharḥ*, 438.

and now" of every iteration in what Culler has characterized as the "ritualistic" element of lyric poetry: the formal patterning of text that encodes re-performance such that the reader can "be not just a listener or an audience but also a performer of the lines—that he or she come to occupy, at least temporarily, the position of speaker and audibly or inaudibly voice the language of the poem, which can expand the possibilities of his or her discourse."[53]

If the falcon is taken to play a leading role in the Urdu *ghazal* #40, with the nightingale as an implied presence by way of its attributes, the Persian *ghazal* #28 from Iqbal's lyric collection *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* ("Persian Psalms"), published in 1927, reverses the situation. In this short *ghazal*, rather than constructing a potential contrast or divergent roles for the falcon and the nightingale on the basis of their capacity for movement and transformation, the birds of the garden are themselves the agents of change without needing to fly outside its walls.

Ghazal #28, *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*[54] part II

1 *dar īn chaman dil-i murghān zamān zamān digar ast*
bi-shākh-i gul digar ast va bi-āshiyān digar ast

The heart of the birds in this garden
changes time and time:
There's one—on the rose branch. Another—in the nest.

2 *bi-khud nigar gila-hā-yi jahān chih mī-gū'ī*
agar nigāh-i tu dīgar shavad jahān digar ast

Look within yourself: what is
this world-lamenting?
If your sight can change, so too the world.

3 *bih har zamāna agar chashm-i tu nikū-nigarad*
ṭarīq-i mai-kada va shīva-yi mughān digar ast

[53] Culler, *Theory of the Lyric*, 37.
[54] Text from Muhammad Iqbal, *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* (Lahore: Sheikh Mubarak Ali, 1927), 131. In his commentary, Chishtī interprets this *ghazal* as political rather than religious, stating that "using allusions and metaphor (*ramz u kināya*)…Iqbal expresses the political signposts (*siyāsī rah-numā*) of this age," and that the spring branch and the nest of the first verse represent "public life" and "private life." Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī, *Sharḥ Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* (Lahore: ᶜIshrat Publishing House, 1953), 281.

If your eye's discerning,
in every age the tavern path
and the Magi's charm changes.

4 *bih mīr-i qāfila az man duᶜā rasān va bi-gū'ī*
agar-chih rāh hamān ast kārvān digar ast

Send my blessing
to the caravan leader. Say:
while the road is the same, the caravan is changed.

While the nightingale as *bulbul* is not named in this *ghazal*, the birds of the garden are described as appearing on a branch of the rosebush (*shāk<u>kh</u>-i gul*) to the nest (*āshiyān*), preferred locations for the nightingale's melodies. Even though the birds themselves are plural (*murghān*), their "heart" is singular (*dil*, not *dil-hā*), suggesting a common essence even as it changes or is different time and again (*zamān zamān digar ast*), and even as the birds flit from place to place within the garden. As in the previous Urdu *ghazal*, we have a present-tense refrain (*ast*, "is"), but one that is undermined by what immediately precedes it: *digar* (other, another, again), an ambiguous Persian word that largely depends on its context for a specific meaning.[55] In the first verse, it is used to refer both to the heart changing or becoming another repetitively, and to the different birds themselves (there's one…there's another). Similar to *aur bhī*, *digar* indicates that the *ast* is not as straightforward as it may seem: something *is*, but can change at any moment. That this all occurs within the demarcated space of the garden might once again be read as a mode of engagement with poetic tradition; i.e., the "heart" of conventional tropes may be constantly remaking itself, but those tropes themselves will continue to sing out where we would expect to find them.

[55] "Another, other, more; the rest; over again; near; besides, further, moreover; again; some; any more, any longer; hitherto." Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, 553.

The second and third verses turn to the language of seeing and perception: look, sight, eye, discern (*nigar*, *nigāh*, *chashm*, *nigarad*). Voicing a command ("look within yourself," *bi-khud nigar*) the second verse asks why the addressee laments over the world, arguing that, "if your sight can change" (*agar nigāh-i tu dīgar shavad*), the world will follow (*jahān digar ast*). The power of the gaze is such that it can transform both the viewer and the object viewed. In the second verse, vision changes what it sees; in the third, the discerning eye (*nikū-nigar*, lit. "well-seeing") either recognizes the changes that have been occurring regardless of whether or not they are seen, or effects those changes itself. The second hemistich of verse 3 does not locate change in the objects seen by the eye, but specifically in the means of their access: in every age, the *path* to the tavern (*ṭarīq-i mai-kada*) and the *charm* of the Magi (*shīva-yi mughān*) may look different, but the tavern itself remains where it always has been.

Finally, the fourth and final verse once again introduces an "I" voice in place of a conventional *takhalluṣ*, telling the addressee to send their best (*duᶜā rasān*, conveying a prayer or blessing) to the leader of the caravan, and to impart another message of change with continuity—"while the road is the same, the caravan is changed" (*agar-chih rāh hamān ast kārvān digar ast*). This builds on the previous verse's imagery: if in verse 3 the destination remained constant while the path shifts, in verse 4 the path is the same as it was but the travelers are different, similar to the mutable heart of the birds of the garden where this *ghazal* began. Here, the metaphors of each verse are not presented as something to overcome or move beyond, but as possessing the ability to change, or, more specifically, to be both themselves and an other (*digar ast*), to signify what they are and are not simultaneously.

Having sighted the nightingale in both an Urdu and a Persian *ghazal*, let us now look at another Persian *ghazal* from *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* in which the falcon makes an appearance. In this

ghazal (#23), the *radīf* shifts from "is/are" (*haiṇ*, *ast*) to the negative (*nīst*). As we have now come to expect, these seven verses move through a rapid series of shifting voices, referents, and figurations:

Ghazal #23, *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*[56] part II

1 *az navā bar man qiyāmat raft va kasī āgāh nīst*
paish-i maḥfil juz bam u zīr va maqām u rāh nīst

A song brought down on me
the end of days, and no one knew—
to the crowd there's only
the sharp and flat, the tone and mood.

2 *dar nihād-am ᶜishq bā fikr-i buland āmīkhtand*
nā-tamām-i jāvidān-am kār-i man chūn māh nīst

In my essence, love
and exalted thought were mixed:
unlike the moon, I am
eternal unfulfillment.

3 *lab firau-band az fighān dar sāz bā dard-i firāq*
ᶜishq tā āhī kushad az jaẓb-i khvīsh āgāh nīst

Close your lips to lamentation;
content yourself with separation.
Love doesn't know its own allure
until it draws out a sigh.

4 *shuᶜla'ī mī bāsh va khāshākī kih paish āyad bi-sūz*
khakiyān rā dar ḥarīm-i zindagānī rāh nīst

Be ablaze. Burn
the dry brush before you.
For souls of dust there is no passage
in the sanctuary of living.

5 *jurra-shāhīn-ī bi-murghān-i sarā ṣuḥbat ma-gīr*
khīz va bāl u par gushā parvāz-i tu kūtāh nīst

You are a falcon. Don't consort
with birds that sing.

[56] Text from Iqbal, *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*, 122-23.

Rise, spread wing
and feather: your flight is not cut short.

6 *kirm-i shab-tāb ast shāᶜir dar shabistān-i vujūd*
dar par u bāl-ash furaughī gāh hast u gāh nīst

The poet is a firefly
in being's dark bed-chamber.
On his feathered wings sometimes
light gleams; sometimes not.

7 *dar ghazal Iqbāl aḥvāl-i khudī rā fāsh guft*
z-ān-kih īn nau-kāfir az ā'īn-i dair āgāh nīst

With a ghazal, Iqbal divulged so much
of the states of selfhood
that this new-unbeliever is unaware
of the monastery's customs.

The *maqṭaᶜ* opens with music—a description of a song or melody (*navā*)[57] so powerful, and yet so subtle, that it brings forth the experience of the eschatological resurrection to an individual speaker, but no one else is aware or possesses the necessary insight to apprehend it. Except for the first-person voice telling us what happened, the rest of those gathered in the assembly (*maḥfil*) only hear the outer trappings of music: "the sharp and flat, the tone and mood," and remain unaffected by its true power. "*Bam u zīr*" [58] refers to the high and low notes of a musical piece, and while "*maqām u rāh*" functions as musical vocabulary, the "station" and the "way" also have significant connotations as mystical terminology. Taken together, this opening verse seems to locate itself in a *samāᶜ* gathering, in which the ritual of playing music elicits a condition of enlightened ecstasy, with the inner meaning of the music dependent on the state of inner

[57]"voice, sound, modulation, song; a certain musical tone or mood." Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, 1428.
[58] As in Rumi: "Sometimes beat the high pitch (*zir*), o heart, and sometimes the low one (*bam u bam u bam*)." As translated in Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 215.

cultivation of the audient.[59] From the first words of this *ghazal* the reader (unlike the rest of the crowd at the gathering) is made aware of the possible discrepancy between word and meaning, sign and signification,[60] and that the stakes are nothing less than the resurrection itself.

The second couplet enacts this sensibility with a completely different set of images, using a series of lengthy, drawn-out "a" sounds (*nā-tamām-i jāvidān…kār…māh*) in contrast to what they describe: incompleteness. Rather than an inconstant moon, the *māh* of this verse can attain perfection or completion with every cycle; unlike the speaker, who remains perpetually unfinished, the moon *can* become full. As a conventional metaphor, the moon in the Persian tradition commonly refers to the beloved—especially the beauty of their face—who would dangle the promise of union but never fulfill it. To return to the first hemistich, the "I" describes their essence as being a mixture (more accurately, having been mixed, with the agency given to a third party) of "love" (*ᶜishq*) and "exalted thought" (*fikr-i buland*). As an oppositional pairing, love and reason (*ᶜishq* and *ᶜaql*) have a long history in Persian poetic and philosophical traditions— *fikr-i buland* is a somewhat unexpected counterpart to *ᶜishq*, but would seem to function similarly to logic and reason. The tension between intellectual and intuitive faculties (representing, perhaps, the philosophical and the poetic) is what causes "eternal unfulfillment," a constant movement towards and deferral of stability and completion. Unlike the other *ghazal*s we have examined, the first two verses of this *ghazal* repeat the first-person singular (*man*, *-am*), conveying a strong sense of interiority.

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[59] J. During and R. Sellheim, "Samāʿ," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, available at: http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0992

[60] As in Shabistarī's *Gulshan-i rāz* ("Rose-garden of Mystery"), a text of particular interest for Iqbal, who follows up the *ghazal*s of *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* with a *masnavī* entitled *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd* ("New Rose-garden of Mystery"):
"The soul's Sama' is not compacted
alone of words and consonants.
No, in every pitch and strain
there's another enigma contained." As translated in Leonard Lewisohn, "The Sacred Music of Islam: Samā' in the Persian Sufi Tradition," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 6 no. 1 (1997), 16.

As soon as a lyric "I" begins to be established, however, the third verse shifts abruptly to an imperative to a second-person addressee. The "you," suffering in separation from the beloved and therefore wailing and lamenting, is paradoxically told to find contentment in the separation itself, with the wordplay between *firau* ("close"), *fig<u>h</u>ān* ("lament"), and *firāq* ("separation") aurally tying together the first hemistich. The second hemistich introduces something of a contradiction: love is unaware of its own allure until it elicits or draws out a sigh (*tā āhī kushad*), but the "you" is being asked to keep silent, which would in turn prevent love from ascertaining the extent of its power. Here, the *qāfiya* and *radīf* of the very first line are repeated— *āgāh nīst*, unaware—contrasting love, ignorant of its own ability until it hears a sigh or external expression from the lover, against the people in the musical assembly, ignorant of the power of song *because* they only focus on its outer manifestation.

Verse 4 continues the imperative mode, exhorting the addressee to "be a flame" (*shuᶜla'ī mī bash*) and "Burn / the dry brush before you" (*<u>kh</u>āshākī kih paish āyad bi-sūz*). The image of the dry brush, sticks, or leaves, often figured as a spiritual obstacle that must be burned away with the purity of passion and devotion, is onomatopoetically echoed with the consonance of "sh" sounds of this first hemistich, all of which vanish in the second hemistich. Why must the addressee be/become a flame? Because the default state for humankind is that of dust—*<u>kh</u>āk*—and there is no going forward, no road or passage, for dust-beings in the sanctuary of life (*ḥarīm-i zindagānī*). *Ḥarīm* suggests the sacred enclosure of Mecca, with an oblique antithesis between that which is set apart from everyday existence, and *zindagānī*, daily life and the business of living.

The falcon and the nightingale *both* make their appearance in verse 5, and in contrast to one another. Chishtī actually cites the Urdu line "*tu shāhīṇ hai parvāz hai kām tērā*" as the extent

of his commentary for this verse.[61] Like the Urdu *ghazal*, this verse opens with a direct metaphorical statement ("you are a falcon," *jurra-shāhīn-ī*), with the additional detail of *jurra*, indicating a specific, superior type of falcon: "active, quick; moderate-sized, neither large nor small; a common name for any male bird or beast, but particularly of a male falcon (used metaphorically for a hero or brave man)."[62] Here, one of the aspects of this falcon is that it should not spend time in the company of "birds that sing" (*murg̲h̲ān-i sarā*), nightingales by virtue of metonymy. As convivial and pleasant as consorting with nightingales may be, the falcon must abandon it, since his purpose is not to sing but to soar. The commands continue in the second hemistich: "rise" (*k̲h̲īz*) and "spread wing and feather" (*bāl u par gushā*), since the flight will be long, as opposed to the brief (*kūtāh*) hopping of the garden birds from branch to branch.

The motif of wings and feathers spreads into the sixth verse, but the metaphor is somewhat mixed. "Feather and wing" (*par u bāl*, a reversal of the previous *bāl u par*) refers to the insect wings of the firefly,[63] fluttering open and closed, the soft sound in the hush of the dark bedchamber of existence reflected in the "sh" and "t" sounds of *shab-tāb*, *ast*, *shāᶜir*, *shabistān*. Instead of spreading wide in preparation for majestic flight, however, these firefly wings seem coy or indecisive, opening and closing to reveal a light and then just as quickly extinguish it. The metaphor of the firefly introduces the "poet" into this *ghazal*, who, perhaps unlike the "you" of the falcon, only hints at things, flicking a light on and off in the darkness of existence, sometimes revealing flashes of meaning and sometimes not, rather than moving toward decisive action.

[61] Chishtī, *Sharḥ Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*, 260.
[62] Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, 361.
[63] *Kirm-i shab-tāb* can also indicate "glow-worm," but given the description of the insect as having wings, "firefly" seemed the best-fitting translation.

In the final verse, we encounter a rare instance of the "Iqbal" *takhalluṣ*. A classical convention, the introduction of a *nom de plume* introduces considerable ambiguity around who the speaker is and whether they can be identified with the author who historically used the name (who is talking about Iqbal, if Iqbal is assumed to be "I"?). This "Iqbal," we are told, divulged so much about the states of selfhood (*aḥvāl-i khudī*) through the *ghazal* that "this new-unbeliever" (*īn nau-kāfir*)—the introduction of yet another voice—is unaware of the customs of the monastery or temple (*dair*) where, having renounced Islam, they have taken refuge. The *dair* could, following Hafiz, [64] also be a tavern, since in the *ghazal* universe the Christians and Zoroastrians, providers of wine, were part of a "group of images with which poets try to indicate the contrast between law-bound exterior religion, or narrow legalism, and the religion of love, which transgresses the boundaries of external forms."[65] The *ghazal*'s last line ends on precisely the same refrain as its first line, *āgāh nīst*, or "not aware/unaware," bracketing the constitutive verses with the language of uncertainty and un-knowing. We began with the description of an intense, personal spiritual experience that no one else was aware of, and we end with the *ghazal* itself having conveyed such secrets that the one who heard them is rendered unaware of religious traditions in favor of knowledge of the states of selfhood. *Aḥvāl*, like *maqāmāt*, is a term loaded with Sufi signification: the plural of *ḥāl*, it refers to spiritual states (inherently transient and ephemeral) the initiate passes through along the path towards the divine, in contrast with the stations (*maqāmāt*) which are more or less fixed.[66] What *aḥvāl-i khudī* refers to is not completely clear—does it indicate the states along the path to selfhood, or the variable states *of* selfhood?

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[64] *ay gudā'ī khānqah bāz ā kih dar dair-i mughān / mī-dahand ābī kih dil-hā rā tavāngar mī-kunand*
"O beggar at the cloister door, come to the monastery of the Magi, / for the water they give makes hearts rich." As translated in Elizabeth Gray, *The Green Sea of Heaven: Fifty ghazals from the Diwan of Hafiz* (Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 1995), 103.
[65] Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 143.
[66] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sufi Essays* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1972), 71-72.

Either way, "Iqbal" used the *ghazal* (an unspecified *ghazal* that could mean this particular one, or the form in general) to reveal them, suggesting a special revelatory role for poetry in general and the *ghazal* in particular. Reading the line again as a whole, we can see how the *ghazal* method operates with reference to its own work of textual instability and the deferral of meaning:

> *dar ġẖazal Iqbāl aḥvāl-i ḵẖudī rā fāsh guft*
> *z-ān-kih īn nau-kāfir az ā'īn-i dair āgāh nīst*
>
> With a ghazal, Iqbal divulged so much
> of the states of selfhood
> that this new-unbeliever is unaware
> of the monastery's customs.

The *ghazal* itself is what allows Iqbal/"Iqbal" to "divulge" (*fāsh guft*, revealed, made manifest) the states of selfhood. But this divulging is (to borrow a term from Paul Ricoeur) both disclosive *and* non-disclosive at once; it is disclosed to us that *something* was disclosed, and the manner in which it was disclosed, but not *what* was disclosed. The states of selfhood are not themselves the secret, but something *about* them that, when "Iqbal" disclosed it, had a certain effect. The opening verse of this *ghazal* offers up a disclosure, an inner experience no one else could recognize was happening, and the final verse refuses to let us in on the secret, paradoxically, by way of telling us about its existence and effects. This is, perhaps, what differentiates the falcon and the nightingale in this *ghazal*, but also what metaphorically binds them together—the nightingale sings to the rose, but the petals remain stubbornly closed, just as the poet, in trying to express the ineffable, must ultimately fail; the falcon may silently take off and soar to the heavens, but without the ability to convey what it may see there, it cannot inspire others to do the same. If an initial temptation would have been to read their appearance across languages to indicate a poetic valuation of language and tradition (i.e., nightingale/Persian/tradition; falcon/Urdu/modernity), these *ghazal*s have demonstrated that these birds can be awfully

difficult to analytically ensnare, flitting from branch to branch or soaring away, keeping out of reach. Instead, they exemplify the *ghazal* method of negotiating new demands for the Persianate poetic tradition by means of ambiguity, subversion, and deferral. The nightingale sings, the falcon soars, and both are necessary to make sense of the world both within and beyond the garden.

CHAPTER FOUR

Peripatetic Poetics: the Wandering *Ghazal* in the *Javīdnāma*

Introduction

In a 1961 translation of Muhammad Iqbal's 1932 epic narrative-verse *Javīdnāma*, Pakistani translator Shaikh Maḥmūd Aḥmad notes that "while the race for the physical conquest of the moon is on it may be of some interest to know that a great poet of this century, Doctor Sir Muhammad Iqbal, made a conquest of space in his vision. He left a record of it in eloquent Persian verse, in which he scales the heights, traverses the planets and meets great spirits of all times, who resolve for the poet the problems that confront him."[1] Leaving the question of whether or not Iqbal was the first to rhetorically win the space race open for the time being, we can observe at the very least that the *Javīdnāma* inspired narratives of interstellar travel beyond those contained in its verses.

In this chapter, we will locate the *Javīdnāma*[2] within the traditions of the two major Islamic literary genres it reimagines—the *maṯnavī* and the *miʿrāj*—and then turn to Iqbal's

[1] Mahmud Ahmad, *The Pilgrimage of Eternity: Being an English translation of Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal's Javid Nama* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1961), 1. In more recent years, assertions of Iqbal's superior scientific intuition remain commonplace: "As early as 1932, long before the United States sent exploratory missions to the moon, Iqbal was suggesting that sooner or later we would observe the moon's conditions and its caves and mountains." Farzin Vahdat, *Islamic Ethos and the Specter of Modernity* (London, New York: Anthem Press, 2015), 6.

[2] Translated variously as "The Pilgrimage of Eternity" or "Book of Eternity." Other than Mahmud Ahmad's English translations, cited above, the existing translations into European languages are (in chronological order): Alessandro Bausani, *Il Poema Celeste* (Rome: Instituto per il medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1952); Annemarie Schimmel, *Buch der Ewigkeit* (Munich: Man Hueber Verlag, 1957); Eva Meyerovitch and Mohammad Mokri, *Le Livre d'Éternité* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1962); A. J. Arberry, *Javid-nama By Iqbal: Translated from the Persian with an Introduction and Notes* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1966); A. Q. Niaz*, Iqbal's Javid nama: Versified English Rendering* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1984). The Niaz translation was in fact completed in the late 1960s and published posthumously by the Iqbal Academy. As it stands the work has not seen a new translation in over 50 years. Arberry's 1966 translation remains the definitive one for the English reader, despite a lack of scholarly context and certain errors: see Heshmat Moayyad,review of *Javid-nama By Iqbal: Translated from the Persian with an Introduction and Notes*, by A. J. Arberry, *Mahfil* 7:1 (Spring-Summer 1971): 163-68.

interpolation of lyric *ghazal*s within the narrative-verse framework. The structuring conceit of the *Javīdnāma* is the narrator's journey through the cosmos, his ascension from earth through the spheres of the planets and beyond. The voyage is visionary and imaginary, casting our traveler—given the name "Zinda-Rūd" or "living stream" by his guide, Rumi—in a state of perpetual motion, always both departing from and arriving at another station along a way to which there is no clear endpoint. This metaphysical condition, as both an aspiration and a prerequisite for the Sufi disciple and Iqbal's prescription for a modern Muslim subject, becomes textually inscribed through the incorporation of *ghazal*s in the narrative. The *Javīdnāma* performs, through shifts in voice, rhyme, and meter, the kind of oscillation between stability and fragmentation, momentum and pause, disorientation and affirmation, the kind of sensibility it seeks to cultivate in the reader. Identifying and closely analyzing points in the narrative where these sudden switches occur allows us to bring the *ghazal*'s particular mechanisms into sharper focus against the background of the other major verse-form of Islamic literature—the *maṯnavī*—in which it is embedded.

Overview of the Plot and Characters in the *Javīdnāma*

At the narrative level, the *Javīdnāma* travels across all manner of geographic, temporal, and religious boundaries. Mapping the overall plot, characters, and transitions will clarify the following arguments concerning the *Javīdnāma*'s allegories, antecedents, and aspirations. In the interest of providing the only systematic exposition in English of this fascinating text, I hope the reader will forgive more detail than is perhaps strictly necessary.

After a customary *munājāt*, or opening prayer, in which our narrator laments the separation of earth from heaven, we move to the "Prologue in Heaven" (*tamhīd-i āsmānī*), in

which heaven reproaches the earth on the first day of creation (*nukhustīn rūz-i āfarīn-ash nakūh-ash mī kunad āsmān zamīn rā*).[3] The earth, currently devoid of life, is mocked for its empty darkness: heaven asks, "where is your light, other than that from my sun and moon" (*juz ba qindīl-am tu-rā nūrī kujā*)? The earth, ashamed, is soon vindicated by a disembodied voice that extols the light of the soul above that of the celestial bodies.[4] This is followed by our first ghazal, the "Song of the Angels" (*naghma-yi malā'ika*), who continue the theme by describing the superiority of creatures of earth (humankind) to creatures of light (angels): "one day, the splendor of a fistful of dust will outshine those made of light / one day, by the star of its destiny, earth will become the heavens."[5] We then move to the "Prologue on Earth" (*tamhīd-i zamīnī*) where the drama opens on a narrator sitting on the shore of an ocean at sunset, having a moment alone with his thoughts. He is moved to "involuntarily" (*bī-ikhtiyār*) recite a *ghazal*—a well-known one of Rumi's, with the end-rhyme "…is my desire" (*–am ārzūst*)—which occasions the miraculous appearance of the spirit of Rumi himself, shining with the light of immortality (*paikarī raushan zi nūr-i sarmadī*). This is the first suggestion of the *ghazal* serving as a transitional incantation, initiating the narrator and the reader into a new textual destination, introducing a new character and voice. Summoned forth by his own *ghazal*, Rumi discourses on existence and non-existence (*maujūd u nā-maujūd*), the power of love (*ʿishq*) and "explains the mysteries of the ascension" (*sharḥ mī dahad asrār-i miʿrāj rā*), with the specificity of the word *miʿrāj* sighting a horizon of narrative expectations stretching back to the night journey of the

[3] The textual reference for all quotations from the *Javīdnāma* is the 1982 special edition from the Iqbal Academy, an oversized folio containing original illustrations by the Pakistani artist Jimmy Engineer. Muhammad Iqbal, *Javīdnāma: tabʿ-i khāṣ* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1982).

[4] *nūr-i subḥ az āftāb-i dāgh-dār / nūr-i jān pāk az ghubār-i rūzgār*
nūr-i jān bī-jāda-hā andar safar / az shuʿā-yi mihr u māh saiyār-tar
The light of dawn is from the burn-scarred sun / The soul's light is pure from the dust of days
The soul's light journeys without any path / going beyond the rays of the sun and moon

[5] *furaugh-i musht-i khāk az nūriyān afzūn shavad rūzī / zamīn az kaukab-i taqdīr-i ū gardūn shavad rūzī*. This *ghazal* is quoted from Iqbal's *Zabūr-i ʿAjam* (1927).

prophet Muhammad (the *Javīdnāma* as an example of *miᶜrāj* literature will be discussed in more detail below).

No sooner has the narrator processed Rumi's apparition ("my soul was shaken by his speech / every atom in my body became quicksilver" (*az kalām-ash jān-i man bī-tāb shud* / *dar tan-am har ẓurra chūn sīmāb shud*) than another supernatural being bursts from the clouds: Zurvān, the ancient Zoroastrian deity of time itself.[6] Zurvān proclaims that all temporal existence is under his command, except for the one who recites the *ḥadīth* "I have a time with God" (*lī maᶜa allāh waqt*: an expression of the prophet Muhammad concerning prayer), interpreted in Sufi discourse to indicate the practitioner transcending historical, created time to experience the eternal "now" of the divine presence, especially in the context of mystical understandings of the *miᶜrāj*.[7] Hearing Zurvān's speech, the narrator is conducted to a different plane: "my thread snapped from that ancient world / a new world came to hand (*rishta-yi man z-ān kuhan ᶜālam gusast* / *yak jahān-i tāza'ī āmad ba-dast*). He hears a melody, revealed in the next subsection to be the chant of the stars (*zamzama-yi anjum*), a lyric interruption which, however, does not take the form of a *ghazal*, but instead a short *tarjīᶜ-band*: a similar poetic form which is basically made up of short stanzas following the *ghazal* rhyme scheme, but set off between each stanza with a separate rhyming line or couplet. Rumi and the narrator then travel to the sphere of the moon (*falak-i qamar*), where they encounter within a cavern the Vedic sage "Jahān-dūst"

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[6] See: Albert de Jong, "Zurvan," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/zurvan-deity

[7] On this *ḥadīth*, see: Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 219-20; A. J. Arberry, *Discourses of Rumi* (London: J. Murray, 1961). Zurvān's lines include:

man ḥayāt-am man mamāt-am man nashūr / *man ḥisāb u dū-zakh u firdaus u ḥūr*
…dar ṭilism-i man asīr ast īn jahān / *az dam-am har laḥẓa pīr ast īn jahān*
lī maᶜa allāh har kih rā dar dil nishast / *ān javānmardī ṭilism-i man shikast*
I am life, I am death, I am resurrection / I am the reckoning, hell, paradise, and houri
…this world's held prisoner by my talisman / it ages every moment through my breath
In whoever's heart "I have with God" [a time] resides / that brave youth has broken my talisman

("friend of the world," Iqbal's Persian rendering of the Sanskrit *Viśvāmitra*[8]). Jahān-dūst and Iqbal engage in a philosophical question-and-answer session, and the ascetic presents nine aphorisms. Then, another Zoroastrian entity appears: Sarūsh, to whom Rumi assigns the rank or authority of the angel Gabriel (*sha'n-i ū jibrīlī*). Sarūsh, described as having sprung from the mind of the deity (*zād dar andīsha-yi yazdān-i pāk*), exiled himself into the realm of existence from the "joy of self-manifestation" (Arberry's translation for *zauq-i namūd*; indeed, the heading for this subsection is "the *jalva* or splendor/manifestation of Sarūsh"). Annemarie Schimmel notes that the angel's appearance "at the beginning of the mystical path" is "typical of all visionary recitals,"[9] and that Sarūsh "serves as the angel of inspiration and is therefore a counterpart of Gabriel, whom he sometimes replaces—with the difference that Gabriel inspires the prophets and Sarosh the poets. In this capacity he has long assumed an important role…for Sarosh guides the poet into a higher world, and like Gabriel he assures him that Divine Grace is greater than all else."[10] It is suggestive that, given Sarūsh's role as transitional guide, he sets the narrator and Rumi on the path to their next destination by singing a *ghazal*, the third so far in the Jāvīdnāma but the first that appears to be an original composition for this text rather than a quotation from Rumi or Iqbal.

Still within the sphere of the moon, we now come to a place called the "valley of Yarghamīd, which the angels refer to as the valley of ṭawāsīn" (*ḥarakat ba vādī-yi yarghamīd kih*

[8] One of the most important figures of Vedic Hinduism; a king-turned-ascetic credited with composing the Gayatri Mantra, which Iqbal rendered into Urdu as the poem "*Āftāb*" or "Sun." See Muhammad Iqbal, *Kulliyāt-i Iqbāl: Urdū* (Aligarh: Educational Book House, 1997), 43.

[9] Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1989), 207. In her discussion of the angels, Schimmel goes on to note Iqbal's incorporation of Islamic Neoplatonic cosmology into the *miᶜrāj* narrative: "…in Suhrawardi's system Sarosh is equal to Gabriel in his role as Angel of Man and, at the same time, the Active Intellect. As such, he constitutes the tenth intellect who is located in the Moon-sphere, exactly there where Iqbal has assigned a place to him" (207-8).

[10] Annemarie Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 145.

malā'ika ū rā vādī-yi ṭavāsīn mī-nāmand), at which Rumi extols the virtues of poetry and the poet, describing them as the heir to prophecy (*vāris-i paighambarī*). Each inhabitant of this valley represents a "*ṭā-sīn*" of prophecy: the Gautama Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ (as described by Tolstoy), and Muhammad (as described by Abu Jahl). The designator "*ṭā-sīn*," plural *ṭawāsīn*, is never explained, but the most immediate referents would seem to be 1) the Qur'anic *muqaṭṭaᶜāt* or *al-ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭaᶜa*, the mysterious, disconnected Arabic letters that appear at the beginning of certain *sūra*s, in this case the *ṭā* and *sīn* that open *sūra* 27, which focuses on several prophets;[11] and 2) the *kitāb al- ṭawāsīn* of Sufi martyr Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj, (who will appear as himself in this text on the sphere of Jupiter), a set of writings on mystical experience.[12] Introduced by our as-yet-unnamed narrator—"I will unveil the mysteries of all / I will tell you the *ṭawāsīn* of the apostles" (*parda rā bar-gīram az asrār-i kul* / *bā tu gū-yam az ṭawāsīn-i rusul*)—each of these four has a counterpart that contributes to or ventriloquizes their main beliefs. Gautama Buddha and a dancing-girl (*raqqāṣa*) both recite *ghazal*s from Iqbal's *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* that cleverly act out worldly renunciation with alternating refrains of negation (*nīst*) and presence (*hast*); they are the only figures in this section to be voiced by lyric interruption. Zoroaster triumphs over the temptations of Ahriman, and we then shift to a scene in which Tolstoy (*ḥakīm-i tūlstū'ī*) struggles waist-deep in a river of quicksilver, contending with a European woman on the shore whom he castigates for having sold out the message and spirit of Jesus for profit-driven material gain.[13] Finally, the spirit of Abu Jahl, infamous in Islamic history

[11] See Keith Massey, "Mysterious Letters," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, online edition, ed. Jane Dammen McAullife, available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00128. Sura 27– "*al-naml*," or "the ants"—is a Meccan sura narrating the stories of Moses, Solomon, Saleh, and Lot, emphasizing how those who doubted their messages were the recipients of divine punishment.

[12] See Carl W. Ernst, *Hallaj: Poems of a Sufi Martyr* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2018).

[13] *pūr-i Maryam ān chirāgh-i kā'ināt* / *nūr-i ū andar jihāt u bī-jihāt*…
qīmat-i rūḥ al-quds na-shinākhtī / *tan kharīdī naqd-i jān dar bākhtī*…
ᶜaql u dīn az kāfirī-hā-yi tu khwār / *ᶜishq az saudagarī-hā-yi tu khwār*
The son of Mary, that lamp of the universe / his light pervading the form and formless

for his fierce opposition to Muhammad and the early Muslim community, laments the prophet's destruction of the idols in the Ka'aba, insisting that worshipping an unseen god is blindness (*pīsh-i ghā'ib sajda burdan kūrī ast*).

We then ascend to the sphere of Mercury (*falak-i ᶜuṭārid*), where the call to prayer echoes through an otherwise empty landscape. Puzzled, the narrator asks Rumi where the sound is coming from, and Rumi informs him that this is the station of the saints (*īn maqam-i auliyā-st*) and that, after his exile from paradise, Adam paused on this sphere and familiarized it with the sighs (*sūz-i āh*) and lamentations (*nāla*) of humankind. Two figures in prayer come into view: Jamāl al-dīn Afghānī (usually "al-Afghānī," d. 1897), the political thinker and activist known for his fiery opposition to British imperialism and his contributions to Islamic modernist and nationalist political movements; and Saᶜīd Ḥalīm Pāshā (d. 1921), the Ottoman grand vizier for much of World War I and another prominent reformist thinker. Rumi introduces the narrator for the first time as "Zinda Rūd" ("living stream/river"), and Afghānī asks him for news of the Muslims on earth. Zinda Rūd laments the destruction wrought by European imperialism, Communism (*ishtirāk*), and the weakness of faith in Islam, in response to which Afghānī and Saᶜīd Ḥalīm Pāshā discourse on "religion and country" (*dīn u vaṭan*), "Communism and capitalism" (*ishtirāk u mulūkiyat*)[14], and "east and west" (*sharq u gharb*), in which Saᶜīd Ḥalīm Pāshā criticizes Kemalist Turkey for empty imitation of the West: "the Turks have no new melody in their lute / their new is just Europe's old" (*turk rā āhang-i nau dar chang nīst* / *tāza-ash juz kuhna-yi afrang nīst*). Afghānī then launches into a four-part excursus on the

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You did not recognize the holy spirit's value / you bought the body, gambled away the spirit
Your infidelity debased reason and religion / your mercantilism debased love

[14] Despite clear contempt for both systems—"…both deceive mankind and do not know god / the life of one is production, the other taxation / between these two stones is man: a glass (*har dū yazdan nā-shināsādam farīb* / *zindagī īn rā khurūj ān rā kharāj* / *dar miyān-i īn dū sang ādam zajāj*)—Marx himself is praised as a "prophet without Gabriel" (*paighambarī bī jibra'īl*) whose heart is a believer even as his brain is an infidel (*qalb-i ū mu'min dimāgh-ash kāfir ast*).

"foundations of the qur'anic world" (*muḥkamāt-i ᶜālam-i qur'ānī*), including man as god's viceregent (*khilāfat-i ādam*), divine government (*ḥukūmat-i ilāhī*), the earth as the dominion of God (*arẓ mulk-i khudā-st*), and that wisdom is a great good (*ḥikmat khair-i kathīr ast*).[15] Zinda-Rūd asks why, when Muslim nations are faced with suffering, does the Qur'an not "unveil its face" and "emerge from within us?" Saᶜīd Ḥalīm Pāshā and Afghānī reply that the "man of divine truth" (*mard-i ḥaqq*) must continually journey onwards toward the sanctuary (*ḥaram*), and Afghānī delivers a message to the people of Russia in which he urges the Soviet Union to look to the Islamic East for inspiration. Finally, Rumi asks Zinda-Rūd for a *ghazal*, since "the song of one who holds the beloved's scent / leads a people to the beloved's street (*naghma-yi mardī kih dārad bū-yi dūst* / *millatī rā mī-barad tā kū-yi dūst*). In the second original *ghazal* in the Jāvīdnāma, Zinda-Rūd transfers us from Mercury to Venus with a meditation on mutability and flow in the wandering nature of the landscape of common Sufi tropes: "you say these roses and tulips are all fixed here / they are all travelers, like waves of the breeze" (*īn gul u lāla tu gū'ī kih muqīm-and hama* / *rāh-paimā ṣifat-i mauj-i nasīm-and hama*).

On Venus (*falak-i zahra*) Rumi and Zinda-Rūd encounter an assembly of ancient gods. Though each of them is wounded by a blow from Abraham (*har yakī āzarda az ẓarb-i khalīl*), Baal performs a lyric soliloquy—another *tarjīᶜ-band*—celebrating the resurgence of idolatry in the modern world as well as the tendency to romanticize the past. "Long live the European orientalist," he says, "who has resurrected us from the tomb...Ancient gods, our time is now!" (*zinda bād afrangī-yi mashriq-shinās* / *ān-kih mā rā az laḥd bīrūn kashīd…ay khudāyān-i kuhan waqt ast waqt*). Rumi then recites a *ghazal*, causing the gods to fall prostrate before him.[16] We

[15] This is a reference to Qur'an 2:269: "…whoever has been given wisdom has indeed been given a great good" (*...wa man yu'ta-l-ḥikma fa-qad 'ūtiyā khairan kathīran*).

[16] *baz bar rafta u āyanda naẓar bāyad kard* / *hala bar khīz kih andīsha-yi digar bāyad kard*
ᶜishq bar nāqa-yi ayyām kushad maḥmil-i khwīsh / *ᶜāshiqī rāhila az shām u saḥar bāyad kard*

then proceed to an eerily still, silent, and clear ocean, where Rumi recites the qur'anic sura Ṭa Ha and the waves part to reveal "two pharaohs" in its depths. One is the Egyptian Pharaoh (*firᶜūn*) of the Qur'an, and the other is Lord Kitchener (d. 1916, *ẓū al-khartoum*, or "the one of Khartoum"), governor-general of the Sudan and later commander-in-chief of the British Indian Army, and for Iqbal a symbol of the brutality of British colonial rule. Interestingly, both figures are tied in to the continuing critique of colonial adventure, Orientalism, and the institution of the museum from the previous section: Pharaoh describes Egyptian artifacts on display as a warning to modern-day imperialists, lamenting that "if I could see Moses again / I'd ask for an enlightened heart."[17] Kitchener denies that Europeans loot graves, and when Pharaoh asks him about the Mahdi's tomb—famously sacked and destroyed by Kitchener's forces in the aftermath of the revivalist, anti-colonial Mahdist revolt (1898)—the Mahdi *himself* appears as the "Sudanese dervish" (*darvīsh-i sūdānī*)[18] to excoriate Kitchener for his crimes. In verses that evoke the natural imagery of the pre-Islamic and classical Arabic *qasīda*, he yearns for the Arab spirit to re-awaken and create a new age: "dew slackens the desert sands like silk…clouds ringed like the

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Once more one must look to what has passed, and what is to come / rise! one must newly think
love bears its own burden on the camel of time / You, a lover? One must ride on dusk and dawn
This *ghazal* is also taken from Iqbal's *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*. The placement of the Pharaoh and Kitchener speaks to their mutual nautical demise.

[17] *bāz agar bīn-am kalīm allāh rā* / *khwāh-am az vay yak dil-i āgāh rā*. On the museum as colonial institution, see Timothy Mitchell, "The World as Exhibition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 no. 2 (1989): 217-36. Pharaoh goes on to say:
"Alas for the nation blind with greed / robbing the dusty grave of rubies and pearls
A figure within a museum / has a story on its silent lips
It tells the history of imperialism / bestowing vision on the blind."
vāy qaumī az hawas gardīda kūr / *mī barad laᶜal u guhar az khāk-i gūr*
paikarī k-ū dar ᶜajā'ib-khāna ast / *bar lab-i khāmūsh-i ū afsāna ast*
az mulūkiyat khabar-hā mī dahad / *kūr chashmān rā naẓar-hā mī dahad*

[18] Muḥammad Aḥmad b. ᶜAbd Allāh (d. 1885); see P. M. Holt, "al-Mahdiyya," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, available at: http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0622. See also "Horatio Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, available at: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Horatio-Herbert-Kitchener-1st-Earl-Kitchener; for more on the destruction of the Mahdi's tomb, see Katie J. Hickerson, "Death Rites and Imperial Formations in Sudan, 1865-1935," PhD diss., (University of Pennsylvania, 2017).

wings of the partridge…Camel-driver, the others are in Yathrib, and we in Najd / spur the camels, sing them into ecstasy."[19]

Moving now onto Mars (*falak-i mirrīkh*), Rumi and Zinda-Rūd discover a world similar to Earth, but with inhabitants who are superior to humans in scientific knowledge and skill, and the inhabitants live in a utopian society in which there is no poverty, exploitation, or war. A Martian astronomer comes out from his observatory to meet them (*bar-āmadan-i anjum-shināsi mirrīkhī az raṣadgāh*) and informs them of this sphere's origins: in paradise, the common ancestor of the Martians, "Barkhiyā," resisted the temptations of a Satanic analogue and was gifted Mars as a reward from the deity. The astronomer takes them on a tour of his city, "Marghadīn," in the course of which they come across a public gathering listening to an alien woman (*daushīza-yi mirrīkh kih daᶜwā-yi risālat karda*; "kidnapped from the Franks" and "set loose in this world") preaching the perfidy of women's liberation. The sojourn on Mars is brief, and without any *ghazal*s.

Rumi and Zinda-Rūd continue to Jupiter (*falak-i mushtarī*), where we then hear three *ghazal*s in a row from some of mystical lyric's heavyweights: Ḥallāj,[20] Ghālib,[21] and Qurrat al-ᶜain Ṭāhira.[22] These three are described as "noble spirits…who did not accept dwelling in

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[19] *rīg-i dasht az nam mithāl-i parniyān…*
ḥalqa ḥalqa chūn par-i tīhū ghumām / tars-am az bārān kih dūr-īm az maqam
sārbān yārān ba yathrib mā ba najd / ān ḥudā k-ū nāqa rā ārad ba wajd

[20] That is, Ḥusain ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922), known for his ecstatic utterance of "I am the Truth" (*ana al-ḥaqq*) and subsequent execution by the Abbasid government in Baghdad. A figure of great controversy in early Sufism, his legacy developed into a more abstract notion of the Sufi martyr, sacrificed for speaking truth to power. See: Louis Massignon, *La passion d'al-Hosayn-Ibn-Mansour al Hallaj, martyr mystique de l'Islam* (Paris: Geuthner, 1922); Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi'raj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 238-53; Carl W. Ernst, *Hallaj: Poems of a Sufi Martyr* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press: 2018). On the influence of Hallaj on Iqbal's thought in particular, see Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 341-53.

[21] Mirzā Asadullāh Khān "Ghālib" (d. 1869), widely considered to have been the last of the Indo-Persian *sabk-i hindī* poets and a pinnacle of achievement for the Urdu *ghazal*. For an ever-growing scholarly resource on Ghalib's life and poetry, see the website maintained by Frances Pritchett, "A Desertful of Roses: the Urdu Ghazals of Mirza Asadullah Khan 'Ghalib," at: www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ghalib/

[22] Both names are titles of Fatima Baraghani (d. 1852), usually spelled "Tahirih," a major figure in Bahá'ism known for her devotional poetry and for her execution in Tehran by Nasir al-dīn Shāh after her refusal to recant her

paradise and chose eternal wandering" (*arwāḥ-i jalīl…kih bih nashīman-i bihishtī na-girawīdand wa bi-gardish-i jāvidān girā'īdand*), dressed in red tulip-colored garments and lit by an inner glow.[23] Rumi tells Zinda-Rūd to listen, since their songs have "shaken up the soul of the sanctuary" (*shaur-hā afkanda dar jān-i ḥaram*). Three *ghazal*s—labeled as "songs" (*navā*)—follow. Ḥallāj speaks first, reciting one of Iqbal's earlier *ghazal*s from *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*; then Ghālib and finally Qurrat al-ᶜain Ṭāhira recite their own *ghazal*s quoted from their respective *dīvān*s.[24] Ḥallāj's *ghazal* interlude and the contextual discourse will be discussed in further detail below. Zinda-Rūd asks them why they have chosen to distance themselves from the station of the believers (*az maqam-i mu'minān dūrī chirā*), and enters into a detailed question-and-answer with (mostly) Ḥallāj on the nature of love, destiny, the self, and the prophet. When Ḥallāj explains that self-annihilation (*fanā*) cannot be the end-goal of gnosis (*maᶜrifat*), but rather that "non-existence cannot discover existence" (*dar na-mī yābad ᶜadm maujūd rā*) Zinda-Rūd asks after "the one who considered himself better than Adam" (*ān kih khud rā bihtar az ādam shumurd*) and Ḥallāj introduces the figure he refers to as the "leader of the people of separation" (*khvāja-yi ahl-i firāq*), who knows the mysteries of being and non-being, and whose "infidelity revealed to us this secret: / from falling comes the pleasure of rising" (*kufr-i ū īn rāz rā bar mā gushūd* / *az futādan laẓẓat-i barkhāstan*). This esoteric figure is revealed to be none other than Iblīs—Lucifer—who for both Ḥallāj and Iqbal represents a tragic lover and creative force rather than an embodiment of evil. Here, Iblīs extols his unceasing action on earth, and when Zinda-Rūd urges

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conversion. For more, see Sabir Afaqi, ed. *Táhirih in History: Perspectives on Qurratu-l-ʻAyn from East and West* (Los Angeles, CA: Kalimát Press, 2004).

[23] Before me I saw three pure spirits, / a world-melting fire in their breasts,
wearing tulip-colored robes, / faces shining with an inner fire,
feverish, burning since the moment of *alast* / drunk with the wine of their own songs.
pīsh-i khud dīd-am sih rūḥ-i pāk-bāz / *ātish andar sīna-shān gītī-gudāz*
dar bar-shān ḥulla-hā-yi lāla-gūn / *chihra-hā rakhshanda az sūz-i darūn*
dar tab u tābī z-hangām-i alast / *az sharāb-i naghma-hā-yi khvīsh mast*

[24] See Mirzā Asadullāh Khān Ghālib, *Kulliyāt-i Ghālib fārsī* (Lucknow: Naval Kishore, 1925), 465.

him to give up separation (*firāq*) in order to be with god, Iblīs chastises him, explaining that "the instrument of life *is* separation's burning / how joyful the drunkenness of the day of separation! / the talk of union doesn't come to my lips / if I seek union, neither he nor I remain."[25] Iblīs laments that, despite having given humankind free will, no one rebels against him.

Journeying onward to Saturn (*falak-i zaḥl*), Zinda-Rūd is horrified to encounter an evil world, where the "despicable spirits who betrayed nation and people and were rejected by hell" (*arvāḥ-i raẕīla kih bā mulk va millat ghadārī karda va dūzakh īshān-rā qubūl na-karda*) are condemned to an eternity of torment. Here, two infamous traitors of Indian history—Mīr Jaᶜfar of Bengal (d. 1765), known for betraying Navāb Sirāj al-Daula to effect a British victory at the 1757 Battle of Plassey,[26] and Mīr Ṣādiq of Mysore (d. 1799), broadly understood to have sold out Tīpū Sulṭān during the siege of Srirangapatna, ending the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1798-99) with an Indian defeat[27]—cling to a rickety skiff tossing on a raging sea of blood, snakes writhing in the air and sharks circling in the waves. The "spirit of India" (*rūḥ-i hindūstān*) appears from the sky, shining with a divine light but chained and fettered, and laments (*nāla u faryād mī kunad*) that she will never be free from the treachery which brought about British domination. Like the section on Mars, Rumi and Zinda-Rūd's time on Saturn is comparatively brief, and contains no *ghazal*s.

At the boundary of our universe, Rumi and Zinda-Rūd ascend into a liminal space "beyond the spheres" (*ān sū-yi aflāk*), where infinite possible worlds are visible. Here we meet another Ḥallāj, as Rumi describes him, just without gallows and rope (*dār u rasan*)—Nietzsche,

[25] *guft sāz-i zindagī sūz-i firāq / ay khushā sar-mastī-yi rūz-i firāq*
bar lab-am az vaṣal mī na-āyad sukhan / vaṣl agar khvāh-am na ū mānad na man
[26] See A. S. Bazmee Ansari, "Mīr Djaᶜfar," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, available at: http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1915
[27] See P. J. Marshall, "Tīpū Sulṭān," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, available at: http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7562

the "wise German [whose] place is between these worlds, [with] an ancient song within his reed flute" (*īn farzāna-yi almānī-st / dar miyān-i īn dū ᶜālam jā-yi ū-st / naghma-yi dīrīna andar nāy-i ū-st*). Much has been made of Nietzsche's influence on Iqbal's philosophical thought, particularly in the context of the perceived relationship between Nietzsche's *übermensch* and Iqbal's ego-self or *khudī*;[28] it is his poetic representation here, however, which clarifies his function in the *Jāvīdnāma* and in Iqbal's thinking more broadly. As we encounter him, Nietzsche's station is at the threshold between the end of observable universes and the realms of paradise: his accomplishments necessary, even exalted, but ultimately insufficient. He is trapped between *lā* (no) and *illā* (but), a paradoxical pair—frequently invoked by Iqbal, Rumi, and by Sufi discourse and ritual practice more broadly—that constitutes the *shahada*: "there is no god but god" (*lā ilāha illā allāh*). The juxtaposition of negation and affirmation, such that affirmation depends upon previous negation and together they lead to unity, *tauḥīd*, mirrors other important oppositional pairs in Sufi thought, such as *fanā* and *baqā*, or self-annihilation and subsistence in the divine, and the qur'anic phrase "everything passes away except his face" (*kullu shay'in ḥālikun illa wajhahu*).[29] The text here follows a tradition of mapping these states onto the stations of the mystical journey towards divine union (subverted in this passage as the fullest expression of the self, *khudī*, rather than self-effacement), locating Nietzsche "beyond the spheres" but unable to enter paradise: "'no' and 'but' are stations of the self / he remained in 'no'

[28] The comparison is not, however, one Iqbal explicitly makes; in the *Reconstruction*, for instance, he is more concerned with Nietzsche's understanding of time and the eternal recurrence. The genealogy of *khudī* can be more fruitfully traced through Islamic formulations of the human such as Ibn ᶜArabī's *insān al-kāmil*. For more on Iqbal and Nietzsche, see Lectures IV and VII, "The Human Ego—His Freedom and Immortality" and "Is Religion Possible?" in Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, ed. M. Saeed Sheikh (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 76-99, 143-58; H. C. Hillier and Basit Bilal Koshul, eds., *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015); Abdennour Bidar, *L'Islam face à la mort de Dieu: actualité de Mohammed Iqbal* (Paris: François Bourin, 2010).

[29] The *lā/illā* concept is also brought up earlier in the Jāvīdnāma in Afghani's message to the Russian people. See also: William Chittick, *The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi* (New York: World Wisdom, Inc., 2005), 71-73; Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 86-94.

and did not go on to 'but'…divine splendor embraced him and he didn't know it (*lā u illā az maqāmāt-i khudī-st* / *ū bih lā dar-mānd va tā illā na-raft…bā tajallī ham-kinār va bī-khabar*). Nietzsche speaks only one full line (two rhyming hemistiches) in this section—"No Gabriel, no paradise, no *ḥūrī*, no deity / just a handful of dust, burning from a desiring soul" (*na jibrīlī na firdausī na ḥūrī na khudāvandī* / *kaf-i khāki kih mī-sūzad zi-jān-i arzūmandī*). Nietzsche is described as repeating this verse a hundred times in a song or chant (*bar lab-ash baytī kih ṣad bār-ash surūd*), and indeed while it is too short to properly constitute a lyric interlude on its own[30] in the same manner as the others in the *Jāvīdnāma*, it breaks from the surrounding *masnavī* in a similar way. In fact, if reading the text aloud without knowing this irruption was coming, the reader would be forced to pause, restart, and *repeat* the verse to have the rhythm sound right—acting out themselves a small part of Nietzsche's fate.

Rumi urges Zinda-Rūd onwards to "…that station / in which speech flowers without words" (*ān maqam* / *k-andar-ū bī-ḥarf mī rūyad kalām*). They alight into the "world without dimension" (*jahān-i bī-jahāt*), transcending discourse and reason, filled with fantastic qualities of pastoral beauty illuminated by the delight of seeing the divine beloved (*ẓauq-i dīdār*): the "gardens of paradise" (*jannat al-firdaus*). They view the ruby palace of Sharaf al-nisā—apparently a heavenly counterpart to her elevated mausoleum on earth in Lahore—a figure not particularly well-known outside of Punjabi history, but famed locally for her piety and dedication to reading the Qur'an at a time in the early 18th century when the Mughal ruler of the city resisted Sikh incursions.[31] Rumi draws Zinda-Rūd's attention to the approach of Mullā Ṭāhir

[30] Although, following Pritchett, we could identify this as one couplet of a *ghazal* (the *maṭlaʿ*, based on the rhyme) and therefore as a "two-line poem" in its own right.

[31] Sharaf al-nisā was the sister of Nawab Zakariya Khān, the *ṣubēdār* of Lahore under Mughal emperor Muḥammad Shāh "Rangīla" (d. 1748). Local legend holds that the power of Sharaf al-nisā's religiosity prevented would-be Sikh looters from damaging the tilework on her tomb. For more, see: Majid Sheikh, "Abiding mystery of the pious lady and the Cypress Tomb," *Dawn*, January 1, 2017, www.dawn.com/news/1305655; Masood ul-Hasan Khokhar,

Ghanī Kashmīrī (d. 1668)[32], the most prominent "Indian style" Persian poet of Kashmir, who is reciting poetry to Mīr Sayyid Alī Hamadānī or Shāh-i Hamadān (d. 1384), a medieval Sufi traveling teacher popularly remembered in South Asia for missions to convert Kashmir to Islam.[33] In the presence (*dar ḥuẓūr*) of Shāh-i Hamadān, the three engage in a dialogue in which Zinda-Rūd laments the oppressed state of the people of Kashmir, Shāh-i Hamadān expounds on the nature of the soul and of true kingship, and Ghanī Kashmīrī praises the resistant spirit of the Kashmiri people, urging Zinda-Rūd to sing, for "the destiny of nations is shaped by a song / nations are ruined and rebuilt by a song…cast a new uproar in paradise / strike up a song with drunken joy in paradise (*az navā tashkīl-i taqdīr-i umam* / *az navā takhrīb u taᶜmīr-i umam…tāza āshūbī fikun andar bihisht* / *yak navā mastāna zan andar bihisht*). Zinda-Rūd then provides our first heavenly *ghazal*, again an insertion from *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*, which gives the inhabitants of paradise a taste of the "pain and grief" of earthly creatures (*har dil-ī rā dar bihisht-i jāvidān* / *dād-am az dard u gham-i ān khāk-dān*).

Zinda-Rūd's *ghazal* draws forth admiring houris as well as a new, surprising interlocutor: the "Indian poet Bartarī-harī" (*shāᶜir-i hindī Bartarī-harī*), or Bhartrihari, the 5th-century Sanskrit grammarian, poet, and philosopher of language.[34] The two discuss the unique qualities of being a poet,[35] and when Zinda-Rūd asks him to unveil the secret of divine truth (*sirr-i ḥaqq vaqt-ast*

"Tomb of Sharaf un-Nisa Begum known as Sarvwala maqbara at Lahore," *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* 3, no. 1 (Jan-Jun 1982), 111.

[32] See Prashant Keshavmurthy, "Gani,"in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: www.iranicaonline.org/articles/gani-kasmiri

[33] See Parviz Adkā'i, "Hamadāni, Sayyed ᶜAli,"in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hamadani-sayyedali

[34] Known for writing on the nature of meaning and paradox, Bhartrihari saw "language [as] of divine origin…Brahman expressing and embodying itself in the plurality of phenomena that is creation." See Stephanie Theodorou, "Bhartrihari," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, www.iep.utm.edu/bhartrihari; Andrew Schelling, trans., *Some Unquenchable Desire: Sanskrit Poems of the Buddhist Hermit Bhartrihari* (Boulder, CO: Shambala Publications, 2018).

[35] "No one knows where in the world the poet is / his music comes from both high and low notes
that hot-blooded heart within him / doesn't even rest before god
our soul takes pleasure in the search / the fire of poetry is from the station of desire"

gū'ī bī-ḥijāb), Bhartrihari presents heaven's second *ghazal*, on the theme of the creative energy of action (*ᶜamal*, presumably a gloss for *karma*). We then turn to the palace of the kings of the east (*kāk̲h-i salāṭīn-i mashriq*): Nādir, Abdālī, and the "martyred king," *sulṭān-i shahīd*. These refer to Nādir Shāh (d. 1747), a powerful Iranian ruler known for his military prowess who made incursions into South Asia;[36] Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī (d. 1772), considered the founder of modern Afghanistan;[37] and Tīpū Sulṭān (d. 1799), the ruler of Mysore betrayed by Mīr Ṣādiq, suffering for his crime back on Saturn.[38] Zinda-Rūd is introduced to them by Rumi in the manner of a court poet, and they ask him for news of their respective homelands (Iran, Afghanistan, India). Zinda-Rūd laments that all have, in their own way, fallen to European conquest and influence. An odd lyric interlude occurs when the spirit of Nāṣir-i Khusrau ᶜAlavī (d. 1088), the medieval Ismaili philosopher, traveler, and poet, suddenly appears, presents an intoxicating *ghazal*, then vanishes just as suddenly (*namūdār mī-shavad rūḥ-i Nāṣir-i Khusrau ᶜAlavī va ghazalī-yi mastāna sarā'īda ghā'ib mī shavad*). Tīpū Sulṭān launches into an apostrophic address to the river Cauvery in India, described as conveying the truths of life, death, and martyrdom (*ḥaqīqat-i ḥayāt va marg va shahadat*). It is ironic (or, perhaps, an instance of mirrored construction) that it is in heaven, at the farthest metaphysical distance from earth, that the inhabitants are most interested in earthly affairs—that geography takes on a new salience in a space meant to exceed all borders.

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kas na-dānad dar jahān shāᶜir kujā-st / parda-yi ū az bam u zīr-i navā-st
ān dil-i garmī kih dārad dar kinār / pīsh-i yazdān ham na-mī gīrad qarār
jān-i mā rā liẓẓat-i justujū-st / shiᶜr rā sūz az maqam-i arzū-st

[36] See Ernest Tucker, "Nāder Shah,"in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/nader-shah

[37] Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī was also known as Aḥmad Khān Abdālī, indicating his tribal affiliation. See Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[38] See fn28 above.

But the gardens of paradise are not, in fact, the final frontier for Rumi and Zinda-Rūd. As Zinda-Rūd comments, "love does not rest in separation or union, / never rests, without eternal beauty…our faith, a swift-footed wave: / choose the open road, abandon the resting-place" (*ᶜishq dar ḥijr u viṣāl āsūda nīst* / *bī-jamāl-i lā-yuzāl āsūda nīst…kaish-i mā mānand-i mauj-i taiz-gām* / *ikhtiyār-i jāda va turk-i maqam*). The houris ask him for one more *ghazal*, and he obliges before passing on, alone, to another state of being (described as "presence," *ḥuẓūr*), "drowned in the spectacle of beauty / always overturning, eternal" (*gharq būd-am dar tamāshā-yi jamal* / *har zaman dar inqilāb va lā-yuzāl*). Zinda-Rūd cries out that the illumination of the two worlds has been darkened by imperialism, and that humankind is unworthy of the divine presence. A voice—the "voice of beauty," *nadā-yi jamāl*—answers him, explaining that existence is "taking a share of the beauty of the essence of truth" (*az jamāl-i ẕāt-i ḥaqq burdan naṣīb*) and creating a new world from deep within the self (*az ẓamīr-i khud digar ᶜālam biyār*). Zinda-Rūd objects that repetition cannot produce life, since nations, once fallen, do not rise again; the voice of beauty corrects him and specifies that it is re-creation, not repetition, that originates with the divinity. The voice of beauty seems to represent a personification of an attribute (*jamāl*) of the divine rather than God himself, since another entity is introduced for the final lines of the *Jāvīdnāma*, in which a *ghazal* gets the last word in the voice of the manifestation of divine splendor (*tajallī-yi jalāl*), the *mysterium tremendum* issuing paradoxical commands to an awe-struck Zinda-Rūd. This final *ghazal*, again a reworked piece from Iqbal's earlier collection *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*, will be analyzed in greater detail below. The text officially ends with an address (*khitāb*) to Javīd, Iqbal's son, but this section is clearly demarcated as separate from the main narrative.

A Narrative Verse: the *Javīdnāma* as *Masnavī*

On both formal and rhetorical levels, the *Jāvīdnāma* is a *masnavī*, one of the primary poetic forms of the Islamic and Islamicate world. Comprising 3,646 verses, the *Jāvīdnāma* is in fact on the shorter side for a *masnavī*, especially when compared to the paragon of the genre, Rumi's *Masnavī-yi maᶜnavī*, which at 25,000 verses stretches over six volumes in published form. The *Jāvīdnāma* was neither Iqbal's first nor last *masnavī*—published in 1932, it was preceded by his first Persian publications, "Secrets of the Self" (*Asrār-i khudī*, 1915) and "Mysteries of Selflessness" (*Rumūz-i bī-khudī*, 1917) as well as the "New rose-garden of mystery" (*Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd*, included at the end of 1927's *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*; and followed by "What is to be done, O peoples of the East" (*Pas chih bāyad kard ay aqvām-i sharq*, 1936)—although it is the only one to incorporate *ghazal*s in a repeated, systematic manner, and the most wide-ranging in terms of thematic content and epic scale.

The basic characteristic of the *masnavī* (also commonly transliterated *mathnawī*) is hinted at by its name, derived from the Arabic root *th-n-ā* or "doubling," referring to the pairs of rhymed hemistiches that create a rhyme scheme *aa bb cc* and so forth, similar to the English heroic couplet. The meter is almost always the same one used by Rumi, so much so that it is frequently referred to as the "*masnavī* meter" (*vazn-I masnavī*): the *ramal musaddas maḥẓūf*, an 11-syllable line favoring stressed over un-stressed feet.[39] All of Iqbal's *masnavī*s use this meter, a fact often cited as evidence for his devotion to Rumi, although this hardly sets him apart from other composers of the genre. The comparatively few technical requirements of the *masnavī* allowed for longer and more varied compositions than the monorhyme of the *qasīda*, for instance, could contain. While theoretically the narrative-verse *masnavī* could be on any theme,

[39] The assignation in the Arabo-Persian metrical system is:
fāᶜilātūn fāᶜilātūn fāᶜilun: — ⏑ — — / — ⏑ — — / — ⏑ —

it has historically tended toward the "the heroic, the romantic, and the didactic."[40] On this last, J. T. P. de Bruijn notes that the 11th-century *masnavī*s of Nāṣir-i Khusrau (whom we recall from his guest appearance in heaven in the *Jāvīdnāma*), while the author himself is not considered to be Sufi, set up a "link between cosmology on the one hand and the moral education of human beings on the other hand, established within the perspective of eternal salvation, [which] is common to the entire tradition of didacticism by Sufi poets."[41] While these categories often bled into one another in practice—romance narratives often also functioned as didactic, mystical allegory, particularly in the Indo-Persian tradition[42]—the *Jāvīdnāma* locates itself on an epic-didactic horizon of expectations, clearly concerned with instruction and exhortation through examples of historical figures laudable and condemnable, and persuasion through the text's performance of how to improve the spiritual self. It is the 12th- and 13th-century didactic *masnavī*s of Sanā'ī (*Sayr al-ʿibād ilā al-maʿad*, also a *miʿrāj* narrative), ʿAṭṭār (*Manṭiq al-ṭayr*, *Muṣībat-nāma*), and Rumi (*Masnavī-yi maʿnavī*) that instantiate the structure, themes, and style considered by succeeding poets and audiences to be fundamental to the genre.

In these narratives, the reader-as-disciple is presented with a progressive (if usually sprawling, digressive, and recursive) process of refining the self in the service of contemplation of—and eventual union with—the divine. Devices such as frame-tales structure the allegorical textual journey, whether presented as a form of earthly or cosmic travel as in the *Jāvīdnāma* or other works that draw from the *miʿrāj* tradition, or peripatetic storytelling as in Rumi's *Masnavī*: outward sequences of events, places, and encounters mirror and guide the inward progression of

[40] J. T. P. de Bruijn, B. Flemming, and Munibur Rahman, "Mathnawī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0709
[41] J. T. P. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry: an introduction to the mystical use of classical Persian poems* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1997), 87.
[42] For instance, Nizāmī's *Laylī va Majnūn*, Jāmī's *Yūsuf-Zulaikhā*, Qutban Suhravardi's *Mirigāvatī*, Faiẓī's *Nal-Daman*, Mālik Muḥammad Jāyasī's *Padmāvat*.

mystical subjectivity, incrementally leading the reader-initiate to a higher state. Particularly in the case of Rumi's *Masnavī* , the form functioned in ritual recitation as an important heuristic method for followers of Sufi *ṭarīqa*s. While the *Jāvīdnāma* does not (unlike Iqbal's earlier *Asrār-i khudī* and *Rumūz-i bī-khudī*) make use of a nested story-within-a-story structure, it does narrate laments, warnings, meditations, exhortations, advice, exegesis, dramatic monologues and dialogues, and, of course, lyric *ghazal*s in the voices of its various characters.

One character of particular significance is the protagonist's celestial guide, Rumi.[43] It is universally observed in scholarship on Iqbal that the pairing of Zinda-Rūd and Rumi reflects that of Dante and Virgil in the *Divine Comedy*. While Iqbal doubtless had this precedent in mind,[44] it is touted as evidence of his success in bringing together "eastern" and "western" traditions at the expense of the plethora of models available for the character of the spiritual guide from the Islamic literary tradition. From the qur'anic tales of Moses and Khiẓr to the *pīr* and the hoopoe of ᶜAṭṭār's *Muṣībat-nāma* and *Manṭiq al-ṭayr* to, first and foremost, Gabriel leading the prophet Muhammad on his night journey and ascension (*miᶜrāj*), the presence of a guide-teacher of a higher spiritual rank is so commonplace as to be expected in these kinds of poetic narratives. This is not to deny the immense influence of Rumi[45]—who appears as a character and in quotation throughout Iqbal's oeuvre, particularly the *masnavī*s—but to point out that Iqbal's use of the convention represents a development of Perso-Islamic literary tradition, not a break from it.

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[43] For more on Rumi's role as spiritual guide to Iqbal, see Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalallodin Rumi* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), 382-87.

[44] In a 1931 letter, Iqbal writes that he intends to begin a new work, which "will be a kind of Divine Comedy and in the style of Rumi's Mathnawi." Cited in Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 53.

[45] Indeed, one of Iqbal's many sobriquets is *Rūmī-yi ᶜaṣr*, or "Rumi of the age." For more on the connections between Iqbal and Rumi, see Sayyid Muḥammad Akram, *Iqbāl dar rah-i maulavī: sharḥ-i ḥāl va āsār va sabk-i ashᶜār va afkār-i Iqbāl* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1982); Franklin Lewis, *Rumi - Past and Present, East and West, The Life, Teachings, and Poetry of Jalâl al-Din Rumi* (London and New York: Oneworld Publications, 2001), 351-53; Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 353-60.

A Narrative Universe: the *Javīdnāma* as *Miᶜrāj*

If the *masnavī* form presents a kind of horizontal motion, bringing past forms into present practice, the *Jāvīdnāma*'s use of the *miᶜrāj* structure sets out a vertical trajectory of ascent and descent. Inspired by two brief qur'anic passages—the description of Muhammad's night journey (*isrāᶜ*) and prophetic vision[46]—the tradition of *miᶜrāj* narration, with increasingly detailed itineraries, unfolded in *ḥadīth* literature.[47] As forms and genres, the two typically go hand-in-hand—most *miᶜrāj* narratives in Persian are written as *masnavī*s. The major features typically include: the angel Gabriel as Muhammad's guide, Muhammad's nocturnal transport on the fantastic creature al-Burāq from Mecca to Jerusalem, the choice of milk over wine, the progressive ascension through seven heavens and interactions with the earlier prophets stationed at each, the lote tree of the farthest limit, the opening and purification of Muhammad's heart, and the negotiation with the divine presence resulting in the prescription of five daily prayers for the Muslim community.[48]

In Sufi thought and literature, the *miᶜrāj* came to serve as a model for mystical ascent. Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 874), considered a foundational figure of Sufism known for ecstatic utterances and the concept of self-effacement in divine union (*fanā*), influentially described the mystical experience in terms of the *miᶜrāj*, which he undertook in a visionary dream.[49] Moving past the temptations offered at various spheres, Bisṭāmī "affirms the inherent dynamism of Sufi

[46] Q 17:1 and 53:1-18.
[47] See Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, 19-28.
[48] While these elements are subject to some variation, the inhabitants of the heavens are usually: Adam in the first, Yaḥyā and ᶜĪsā (John the Baptist and Jesus) in the second, Yūsuf (Joseph) in the third, Idrīs (Enoch) in the fourth, Hārūn (Aaron) in the fifth, Mūsā (Moses) in the sixth, and Ibrāhīm (Abraham) in the seventh heaven. See Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, and B. Schrieke, J. Horovitz, J. E. Bencheikh, J. Knappert, and B. W. Robinson, "Miʿrāḏj," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, available at: http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0746
[49] This *miᶜrāj* narrative was *attributed* to Bistami, but is contested and thought to be a later attribution from the 11th century. Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, 213-23; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 48-51.

thought, the refusal to stop at any given station of mystical attainment."[50] This is a key feature of the *Jāvīdnāma* as well, with Zinda-Rūd in constant forward motion, even at the final scene in the company of the divine presence. If instead of Gabriel, Rumi is appointed as the guide of Zinda-Rūd, and if instead of a hierarchy of prophets, he encounters an array of personalities across geographic and historical boundaries, the central similarity of the *Jāvīdnāma* with *miʿrāj* narratives lies in the fact that Zinda-Rūd—like Muhammad—does not "pass away" in the face of the divine, but, theoretically, *continues* the journey. Elsewhere in his expository-philosophical writing, Iqbal identifies this quality of the *miʿrāj* with what he terms the "mystic" and "prophetic" "types of consciousness":

> "Muhammad of Arabia ascended the highest Heaven and returned. I swear by God that if I had reached that point, I should never have returned." These are the words of a great Muslim saint, 'Abd al-Quddus of Gangoh. In the whole range of Sufi literature it will be probably difficult to find words which, in a single sentence, disclose such an acute perception of the psychological difference between the prophetic and mystic types of consciousness. The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of "unitary experience"; and even when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The prophet's return is creative. He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world of ideals. For the mystic the repose of "unitary experience" is something final; for the prophet it is the awakening, within him, of world-shaking psychological forces, calculated to completely transform the human world.[51]

While the question of the "return" remains open in the Sufi tradition as well (after all, how can a narrative of ascension exist if no one descended in turn to tell it?), it is clear that Iqbal is broadly invested in differentiating his interpretation from what he understands to be the view of earlier Sufi authors. For Iqbal, the most important feature of Muhammad's ascent is not that he reaches the throne of God, but that he *returns* to Mecca and reports his experience to his community. However, as we will shortly investigate, the text of the *Jāvīdnāma*'s final scene somewhat resists

[50] Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, 215.
[51] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 99.

this Iqbalian reading: while Zinda-Rūd, with the order to "go," seems poised to take on a prophetic mantle, the narrative ends suspended at its highest point. We do not witness his response to this command, or any action taken to fulfill it—the implication perhaps being that it is now up to the reader to complete the descent back to Earth.

Commonly cited influences for the *Jāvīdnāma* as participant in the *miᶜrāj* tradition include: Ibn ᶜArabī's *Futuḥāt al-makiyya*, ᶜAṭṭār's *Manṭiq al-ṭayr*, Abū ᶜAla al-Maᶜārī's *Risālāt al-ghufrān*, and Sanā'ī's *Sayr al-ᶜibād ilā al-maᶜād*. As mentioned above, however, Dante's Divine Comedy is always brought up, and in the context of *miᶜrāj* literature this may have more purchase than in the comparison of the literary guide.[52] The Spanish Orientalist scholar Miguel Asín Palacios (d. 1944) has suggested that Dante in fact drew inspiration for the Divine Comedy from his exposure to Islamic *miᶜrāj* sources available in translation at the time.[53] In 1933 (the year after the *Jāvīdnāma* was published), Iqbal—already in Europe for the 1931 Second Round Table Conference in London—traveled to Madrid on the invitation of Palacios to deliver a lecture on Spain and the history of Islamic philosophy at Madrid University.[54] Iqbal was not only familiar with Dante, having mentioned the Divine Comedy as a literary interest on a few occasions,[55] but also, through Palacios, with the argument that the work was in itself, perhaps, a piece of the *miᶜrāj* heritage. With this in mind, we might think of the *Jāvīdnāma*'s relationship to Dante and *miᶜrāj* literature as analogous to the *Payām-i Mashriq*'s relationship to Goethe and the

[52] For instance, in his commentary Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī discusses the *Fuṭuḥāt* and the Divine Comedy as influences on the *Jāvīdnāma* in some detail. It is worth noting that the lists of source-texts drawn up for the *Jāvīdnāma* always include some combination of the classical European (the Divine Comedy, *Paradise Lost*) and Perso-Arabic traditions, but not the Indo-Persian works that would have presented a more proximate influence. See Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī, *Jāvīdnāma maᶜ sharḥ*, Vol. I (Delhi: Iᶜtiqād Publishing House, 1975), 25-26.
[53] Palacios' most well-known publication on this topic is Miguel Asín Palacios, *La Escatologia Musulmana en la Divina Comedia* (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1919).
[54] See Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 52; Javed Iqbal, *Zinda-rūd: Allāma Iqbāl kī mukammal suwāniḥ-e ḥayāt* (Lahore: Sang-e-Mīl Publications, 2004), 609.
[55] Javed Iqbal, *Zinda-Rūd*, 584; Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 53.

*ghazal*s of Ḥāfiẓ: offering a re-reading of an Islamic poetic tradition in response to how the tradition has been read by the Western canon.

A Narrative Inverse: *Ghazal*s in the *Jāvīdnāma*

The final, most elusive genre contained in the text of the *Jāvīdnāma* is that of the *ghazal* embedded within the *masnavī* framework. Lyric interludes interrupt the rhyming, metered narrative verse. Critics have noted the existence of this textual feature, but how and when these poetic shifts occur, and their function in the narrative, has never been interrogated.

In echoes of the discussion in Chapter 1 on the need among Iqbal critics for his poetry to demonstrate originality, observers and commentators on the *Jāvīdnāma* insist on the insertion of *ghazal*s as evidence of the newness of style Iqbal introduces to the poetic tradition. A. J. Arberry, in the introduction to his 1966 translation, observes that a "remarkable novelty is the interspersing of lyrics, in various metres and in the mono-rhyme characteristic of the Persian ghazal, the effect of which is a very great enhancement of the poetic tension of the whole."[56] Critics writing in Persian have described the *Jāvīdnāma* as the first text to experiment with altering formal poetic genre in such a way. Sayyid Muḥammad Akram, in his study of the influence of Rumi's style on Iqbal, claims that the insertion of various "eloquent and heart-quickening *ghazal*s" was a first in the history of Persian poetry,[57] and that "Iqbal changed the style of the *masnavī*, which had for centuries been singing the same old tune, and into it aptly inserted eloquent *ghazal*s in a way that had not been done before."[58] Muḥammad Riyāẓ, a critic

[56] Arberry, *Javid-nama*, 12.
[57] *...va Jāvīdnāma chunān kih mī-bīnīm az ghazal-hā-yi shīvā va dil-angīz gūnāgūn mashḥūn ast va īn sabk shāyad nukhustīn bār dar tārīkh-i shi'r-i fārsī bi-dast-i Iqbāl shurū' shuda ast*. Akram, *Iqbāl dar rāh-i maulavī*, 98.
[58] *Iqbāl uslūb-i masnavī rā kih az qarn-hā pīsh yak-navākht bud taghyīr dāda va dar ān...ghazal-hā-yi shīvā rā darj namūda*. Akram, *Iqbāl dar rāh-i maulavī*, 130.

writing in both Persian and Urdu, notes that, while *ghazal*s and other short forms, both by Iqbal and quoted from other poets, are included in the *Jāvīdnāma*, the practice is quite rare in Persian literature.[59]

Iqbal was, however, hardly the first poet in the Persian tradition to incorporate *ghazal*s into a *masnavī*—indeed, the *Jāvīdnāma* is not even the first instance in his own oeuvre of this textual practice. "Other poems were occasionally inserted into a mathnawī text, either with or without the use of their specific rhyme scheme,"[60] with the first poet to do so ᶜAyyūqī in his 11th-century *Varqa u Gulshāh*. This tended to occur in romances, such as versions of the story of Laylā and Majnūn, rather than epic or didactic *masnavī*s.[61] Although unusual, "there was poetic precedent for breaking *maṯnavī* form to include *ghazal*s,"[62] and so the *Jāvīdnāma* is not so much breaking new ground in this regard as contributing to a particular tradition.

The insertion of *ghazal*s into the *masnavī* format occurs in Iqbal's own poetry both before and after the publication of the *Jāvīdnāma*. At the end of *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* (1927), a short question-and-answer *masnavī* entitled *Gulshan-i rāz-i jadīd* ("New Rose-garden of Mystery," Iqbal's response to the 14th-century *Gulshan-i rāz* of Maḥmūd Shabistarī[63]) contains an unmarked *ghazal* after the answer to the ninth and final question.[64] In *Musāfir* ("Traveler"), a short masnavi which is part of the publication *Pas Chi Bāyad Kard Ay Aqvām-i Sharq* ("What is to be done, O people of the East," 1936), there are two *ghazal*s: one occurs "at the tomb of the heaven-resting

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[59] *…īn ravish dar tārīkh-i adabiyāt-i fārsī nadir va kam-naẓīr mī bāshad*. Muḥammad Riyāẓ, *Iqbāl-i Lahaurī va digar shuᶜarā-yi fārsī-gū'ī* (Islamabad: Iran Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, 1977), 12.
[60] de Bruijn, "Mathnawī."
[61] See Robert Dankoff, "The Lyric in the Romance: The Use of Ghazals in Persian and Turkish Maṯnavīs," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 43 no.1 (Jan., 1984): 9-25. One is reminded of, for instance, Act I, Scene 5 of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, in which the first fourteen lines the lovers speak to one another formally create a sonnet.
[62] Jan Rypka and Jahn Karl, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1968), 177.
[63] See Leonard Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity: the Sufi Poetry and Teaching of Mahmud Shabistari* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1995); Hamid Algar, "Golšan-e rāz," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/golsan-e-raz.
[64] Muhammad Iqbal, *Dīvān-i Iqbāl-i Lāhaurī*, ed. Sayyid Ḥasan Amīn (Mashhad: Dāryūsh, 1975), 147.

Emperor Babur" (*bar mazār-i shahanshāh Bābur khuld-āshiyānī*) and the second in a marked subsection of the heading "Qandahar and visiting the blessed robe" (*Qandahār wa ziyārat-i khirqa-yi mubārak*), but the ending of this second *ghazal* blurs into the *masnavī* as it resumes.[65]

The *Jāvīdnāma*, however, certainly contains a far greater number of *ghazal*s than either of these other texts, and combines lyrics original to the poem, ones previously written by Iqbal, and ones quoted in part or in full from earlier Persian poets. While, as we have seen, the presence of the *ghazal*s is noted in and of itself, the only reason given for the lyric interludes other than the novelty argument is that they are woven in for the effect of variety, to alleviate the monotony of the *masnavī*'s repetitive meter.[66] As Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī puts it in his commentary:

> Since the brain becomes weary from the study of difficult philosophical discourses, in order to do away with weariness and to effect delight in [one's] temperament, at the appropriate places alluring *ghazal*s are also inserted (…*munāsib maqāmāt par dilkash ghazaleṇ bhī darj kar dī hai*). These *ghazal*s are such that they seem like an oasis in the desert, [where] all the traveler's fatigue disappears (*yih ghazaleṇ aisī maᶜalūm hōtī haiṇ jaisē ṣaḥrā meṇ kō'ī nakhlistān ā jā'ē aur musāfir kī sārī kauft dūr hō jā'ē*).[67]

Here, the distinction between narrative verse as "philosophical discourse" and lyric as "delight" is maintained; the *ghazal*s are intended to give the reader a break from the mental heavy lifting of the *masnavī*'s philosophy. How this might work, however, is not elaborated upon. The why and the how of how the ghazals might operate in the text has, to date, not received any scholarly attention. To that end, let us examine two representative points of lyric interruption in the Jāvīdnāma, which suggestively map out the possibilities of the two poetic forms at play in the text as they relate to the framework of the spiritual journey. The *ghazal*s in the *Jāvīdnāma*, I argue, serve a function closer to disorientation than respite.

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[65] *Dīvān-i Iqbāl-i Lāhaurī* , 371, 375-76. Muḥammad Riyāẓ has noted that *ghazal*s appear in these other *masnavī*s of Iqbal but does not go into any more detail. See Muḥammad Riyāẓ, *Iqbāl aur fārsī shuᶜarā'* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1978), 41-42.
[66] Syed Abdul Vahid, *Iqbal: His Art and Thought* (Lahore: Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf, 1948), 233-34.
[67] Yūsuf Salīm Chishtī, *Jāvīdnāma maᶜ sharḥ*, 14.

When a *ghazal* appears in the *Jāvīdnāma*, it always breaks the rhyme and meter of the surrounding *masnavī*. Metrically speaking, the ghazals all have longer meters and therefore differently stressed inflection points than the masnavī, creating a sonic excess. They destabilize the reading or listening experience, lifting the reader temporarily out of the repetitive rhyme and rhythm to which they have become accustomed. The points at which *ghazal*s appear also tend to be moments of initiation, revelation, and transition, frequently appearing as character soliloquies following Zinda-Rūd's request to unveil a mystery or secret. There are 15 more or less standard-length *ghazal*s (about nine verses long) spaced throughout the 3,646-verse *masnavī*. These appear to be somewhat regularly patterned in groups of five, increasing in frequency as we ascend heaven-ward. They bracket the *masnavī* as a whole: the first *ghazal* occurs as the "Song of the Angels," initiating the reader on the textual journey, and the *ghazal* gets the last word as the voicing of the manifestation of divine splendor. Several of the *ghazal* singers are non-Islamic figures (Sarosh, the Buddha, Tahira, Bhartrihari), echoing the conventional *ghazal* wisdom that spiritual truth can be accessed via representations and practices of unbelief. The following table lays out, for the first time, the number of *ghazal*s in the text, when they occur, which character voices them, and the textual source, if available:

Table 2: Ordered list of *ghazal*s in the *Jāvīdnāma* with textual sources

***Ghazal*s**	**Section/Location**	**Speaker**	**Source**
1	Prologue in Heaven (*tamhīd-i āsmānī*)	Angels (*naghma-yi malā'ika*)	Iqbal, *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*
1	Prologue on Earth (*tamhīd-i zamīnī*)	Zinda-Rūd	Rumi
3	Moon (*falak-i qamar*)	Sarosh (*navā-yi saraush*) Gautama (*ṭāsīn-i gautam*) Dancing Girl (*raqqāṣa*)	--- Iqbal, *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* Iqbal, *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*

Table 2, continued

1	Mercury (*falak-i ᶜuṭārid*)	Zinda-Rūd	---
1	Venus (*falak-i zahra*)	Rumi	Iqbal, *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*
	Mars (*falak-i mirrīkh*)	*none*	
3	Jupiter (*falak-i mushtarī*)	Hallaj Ghalib Tahira	Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq* Ghalib Tahira (Tahirih)
	Saturn (*falak-i zaḥl*)	*none*	
	Beyond the Spheres (*ān sū-yi aflāk*)	*none*	
4	Gardens of Paradise (*jannat al-firdaus*)	Zinda-Rud Bhartrihari Nasir Khusro Alavi Zinda-Rud	Iqbal, *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam* --- Nasir Khusro, qasida ---
1	Divine Presence (*ḥuẓūr*)	Manifestation of Divine Splendor (*uftādan-i tajallī-yi jalāl*)	Iqbal, *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*

As we can see, *ghazal*s are not found on every sphere, but where they do occur, they tend to cluster in groups of five according to a rough pattern: 1+1+3; 1+1+3; 4+1. A significant percentage (7 of the 15, about 46%) of the *ghazal*s are drawn from Iqbal's earlier collections of Persian poetry: *Payām-i Mashriq* and *Zabūr-i ᶜAjam*, mostly the latter. The rest are either original to the text, meaning that they appear to have been written specifically for this occasion and have no outside source (indicated by a --- in the table), or quoted, either in part or in full, from other, earlier literary figures (Rumi, Ghalib, Tahira, Nasir Khusro). Rather than lightening or distracting from the philosophical content of the *masnavī*, the *ghazal*s in fact appear to provide an underlying structure for the text as a whole.

The critic ᶜAbd al-shakūr Aḥsan has noted that "the ghazal is different from the rest of the types of poetic speech (*sukhan*) because it does not have a logical progression (*manṭiqī tasalsul*) or a coherence of meaning (*maᶜnavī rabt*) that for instance is found in the *masnavī*."[68] We can contest this characterization of "logic" and "coherence," but examining the *ghazal* embedded in the *masnavī* can clarify how it progresses and means *differently* than the verse that surrounds it.

Two *Ghazal*s Observed

On Jupiter, Rumi and Zinda-Rūd encounter the group of three "eternal wanderers": Ḥallāj, Ghālib, and Tāhira, of whom Ḥallāj speaks first. The *Jāvīdnāma* moves directly from the end of Ḥallāj's lyric monologue to that of Ghālib. The scene itself is introduced by Rumi speaking to Zinda-Rūd:

[*masnavī*]

guft Rūmī īn qadar az khud ma-rau
az dam-i ātish-i navāyān zinda shau

Rumi said, "Don't go out of yourself so much—
be enlivened by these fire-breathing songs.

shauq-i bī-parvā na-dīdastī nigar
zaur-i īn ṣahbā na-dīdastī nigar

Look: you haven't seen fearless passion;
look: you haven't seen the power of this wine.

Ghālib u Ḥallāj u khātūn-i ᶜajam
shaur-hā afkanda dar jān-i ḥaram

Ghālib and Ḥallāj and the Lady of Persia
shook up the soul of the sanctuary.

īn navā-hā rūḥ rā bakhshad ṣabāt

[68] ᶜAbd al-shakūr Aḥsan, *Iqbāl kī fārsī shāᶜirī kā tanqīdī jā'iza*, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 1977, 2000), 88.

garmī-yi ū az darūn-i kā'ināt

These songs steady the spirit:
their warmth comes from deep within the universe."

Navā-yi Ḥallāj
Song of Ḥallāj

[*ghazal*]

1 *zi-<u>kh</u>āk-i <u>kh</u>vīsh ṭalab ātishī kih paidā nīst*
tajallī-yi digarī dar <u>kh</u>vur-i taqāẓā nīst

Seek an unseen fire
    from your own dust,
Someone else's luster
    is unworthy of your demand.

2 *naẓar bi-<u>kh</u>vīsh chunān basta-am kih jalva-yi dust*
jahān girift va ma-rā furṣat-i tamāshā nīst

My own gaze is so self-fixed
    that while the friend's radiance
eclipses the world, I have
    no chance to see.

3 *bi-mulk-i jām na-daham miṣraᶜ-i naẓīrī rā*
kasī kih kushta na-shud az qabīla-yi mā nīst

For Jamshid's realm I would not give
    that verse of Nāẓīrī:
"The one who isn't slain
    is not from our tribe."

4 *agarcha ᶜaql-i fusūn-pīsha lashkarī angī<u>kh</u>t*
tu dil-girifta na-bāshī kih ᶜishq tanhā nīst

Although reason, that conjurer,
    mustered an army,
don't be heavy-hearted –
    love is not alone.

5 *tu rāh-shinās na-ī v-az maqām bī-<u>kh</u>abarī*
chi na<u>gh</u>ma īst kih dar barbaṭ-i sulaimā nīst

You don't know the way—

haven't heard of the station—
What song isn't contained
in Sulaima's lute?

6 *zi qaid u said-i nahangān ḥikāyatī āvar*
ma-gū kih zauraq-i mā rū-shinās-i daryā nīst

Tell a tale
of hunting sea-monsters—
don't say our boat
is unacquainted with the sea.

7 *murīd-i himmat-i ān rah-rav-am kih pā na-guzāsht*
bih jāda-ī kih darū kūh u dasht u daryā nīst

I follow the force of that traveler
who only set foot
on a path across
mountains, deserts, and oceans.

8 *sharīk-i ḥalqa-yi rindān-i bāda-paimā bash*
ḥaẓar zi baiᶜat-i pīrī kih mard-i ghaughā nīst

Join in the circle
of wine-drinking reprobates:
beware of committing to a master
who won't cause an uproar.

Before we even get to Ḥallāj's *ghazal*, Rumi's rhymed verse introduces a contradiction: the songs we are about to hear are "fire-breathing" (*dam-i ātish*), "fearless" (*bī-parvā*), and "shook up the soul of the sanctuary" (*shaur-hā afkanda dar jān-i ḥaram*), but they also grant "stability to the spirit" (*rūḥ rā bakhshad sabāt*). The next line—the first of the *ghazal*—disrupts this "stability" with metrical excess and a shift in rhyme, but also continues the imagery of heat, light, and fire from the previous lines (*garmī*, *tajallī*, *ātish*), maintaining a consistent semantic field at the same time as it unsettles the previous equilibrium of sound and rhythm. The image of fire in dust …… in Islamic cosmology, angels were created from light, while human beings were created from (alternately) dust, clay, or a clot of blood. The juxtaposition of dust, fire, and

luminosity echoes one of the *Jāvīdnāma*'s previous *ghazal*s ("one day, the splendor of a fistful of dust will outshine those made of light," from the "Song of the Angels"), as well as resonating with one that will follow it ("No Gabriel, no paradise, no *ḥūrī*, no deity / just a handful of dust, burning from a desiring soul," from Nietzsche).

The second verse also continues using language from the first, repeating the word for "self" (*khvīsh*) and introducing another synonym for brilliance or manifestation, *jalva*, etymologically related to *tajallī* by the same Arabic root. Both words are commonly used (as we will see in the next *ghazal* we examine) to describe the splendor of self-revelation of the divine, as in the world-illuminating sun or the unveiling of a beautiful face, metaphors suggested by the "friend's radiance / eclips[ing] the world." Rather than becoming awestruck, however, the speaker/singer (identified here, of course, as Ḥallāj, although the quotation of the *ghazal* from *Payām-i Mashriq* suggests Iqbal and even Ḥāfiẓ in the chorus) is so self-focused, their gaze fastened within, that there is no desire or even opportuāity (*furṣat*) to see anything else. The conventional trope would have been for the figure of the beloved to outshine and eclipse all else in the world, including the one who gazes upon them; in these first two verses of the *ghazal*, this is inverted to suggest that the only splendor worth contemplating is that which radiates from the dusty human self.

The third verse shifts our attention to another intertextual interlocutor by incorporating a line from Nāẓīrī, a late-16th-century Indo-Persian poet known for his amatory *ghazal*s.[69] This line—more precious than the realm of Jamshid (a mythical Iranian ruler associated in literature with ideal kingship)—undermines the self-glorification of the previous ones, presenting instead

[69] While a major player in the early Mughal court, Nāẓīrī largely avoided the style of *sabk-i hindī* poets. See: Paul Losensky, "Naẓiri Nišāpuri," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/naziri-of-nishapur.

the image of sacrifice. Ḥallāj, as a literary figure, was famously martyred for his blasphemous utterance of "I am the truth" (*anā al-ḥaqq*), perceived as equating himself with the divine, and following up the first two verses with the imagery of a noble death is perhaps elliptically reclaiming the irony of sacrificing the self out of overwhelming love for it. The fourth verse also picks up this imagery, setting up the conventional opposition between reason (*ʿaql*) and love (*ʿishq*) as an epic battle, in which the forces mustered by reason, while seemingly insurmountable, are in fact illusory—reason is described as *fusūn-pīsha*, spell-working, a sorcerer or conjurer. Love, however, does not stand alone against reason's army: a reassurance to the addressee reminiscent of the qur'anic scene in Sura Tā Hā which Moses, with divine aid, defeats Pharaoh's army of sorcerers.

The next three verses (5, 6, and 7) introduce the language of travel. Verse 5 opens with a direct address to Zinda-Rūd (and therefore also to the reader), scolding him for not knowing the way (*tu rāh-shināsna-ī*) and being ignorant of the station (*az maqām bī-khabarī*). This could be read as a reproach for having struck out on a journey with no map towards the destination, or for having wandered into the correct location without any knowledge of where one actually is: that Zinda-Rūd is on the right path, but with no means of evaluating his own progress or lack thereof. The second hemistich seems unrelated ("What song isn't contained/in Sulaima's lute?") but perhaps offers a suggestion through a rhetorical question for the confused traveler. If the lute (*barbaṭ*) of Sulaima, one of the legendary beloveds of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, contains all songs, then the poet-singer need look no further for a point of orientation. This statement is somewhat strange coming from Ḥallāj, since "it was uncommon for early Sufis to refer to the corpus of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry,"[70] but given the *ghazal*'s original context as part of *Payām-i*

[70] Ernst, *Hallaj*, 14.

Mashriq, we might read Sulaima's lute here as standing in for the Arabic poetic tradition more generally, particularly the school exemplified by Ibn ᶜArabī and Ibn al-Fāriḍ, who expressed a mystical sensibility through the poetic landscape of pre-Islamic Arabia.

The next verse moves us from disorientation on the path to an exhortation on how to write about it. Wordplay connects verses 5 and 6: just as Zinda-Rūd must be *rāh-shinās*, recognizing the way, so his boat must be *rū-shināsi*, acquainted or familiar with, the ocean depths containing large, mysterious creatures (*nahangān*, sea-monsters or leviathans, whales). No one wants to hear about smooth sailing, Ḥallāj tells us—what makes a good story is the adventure of hunting and capturing (*qaid u ṣaid*) the fantastic beasts whose presence can only be detected by looking more closely beneath what might appear to be still waters.

Confusion over which path to take, its direction and expression, can be clarified, Ḥallāj suggests to Zinda-Rūd in the next verse, through discipleship to the right teacher or leader. He describes himself as the *murīd*—a particularly Sufi-inflected word for student or follower, typically paired with *pīr*, master or teacher—not of an individual, but of a quality of a particular kind of voyager. He follows the *himmat* (a multivalent word connoting power, strength, intention, and magnanimity, often in a sense of spiritual force) of *that* way-farer (*ān rah-rav*) who would never choose the easy road, setting foot instead on a path containing obstacles such as the mountains, deserts, and rivers/oceans (*kūh u dasht u daryā*). An oblique reference here may be to Khiẓr, a qur'anic prophet associated with travel, immortality, and gnostic initiation. In Islamic literature, particularly in Persian, Khiẓr is a multifaceted entity appearing as "a spiritual guide to Moses, Alexander, or to a Sufi adept…a guide to strained travelers on land and sea…[a

ruler of natural features such as] vegetation, waters and deserts, [which become] green and blossoming under his steps or touch…[a patron] over the sea, navigation and the sailors."[71]

Ḥallāj's *ghazal* ends with another invocation of the importance of a spiritual guide, warning Zinda-Rūd against pledging himself or swearing an oath (*baiᶜat*) to a master (here we have the companion word, *pīr*, to the *murid* of the previous verse) who is unwilling to cause an uproar (*ghaughā*). This *pīr* is introduced by the verse as someone who would be a participant in socially and religiously frowned-upon activities such as wine-drinking (*bāda-paimā*); the identification of this master and his like-minded circle as *rindān* (sing. *rind*) draws on long-standing associations in the Persianate Sufi tradition of outer comportment's inverse relationship with inner integrity. A *rind* is a reprobate, a dissolute, a libertine; they behave objectionably for the sake of the objectionable behavior itself. The shock value of their speech and actions serves to remind both themselves and those who observe them of the ultimate absurdity of worldly attachments and regulations. Instead, the *rind*, through their disregard for the religious law, frees themselves from the hypocrisy associated with the sanctimonious representatives of Islam in the Sufi tradition—the *shaikh*, *mulla*, and preacher—seeking to demonstrate the lie of the prohibition by flouting it. The *rind* is a particularly salient figure in the poetry of Ḥāfiẓ, who exploited the various interpretive possibilities for their insouciance to great effect: "seen from the perspective of dialectic Love, this art is the art of the lover in quest of union with the Beloved; considered from the point of view of ethical conduct it will be simply the art of the inspired libertine, whose provocative, scandalous attitude shocks the narrow-minded."[72]

[71] Anna Krasnowolska, "Ḵeżr," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kezr-prophet.
[72] Daryush Shayegan, "The Visionary Topography of Hafiz," in Elizabeth Gray, *The Green Sea of Heaven: Fifty ghazals from the Diwan of Hafiz* (Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 1995), 29.

A repeating concept, necessitated by the dictates of the *ghazal*'s formal rhyme scheme, is the end-rhyme of *nīst*—"is not," grammatical negation. This *radīf* would seem to resonate well with a speaker known for the complete absorption of the self into the divine, although the grammatical function of the negative in the verses works, paradoxically, to affirm a positive statement; i.e. "Someone else's luster / is *un*worthy of your demand"; "love is *not* alone"; "What song is *not* contained / in Sulaima's lute?," and so on. With this affirmation-through-negation in its formal structure, the *ghazal* performs rhetorically the other antitheses contained in its imagery: an unseen fire from within vs. someone else's luster, a self-fixed gaze vs. world-eclipsing radiance, reason vs. love. This structure is also reminiscent of the relationship between *lā* and *illā* introduced in the section on Nietzsche, whom, after all, Rumi describes to Zinda-Rūd as a "Ḥallāj without gallows and rope" (*īn Ḥallāj bī-dār u rasan*).

In her discussion of the impact of Hallaj on Iqbal's thought, Schimmel observes that, while the ecstatic utterance of "I am the Truth" (meaning, "I am God") is not present in this portrayal in the *Jāvīdnāma*, Iqbal was well-acquainted with how Hallaj and his saying had been depicted and interpreted in Islamic literature. "His word *ana al-haqq* seemed to intend the absolute, substantial, union of man and God, and it is small wonder that this expression became popular in all Sufi circles and was used without discretion by all those poets who had realized—or pretended to have—the essential unity of Divine and human nature, transgressing all boundaries of orthodox Islamic teaching."[73] Schimmel's skepticism of this traditional interpretation is shared, she argues, by Iqbal, who was more inclined towards Rumi's understanding of the matter:

> As to Maulana Rumi, Iqbal's spiritual guide, he has compared the situation of him who cries *ana al-haqq* to that of iron cast into fire (Math. II 1347); "The colour of iron lies in the colour of fire, and the iron calls: I am the fire, you may touch me and understand that

[73] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 345.

> I am really fire…" That means that there is no substantial union—for iron remains materially and substantially iron, but a union of the attributes: iron takes the heat and the colour of fire.[74]

Schimmel observes that Iqbal must have been familiar with Massignon's work on Hallaj based on his reference to Massignon's 1913 critical edition of the *kitāb al-ṭawāsīn* in a 1916 letter. At that time, however, Iqbal was critical of Hallaj. What may have prompted his re-evaluation over the following decades remains unclear (Iqbal and Massignon did meet, in fact, in Paris in 1932), but Massignon's interpretation of *ana al-ḥaqq* dovetails well with Iqbal's developing philosophy of *khudī*, as Schimmel notes in her quotation from *La passion d'al-Hosayn-Ibn-Mansour al Hallaj*: "the Divine Unity does not result in destroying the personality of the mystic but it makes him more perfect, more sacred, more divine, and makes him its free and living organ."[75]

The most instructive instance of the *ghazal* in the *Jāvīdnāma* is the final one. It is not specifically demarcated as such in the text, in contrast to most other instances, including Hallaj's *ghazal*, where the formal switch is marked by a new subheading indicating a "song." Instead, this last lyric interruption directly follows the rhymed couplets of the *masnavī* preceding it; the reader, unprepared for the shift, would be caught by surprise by the longer meter and altered rhyme scheme:

> *uftādan-i tajallī-yi jalāl*
> "Manifestation of divine splendor"
>
> [*masnavī*]
>
> *nāghāṇ dīdam jahān-i <u>kh</u>vīsh rā*
> *āl-i zamīn u āsmān-i <u>kh</u>vīsh rā*
>
> Suddenly I saw my own world,
> the people of my own earth and sky:

[74] Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 348.
[75] Massignon, *La Passion*, 117, as quoted in Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 347; see also Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 351n68.

gharq dar nūr-i shafaq-gūn dīdam-ash
surkh mānand-i ṭabarkhūn dīdam-ash

I saw it drowned in dusk-red light,
crimson as a jujube I saw it.

z-āṇ tajallī-hā kih dar jān-am shikast
chūṇ kalīm allāh futādam jalva mast

From those splendors that split open in my soul,
Like Moses I fell down drunk with brilliance.

nūr-i ū har pardagī rā vā namūd
tāb-i guftār az zabān-i man rubūd

The light of it revealed every veiled thing,
and robbed the power of speech from my tongue.

az ẓamīr-i ᶜālam-i bī-chand u chūn
yak navā-yi sūznāk āmad birūn

From the core of the world of without how and when
a burning voice burst forth:

[*ghazal*]

1 *bu-guzar az khāvar u afsūnī-yi afrang ma-shau*
kih na-yarzad bi-jū'i īn hama dīrīna u nau

Leave the east, don't be
enchanted by the west:
it isn't worth one grain,
all this old and new.

2 *āṇ nigīni kih tu bā ahrimān bākhta-ī*
ham bi-jibrīl-i āmīnī na-tawān kard girau

That gem you gambled
away to Ahriman
cannot be wagered, even
to trustworthy Gabriel.

3 *zindagī anjuman-ārā va nigāh-dār-i khud ast*
ay kih dar qāfila-ī bī hama shau bā hama rau

Life adorns the assembly,
watches over itself.
You—in the caravan—
be without all, go with all.

4 *tu firauzanda-tar az mihr-i munīr āmada-ī*
ān-chunān zī kih ba-har ẓurra rasānī partau

You've shown up brighter
than the radiant sun:
live like this, that a ray
lights up every atom.

5 *chūn par-i kāh kih dar rah-guzar-i bād uftād*
raft Iskandar u Dārā u Qubād u Khusrau

Like blades of grass fallen
in the path of the wind,
Alexander and Darius and Qubād and Khusro
have gone.

6 *az tanuk jāmī-yi tu mai-kada rusvā gardīd*
shīsha'ī gīr va ḥakīmāna biyāshām va bi-rau

Your cup, so slight,
disgraced the tavern:
Grab a glass, drink
wisely, and go!

While this encounter leaves Zinda-Rūd voiceless and awe-struck (the manifestation causes him to fall down "drunk with brilliance" like Moses before the burning bush, and robs him of the ability to speak), it does not result in either apotheosis or self-annihilation. In the introductory narrative verses of the *masnavī* section, it is interesting to note that at the end of this grand cosmic journey, the vision Zinda-Rūd has is not of a realm beyond even paradise, but of his *own* world, the "people of [his] own earth and sky" (*āl-i zamīn u āsmān-i khvīsh rā*), illuminated by divine light. Even as we have reached the farthest distance from our starting place on earth, the attention of Zinda-Rūd and the reader is brought back to where we began. The voice reciting this

ghazal, though, is "from the core of the world of without how and when" (*az ẓamīr-i ᶜālam-i bī-chand u chūn*), as well as representing the "manifestation of divine splendor" (*tajallī-yi jalāl*), which at the moment of its self-disclosure collapses the distinction between the individual standing before the divine and the divine itself. In the writings of Ibn ᶜArabī, "the unveiling of *kashf* by which an individual receives a manifestation of the divine, is a polar complement to *tajallī*, the active divine self-manifestation through the complete human being. In the perspective shift, the act of *tajallī* and the act of *kashf* are one act…in the act of manifestation, the one who receives the manifestation (*al-mutajallī lahu*) is identical to the one being manifested (*al-mutajallī*)."[76] The word *tajallī*, along with the location of the undimensioned world, should by this point signal to the reader that the usual order of progression in meter, rhyme, and logic is about to be interrupted.

Shifting to *ghazal* mode, the first verse presents two commands: "leave the east" (*bu-guzar az khāvar*) and "don't be enchanted by the west" (*afsūnī-yi afrang ma-shau*). These imperatives suggest that the addressee (second person singular "you") be "neither of the east nor of the west" (*lā sharqiyya wa lā gharbiyya*), in the Qur'an's famous description of the divine light,[77] but instead occupy a liminal space, identifying completely with neither. All this "old and new" (*dīrīna u nau*) as the second hemistich puts it, isn't worth one "grain" (*jū'i*), which in the Islamic tradition is the equivalent of the forbidden fruit that occasioned Adam's exile from paradise. The ordering of "old and new" suggests a parallel to the ordering of "east" and "west" in the first hemistich, with "east" identified with "old" and "west" with "new."

[76] Michael Sells, "Ibn 'Arabi's Polished Mirror: Perspective Shift and Meaning Event," *Studia Islamica* 67 (1988), 144-45.
[77] Sūra al-nūr, Q 24:35.

The third verse opens with a claim about the nature of life—that it both graces or adorns the assembly (*anjuman-ārā*) and is the guardian of its own self (*nigāh-dār-i khud ast*). This abstract statement is reified in the second line in the situation of an addressee who must somehow both "be without all" (*bī hama shau*) and "go with all" (*bā hama rau*). The paradoxes in both lines turn on the juxtaposition of self and other, individual and collective. Life is what enlivens and beautifies the gathering together of people, but also must guard its selfhood; the "you"—who is already in the caravan—must continue on the journey with the group but also exist without them. The tight repetition of these last imperatives shows just how close to one another these opposites are: *bī hama shau bā hama rau*, the words running together with only the slight variations of *bī* (without)/*bā* (with) and *shau* (be or become)/*rau* (go) to distinguish them. Antithetical pairings are both a key part of Iqbal's lyrics and of Sufi thought more generally,[78] with the contrast between *khalva* (seclusion, retreat) and *jalva* (manifestation), and the paradox of *khalvat dar anjuman* (solitude in the assembly), appearing and reappearing across multiple genres of poetry and prose writing.

The fourth verse reintroduces some of the language of radiance and illumination we saw in Hallaj's *ghazal*: *firauz* (replacement, by metrical license, for *afrauz*—burning, brightening), *mihr-i munīr* (the shining sun), *partau* (beam or ray of light). Because your brilliance exceeds even the sun, the voice of divine splendor says, you must live in such a way that every atom (*ẕurra*, also mote, speck, particle[79]) will be lit up. The imagery of the sun, and the dance of dust particles only visible in its beams, is also heavily invoked in the poetry of Rumi.[80] Verse 5 underscores the ephemeral nature of the world, listing mythical kings whose names and

[78] Schimmel has referred to these in various writings as *polaren Begriffspaaren* or *Gegensatzpaaren*; see Chapter 2 of this dissertation.
[79] "A mote in the sunbeams." Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, 558.
[80] See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*.

accomplishments bow to the sweep of history "like blades of grass fallen/in the path of the wind."

The sixth and final verse of this *ghazal*, and of the *Jāvīdnāma* as a whole, leaves us with a puzzling takeaway. Zinda-Rūd's cup (*jām*, or wineglass) is narrow and delicate (*tanuk*), which has brought disgrace to the tavern (*mai-kada*). The last hemistich gives three commands in a row: grab a glass (*shīsha'ī gīr*), drink wisely (*ḥakīmāna biyāshām*), and go (*bi-rau*). The narrowness of the cup is an unexpected image; conventionally in the Persian tradition, the wineglass is wide, round, and open, often metaphorically a laughing mouth, an opened heart, or a mirror in which the beloved's face appears. The suggestion, perhaps, is that Zinda-Rūd's cautious approach to drunkenness is a disgrace to the tavern, whose inhabitants should be madly, joyfully intoxicated with the wine of the primordial covenant. While the voice of the manifestation orders him to get a real glass and a real drink, however, it does not want him to stay there—the imperative to drink is tempered by the adverb "wisely" as well as the command to leave once he has done so. We end with a motion of beginning again; the final word is "go," the destination unknown. Because the final *ghazal* formally subverts our expectations of narrative closure, it positions Zinda-Rūd, the reader, and the *Jāvīdnāma* as a whole in a space of continual and open-ended travel. The *ghazal* both destabilizes, in the sense of interrupting a straightforward trajectory, and re-orients, in the sense that this very disruption serves to remind us to resist our desire for a straightforward path. Wandering throughout the *masnavī*, the *ghazal*s of the *Jāvīdnāma* exemplify instabilities of linguistic and embodied strivings toward metaphysical destinations that generate creative power from their inherent incompletion.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Taking a cue from the *Jāvīdnāma*'s last lines, I am hesitant to attempt to introduce narrative closure, but some concluding remarks …. Orient ourselves between looking back at the stations already traversed and looking ahead to the guideposts for the path to come. The chapters of this dissertation have read the *ghazal*s of Iqbal as instantiations of a poetic method foregrounding ambiguity and paradox, resisting claims to absolute meaning through formal and rhetorical features that set up a horizon of expectation only to subvert it. Such features include apostrophe and the imperative voice (Chapter 2), metaphor and convention (Chapter 3), and a marked contrast to narrative temporality and forward motion (Chapter 4). The *ghazal* advances its own method for reading, training us to inhabit the paradoxical space between the binaries we attempt to resolve as an interpretive practice: both and neither I/you, past/future, eastern/western, traditional/modern, metaphorical/literal, immanent/transcendent, unified/fragmentary, and so on.

Scholarship on modern Islam—that is to say, scholarship concerning itself with the processes referred to as "revival and reform" from the late 18th century onwards across the Islamic world—has tended to rely on precisely such binaries. The idea of a rupture, disjuncture, or identifiable incommensurability between Islamic "tradition" and "modernity," particularly in politics, law, and education, have located these spheres as the arenas in which questions about what Islam is and could be are contested and negotiated, largely to the exclusion of literature and cultural expression.[1] Even scholarly work that does look at poetry, such as Frances Pritchett's

[1] Scholarship on modern Islamic literature and aesthetics tends to focus on fiction (especially the novel), visual art, and film; for instance in Abir Hamdar and Lindsey Moore, eds., *Islamism and Cultural Expression in the Arab World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), none of the chapters are about poetry. For more on law, see Wael Hallaq, *The Impossible State: Islam, Politics, and Modernity's Moral Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Iza Hussin, *The Politics of Islamic Law: Local Elites, Colonial Authority, and the Making of the Muslim State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Julia Stephens, *Governing Islam: Law, Empire, and Secularism in South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Hussein Agrama, *Questioning*

Nets of Awareness, is more interested in assessing what has been "lost" rather than what has survived and in what forms. We can trace this tendency across a variety of disciplines that consider Islam, the Middle East, and South Asia—a tendency to revalorize pre-modern ways of knowing and forms of expression that situate them as (positively) irreconciliable with modernity; a kind of nostalgic project of retrieval to counter "modern" trends whose basis rests on refutation of the irrational and pre-modern. This invariably ends up, however, re-inscribing divisions between "modern" and "traditional," "inside" and "outside," "authentic" and "imported" that it would seek to undermine. For Pritchett, the *ghazal* is incompatible with contemporary tastes in the same way that, for Wael Hallaq, for instance, Islamic law is incompatible with the modern nation-state. By demonstrating the centrality of the *ghazal* and its unsettling of such interpretive parameters for a figure like Iqbal, taken to be an exemplar of Islamic modernist thinking, I hope to have pointed towards a new way to attend to the intersections of religion, politics, and literary language in studies of contemporary Islam.

For Iqbal, the stakes of composing *ghazal* poetry in the early 20th century were high. In Chapter 1, we connected the questions of the Persianate poetic tradition, Muslim political identity, and Iqbal scholarship and criticism both within and beyond South Asia in terms of their relationship to colonial configurations of religion and literature that emerged in the aftermath of the 1857 rebellion. Having argued against the prevailing critical view that Iqbal's poetry serves his philosophical and religious "message" of truth and certainty, we might fairly ask, having now

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Secularism: Islam, Sovereignty and the Rule of Law in Egypt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Noah Salomon, *For Love of the Prophet: An Ethnography of Sudan's Islamic State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), chapter 4 of which, "The Country That Prays upon the Prophet the Most: The Aesthetic Formation of the Islamic State," looks at the use of *madīḥ* or praise poetry in popular music. For more on education, see Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds., *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007), and on politics: Roxanne Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

read a selection of his Persian (and some Urdu) verse, whether or not Iqbal himself is in fact doing what the critics say he is. Wouldn't Iqbal have agreed that Nietzsche, for instance, is penultimate—that beyond the *lā* there is a necessary and ultimate *illā*? That even a poem's resistance to disclosure itself a form of disclosure? The demands that are made on Iqbal's *ghazal*s, however, themselves point to their irreducibility to a single vision animating texts across his oeuvre. To begin with, we must consider the deliberate use of the *ghazal* itself: if a claim to truth is the goal, with the option of writing in prose, in narrative verse, in other short forms, why choose a form and a primary language (Persian) deeply associated with textual artifice, if not to trouble the distinction? Even the question of intentionality is one the *ghazal* undermines. If we were to ascribe a particular authorial intent to any one *ghazal*, the textual features we explored are bound to frustrate it, introducing resistance in a proliferation of possible meaning. If the *ghazal*, and by extension lyric expression, animates anxieties for Iqbal criticism about the relationship between poetry and philosophy, tradition and modernity, or Islamic pasts and futures, this insistence on certainty, the *ẕauq-i yaqīn*, can help us to think about how structures of power, or claims to truth, are imposed into texts in order to assuage the very anxieties they produce in the reader. As the nightingale singing to the rose, a disruption in form, or a paradoxical command, poetic language will always gesture towards and defer revelation in the same moment.

APPENDIX 1: Original *Ghazal* Translations

Payām-i Mashriq

Ghazal #16

Learn to string the prayer bead
on the sacred thread.
If your sight's two-seeing,
learn to unsee.

Set foot outside the bud's
secluded place. Like perfume,
diffuse into the morning breeze
and learn to breathe.

If you were created
worthless dew, rise—
and on the tulip's scarred heart
learn to drop.

If you were formed
a fresh-blooming rose's thorn,
protect the garden's honor:
learn to prick.

If the gardener uproots
you from your flowerbed,
once more, verdantly,
learn to blossom.

So that you come out
more burning, bitter still,
withdraw into the cask
and learn to age.

How far will you remain
enfolded in others' wings?
In the air of the garden
learn to fly free.

I knocked on the door of the tavern.
The young Magi said to me:
light a fire in the sanctuary,
learn to flare hot.

Bāl-i Jibrīl

Ghazal #40

Beyond the stars there are even more worlds;
there are now even more tests of love.

These wide spaces are not empty of life:
there are hundreds more caravans here.

Don't content yourself with the world of color and scent:
there are even more gardens, more nests.

Why grieve for the loss of one nest?
There are even more places to sigh and lament.

You are a falcon. Your task is to fly.
Before you are even more horizons.

Don't stay in the snare of this day-and-night:
your time and place is even more.

The days of my solitude in the assembly are gone.
The ones who understand are even more, here, now.

Zabūr-i ᶜAjam

Ghazal #28

The heart of the birds in this garden
changes time and time:
There's one—on the rose branch. Another—in the nest.

Look within yourself: what is
this world-lamenting?
If your sight can change, so too the world.

If your eye's discerning,
in every age the tavern path
and the Magi's charm changes.

Send my blessing
to the caravan leader. Say:
while the road is the same, the caravan is changed.

Ghazal #23

A song brought down on me
the end of days, and no one knew—
to the crowd there's only
the sharp and flat, the tone and mood.

In my essence, love
and exalted thought were mixed:
unlike the moon, I am
eternal unfulfillment.

Close your lips to lamentation;
content yourself with separation.
Love doesn't know its own allure
until it draws out a sigh.

Be ablaze. Burn
the dry brush before you.
For souls of dust there is no passage
in the sanctuary of living.

You are a falcon. Don't consort
with birds that sing.
Rise, spread wing
and feather: your flight is not cut short.

The poet is a firefly
in being's dark bed-chamber.
On his feathered wings sometimes
light gleams; sometimes not.

With a ghazal, Iqbal divulged so much
of the states of selfhood
that this new-unbeliever is unaware
of the monastery's customs.

Jāvīdnāma

"Song of Ḥallāj"

Seek an unseen fire
from your own dust,
Someone else's luster
is unworthy of your demand.

My own gaze is so self-fixed
that while the friend's radiance
eclipses the world, I have
no chance to see.

For Jamshid's realm I would not give
that verse of Nāẓīrī:
"The one who isn't slain
is not from our tribe."

Although reason, that conjurer,
mustered an army,
don't be heavy-hearted –
love is not alone.

You don't know the way—
haven't heard of the station—
What song isn't contained
in Sulaima's lute?

Tell a tale
of hunting sea-monsters—
don't say our boat
is unacquainted with the sea.

I follow the force of that traveler
who only set foot
on a path across
mountains, deserts, and oceans.

Join in the circle
of wine-drinking reprobates:
beware of committing to a master
who won't cause an uproar.

“Manifestation of the Divine Presence”

Leave the east, don’t be
enchanted by the west:
it isn’t worth one grain,
all this old and new.

That gem you gambled
away to Ahriman
cannot be wagered, even
to trustworthy Gabriel.

Life adorns the assembly,
watches over itself.
You—in the caravan—
be without all, go with all.

You’ve shown up brighter
than the radiant sun:
live like this, that a ray
lights up every atom.

Like blades of grass fallen
in the path of the wind,
Alexander and Darius and Qubād and Khusro
have gone.

Your cup, so slight,
disgraced the tavern:
Grab a glass, drink
wisely, and go!

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