

A STUDY OF IQBAL'S CONCEPT OF
AESTHETICS AS DIDACTIC IN
SADEQUAIN PAINTING AT LAHORE
MUSEUM

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ABSTRACT

Allama Iqbal has written on various academic, literary, social and philosophical topics. He has also made the concept of beauty the subject of his poetry and prose writings. The paintings of prominent painter and artists Sadeqain have an important place in the artistic interpretation of Allama Iqbal's concept of beauty. These paintings are displayed in the Lahore Museum which convey Allama Iqbal's concept of beauty and ideology through visual content and calligraphy. Allama Iqbal was of the view that reality can be expressed and described through beauty. Every beautiful thing is a manifestation of God. According to him, the artist's job is to highlight the hidden beauty scattered in the universe. The paintings made by Sadiqain also explain Allama Iqbal's concept of self. The change of the world is in the hands of human beings. Sadiqain's painting of Bal Jibril's early poems is of extraordinary importance. These highlight the meaning through visual expression and colors. Sadiqain has made these parts of Allama Iqbal's poetry the subject of his painting, in which the problems faced by the human race, the secrets of the universe, the meaning of life, the role of man in the universe, oppression and authority, evolution and survival, and reason and love are included. Sadiqain's painting describes Allama Iqbal's concept of self in a way that how this concept can be a source of self-realization and human evolution.

Introduction

Iqbal emphasis on the theory of beauty and his writing emphasizes on the intellectual change within an individual or among the whole society. This change is interpreted visually through many artists but one of the paintings by Sadequain presents at Lahore Museum communicates Iqbal's ideology through visuals and text (calligraphy). This paper will give comparison of two different expressions of poetry and image and will visually communicate the message for interpreting art and it's didactic for masses.

This paper, on a broader sense is a content analysis of Iqbal's poetry and related artwork for interpreting the hidden reasons and didactics. Sadequain interprets his inspiration and crux of Iqbal's poetry through his calligraphic verses and paintings present at the Lahore Museum, Lahore.

There are different writers and scholars who gave analysis over Iqbal's concepts. Shafique documented the illustrated biography of Iqbal's verses on different theorist and their contribution for the masses for deeper understanding of the Muslim scientists. It was Iqbal's presidential address during the oriental conference held in Lahore in 1923, made reply to various questions regarding the Muslim preference, as a mode of self-expression, on architecture over music and painting. Iqbal further elaborated it by giving the references of Ibn Taimiyah, Ghazzali, Razi and Suharwardi Maqtul who were forerunners of beacon and described the concept of Art and spatial sciences along with philosophy. This revealed the true spirit of our culture and Islam which provided basis for the modern and western culture earlier in 10th CE. Their theories and work that any form interprets through any field of aesthetic must have reasons to serve and bring change for masses.¹

Iqbal believed that during the development of his theory of art the reality was revealed through beauty. Every beautiful object has expression and is a manifestation of that divine beauty which envelopes the whole universe. He explained that the function of artist is to reveal that hidden beauty which encompasses the whole universe.²

Iqbal's inspirations: A short address on Iqbal's inspiration from the Quran, from the Quran ending with a quotation of a poem from Iqbal's *Bal-I Jibril*, with both in Urdu and English. Talk given at the East London Mosque, 1949.³

Morality in love is a dominant part in Iqbal's poetry is an analyses by Shelly. He further explains that great instrument of moral good is the imagination and poetry triggers that imagination. Shelly consider poet as prophet as it gives new dimension to life by transforming his own state into concrete fact.

Poet grasp the deepest reality tend to produce them in others too. According to Iqbal poet must produce this state of mind and if the poet succeeds in doing so, he is accomplishing the task of a prophet.

Iqbal liked the concept of Shelly that a true poet interprets reality and reveals its secrets to humanity.⁴

Iqbal analysis with the form of arts

Iqbal explains the hidden motive in the poetry of the poet. He rejects the art which may shut man's eye from reality and indulge him in the dreams dragging away him from reality. He takes his own art of poetry and analyze it with other forms of art in comparison to serving it with reasons for the masses.

در یم اندیشہ انداز د ترا
از عمل بیگانه می سازد ترا⁵

Dream of Thought

It makes you alien to action

Similar concept is given in his Urdu poetry

سرود و شعر و سیاست کتاب و دین و ہنر
گہر ہیں ان کی گرہ میں تمام یک دانہ
ضمیر بندہ خاکی سے ہے نمود ان کی
بلند تر ہے ستاروں سے ان کا کاشانہ
اگر خودی کی حفاظت کریں تو عین حیات
نہ کر سکیں تو سراپا فسوں و افسانہ
ہوئی ہے زیر فلک امتوں کی رسوائی
خودی سے جب ادب و دین ہوئے ہیں بیگانہ⁶

Anthem, poetry, politics, books, religion and art
Homes are all single grains in their knot
His conscience is from the khaki servant
Their star is higher than the stars
If you protect yourself, then life itself
If you can't do it, it's all about art and fiction
There has been a disgrace to the nations under the sky
When literature and religion are alien to the self

اے اہل نظر ذوق نظر خوب ہے لیکن
جو شے کی حقیقت کو نہ دیکھے، وہ نظر کیا

*O people of sight, taste is good, but
He who does not see the reality of the thing, sees it*

In the early writings of Iqbal, he admired the connectivity and used the word of intoxicating with reference to the enchanted poetry of Hafiz Shirazy when he was young. But later when Iqbal had this theme of existence of an individual seeing world with an open sight of mind and soul, then he rejected the idea of Hafiz Shirazi of being intoxicated in fantasy world which had no connection with the real life itself.

Iqbal insisted and rejected the art which may shut man's eye from the visual reality and push him towards the sleep of ignorance. Whereas, he compares the poetry of Urfi Shirazi turning the light on the heart of the listener; Art for life is a level of perfection where beauty and power units by transforming into love to reform self – actualization. Leave the luxuries and come to term with bitter realities to attain self-actualization and art for the sake of life and not enjoyment.

Poet gives new meanings to whatever he sees in nature. It is not the art to express the feeling, it is to know through unknown reality and its true meanings.

The Iqbal refers through his poetic ability that one can amplify hidden capabilities and face the reality with courage. The art should resolve the man within a way that can enable him to face the challenges of self-edifice. Art should imply as an escort with human mind and enrich its power to make the life more meaningful. A poet does not only see the nature as it is, he also specks what ought to be by resisting nature.

Iqbal emphasizes that the Muslims are adopting everything from west but not even knowing that if it is good for them or not. It is ruining their own identification and one day they will disappear from the stage of life.

The example of oneness is combining the two and producing a third life. Poets translate the abstract world in reality. According to Iqbal poetry does not work on logical patterns yet there is always something elusive to it which is the real beauty and at the end the art is beauty not truth.

The poet says that beauty without appreciation and practicality is useless. And if one does not pay thanks to Allah and does not walk on the path shown by the God, it is useless of being aware. Creative passion behind poetry is a blind force. The true will to live and strive is inspired by the moral impulse and becomes the love when self identifies itself with the objects of love.

Art for the sake of serving humanity

Iqbal explains that a person who regards spiritual depth for one self is not valid until there is some valid reason behind it. Or one shows internal strength in his way of living life.

God glorification is explained by the poet as the whole world gold to silver, beauty to skill everything is bestowed and made by God.

The poet explains again that whatever there is in world is there since the world came into existence. This world is made for the Allah's beloved Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) but for people they will have their judgment on their acts.

Sadequain's inspiration by Iqbal's poetry

Iqbal's section is comprised of 16 paintings and 14 sections of each of the two murals, where each section of the mural measuring 4 x 9 feet, is based on Iqbal's poetry. For each of the paintings and murals, their transliteration, translation and illustration are inscribed on the opposite page of the corresponding painting.

Iqbal of *Baal e Jibreel* is no longer a poet mourning about socio-political issues, instead unleashes the great human spirit in the form of *Mard-e-Momin*, and inherits the qualities of his creator and capable of changing destinies with a single glance.

This painting also reveals the Iqbal's concept of *khudi* and changing world is in the hands of an individual depending on the basic condition of self-realization.

Painting by Sadequain below is his take on one of the early poems in Iqbal's *Baal e Jibreel*. Interpreting Iqbal's concept in visuals and colors.



1. Source: Holy sinner, *Treasures of time, State Bank of Pakistan*. Mohatta Palace Karachi

Iqbal interprets the works of the philosophers of the past and states that the fine arts have been associated with all kinds of religions from the beginning. Man's finest architecture, which is a mixture of beauty and grandeur, both beautiful and glorious, can be seen in their temples. Stone carving, fetish carving and the painting have also been associated with religion from the beginning.

As opposite to Plato, Iqbal's poetry does not express an illusionary world beyond human senses but a real with all its history and time (that can only be viewed with the inner sense).

Iqbal takes love from the early concepts of Napoleon and Plato. According to which everything is connected with its inner and reflected out later.

Iqbal gives reference of Avicenna and believes that the whole core for achieving something is the ultimate struggle aiming for beauty.

Iqbal and foreign poet's analysis

Some of the distinguished philosophers are painted by Sadequain in the above painting. Here Iqbal's review of philosophers is interpreted in visual art.

The biggest reality of beauty is that it never stays forever, it is there for some time and then it just disappears or changes. This aspect of constant change in beauty with times is also explained by Keats in the same way that if the beauty stops then the struggle is not that adoring.

Iqbal perceived reality in terms of love, and not in terms of beauty in his later years. His concept of beauty undergoes certain changes in attaining the love of the creator and then love being everything. Love for Iqbal is the sole of the creation, beauty, and the power which grows human life.

Iqbal shares his feelings on creativeness with Blake and Coleridge. He believes that creativity is the attribute which we share with God. He believes that God is the poet and the supreme creative artist who makes others follow him.

Plato believed that the poet is not morally responsible for whatever he expresses as the words are ordered by divine force outside him. Unlike Plato, Iqbal says as man has got more privileged than others, therefore he bears greater responsibility to God.

Neitzche perceived Art and human self in two categories *Apollonian* and *Dionysian* and prefers Dionysus self which is the manifestation of change and vitality. Iqbal categories it with *Jalal* and *Jamal* and suggests a counter balance between two. He explains that *Jamal* without *Jalal* is nothing.

Poetic interpretation of Sadequain in Paintings

Sadequain interpreted the poetry of Ghalib, Iqbal and Faiz. These interpretations are awe inspiring because of their thematic intensity. He was deeply interested in the issues that have challenged the best minds of human race focusing the question about mysteries of the universe, meaning of life on our planet and beyond, role of human beings in the universe, freedom and self-determination, survival and progress, and finding the fine line between reasons and emotions. The concept of *kehudi*/self, interpreted by Iqbal is similar in sadequain paintings, his verses painted illustrates various states of self-realization and consciousness. As archetypal expression of mystic vision, these paintings transcend our latent susceptibilities. This holds a beacon to the path of enlightenment, guides through the gateway of spiritual freedom, and provides a conduit to transpersonal truth. In these paintings, Sadequain seeks to share his observation, experiences, and interpretation in seeking the truth, and

the relationship to the world around him and beyond, having reasons to promote and preserve human and there responsibility for others.



2. Source: Holy sinner, *Treasures of time*, State Bank of Pakistan. Mohatta Palace. Karachi

Iqbal's Verses:

دیکھے تو زمانے کو اگر اپنی نظر سے	افلاک منور ہوں تے نور سحر سے
خورشید کرے کسب ضیا تیرے شر سے	ظاہر تری تقدیر ہو سیمائے قمر سے
دریا متلاطم ہوں تری موج گہر سے	شر مندہ ہو فطرت تے اعجاز ہنر سے
اغیار کے افکار و تخیل کی گدائی	کیا تجھ کو نہیں اپنی خودی تک بھی رسائی؟ ^۸

If you look at the times with your own eyes
 May the heavens be enlightened by the light of dawn
 Khurshid kare kisb zia tere sharar se
 Apparent progress is destiny from Seema Qamar
 The river is turbulent with waves
 Be ashamed of nature's miracles
 Begging for the thoughts and ideas of Aghyar
 Don't you have access to your own self?

Iqbal interpretation of verses reveal his believes during the development of his theory that reality is revealed through beauty. Every beautiful object is the manifestation of that divine beauty which envelopes and surrounds the whole universe. He explained that the function of an artist is to reveal that hidden beauty which

encompasses all universes. Further, Sadequain interpreted Iqbal theory stating that, the work of art cannot be produced by creative intuition only. According to Iqbal the desires which are generated out of fire of passion are fountain heads of Art. He further says that when we observe in God's world, we see deeper things within which are not clear just by looking at them. .

Art for Reason by Iqbal:

Iqbal himself is a master of expressions and lyrical visuals. In addition to being a poet, he was also a sage and could look wisely at the source and purpose of fine art. Most of the great poets have passed away who were perfect in their art, but they did not say anything about its true essence. Iqbal, auspiciously, was one of the few people who had such a delicate blend of poetry and wisdom in his nature that it became difficult to separate them from each other.

This refers to Sadequain's work during 1976-77 explaining Iqbal's thematic intensity of verse interpreted through painting in which painting from *Kuliyat-e-Iqbal* depicts moon rising, flying angel and world in collusion are shown in detail.

Sadequain painting at Lahore Museum:

Painting in bottom have figures, painting canvases and utensils covered with cobweb. Sadequain depicted the cobwebs engulfing society.

Art is not just sake of amusement joy or giving false imagination but serves as a tool for the individual to think and analyze oneself deeply and make himself aware of the real world. The challenges of self-identification, whom, Why and What an individual is doing.



Contemporary Art Gallery Lahore Museum,
Photo courtesy: Lahore Museum.
Size: 63. 2x88. Acc no PNG. 4

Painting above is a visual representation of figures evolved with phantasmagoric exploration of form and substance. It emerges with series of canvases in background and painting material in front. Figures are strong and subtle, stripping anatomizing recreating the skeletal forms beneath the visual flesh skeletons. Male and female figures are stuck with self-realization. They are in process to know their contribution or part to depict through skill they are keeping. It shows evolvment in new social and emotional credo of the essential unity of material things. All are caught in the agonizing toils of an evolutionary process of struggle goading them upwards from ground. He represented it as social commentary by showing cob-webbed canvases and one of the figures is encircled by the crown of atrophied oblivion. His huge canvasses are stylized and deliberately contrived though it is depicting the conflict of peaceful forces. Sadequain paintings are also the timeless inspirational point exerted from the poetry of Iqbal.

This depiction of Iqbal's paintings were visualized by Sadequain attentively, but more so to their forms, than their features. He focused on the elongated limbs or the tortured bodies to capture the emotion of the subject of his work rather than on delicate features or vivid color scheme. For capturing interpretation and the concept, he used monochrome colors along with distortion which reflects emphasis on the subject matter hidden behind the visuals. These visual showed his interest in the diverse literature and inspiration through the concepts which he painted.

لیکر تو خطوط کے سہارے ، آجا
واپس مرے صادقین پیارے آجا
ایوان کے دریا کے کنارے آجا
تو خلوتِ تصویر میں بولی تصویر

Come to the house by the river
You spoke in solitude
With the help of letters, come
Come back dear Sadequain

Sadequain reveals about letters which states about responsibility which he has to fulfil eventually. Without any reason painting the picture have no worth. Reason to call him back is to give reason for doing work and interpret narrative which benefits later. Here the letters are the reminder of his work. Although Iqbal is not against

writing drama instead he insisted that it is an imitation which wrecker's oneself by showing something false and is not real.

بڑھتے ہوئے طوفاں میں چلا آیا ہوں
پھر کوچہ جاناں میں چلا آیا ہوں
ایوان کے ایوان میں چلا آیا ہوں
میں کوچہ جاناں سے نکل کر واپس

I have come to the House of Commons
Get out of the main street and go back
I have been in growing storms
Then I went to Kocha Janan (beloved)

Sadequain explained himself through different verses. That he needs to come back from where he started his journey; when his thoughts and vision were aligned. But after roaming around at wrong paths, I am back to the state of being loved by my loved ones. Here Sadequain explains about to be sure about what one is doing. This act must have a vision to follow. Here he points out from his interpretation to Iqbal's struggle for reality in which Iqbal insisted on leaving a comfortable life and come to know the bitter realities faced by a thinker. Iqbal takes art a constant struggle.

اسد عمر کارکھ کے جام، واپس پہنچا کرنے جو ہے میرا کام واپس پہنچا
سوٹھ کا تھا، مگر منزل نقاشی میں میں صبح کا بھولا شام واپس پہنچا

Asad Omar's rakh jam, returned It belonged to it, but the floor was in painting All I have to do is get back to work I forgot the morning and returned in the evening.

Here Sadequain negates omer Khayum philosophy of doubt on almost every facet of religious belief, this is the reflection of Iqbal's poetry with a sensuous image which serves mere for the adoration is rejected by Iqbal. He argues that the real art of poetry which is not just versification but the one which opens up the secrets of life and reality.

ایوان کی شہزادی کے سر پر نہ تھا تاج
میں خانہ تصویر میں پہنچا جب آج
ہاں مؤقلم و لوح کا گڑا تھا مزاج
حلقے میں رباعی کے جو دو دن رہ کر

Han was in a bad mood by staying in the circle for four days. The princess of the house did not have a crown on her head when I arrived at the box office today.

Sadequain describe that he has remain static for four days. Painting is not complete due less effort. Paints and brushes are not prepared for painting. Painting subject is to paint crown of princess head. But without reason it seems impossible to paint. Love is the only source which brings the reality of soul and heart. And here not having crown on head means symbolically not presence of reality and sincerity.

مجھ سے مری آنکھوں سے کہ بہتا خوں تھا
میں شہر مصوری میں پلٹا یوں تھا
خیام کے کوچے میں گیا ہی کیوں تھا
پھر خانہ مانی میں یہ بولی اک لوح

I was back in town painting then in Khana Mani it was a tablet. There was blood flowing from my dead eyes why did he go to the tent coach?

Sadequain support and repeat inspiration from Iqbal that poetry needs reason and direction with logic. Poetry without reason are just words and they are effortless. That's why moving to wrong places is explained by and believing in intoxicated world concept given by Omer Khayyam is negated. Iqbal emphasis that the poetry dwells a person towards right and wrong, how one can write about immoral pleasure devoting poetry.

To imitate nature means not giving your creativeness a chance to express oneself Poet empressees the vitality and energy of his own being by using images of nature. The aesthetic theory of stern believes that poetry expresses that creative energy which manifests itself in self-expression. They believe poet as co-worker in the process of creativity. For them poetry is a source of ecliptic rapture (Sensuous involvement).

آیا نہ تو، گو میں نے بچھائیں آنکھیں
لیلائے مرعانی سے لڑ آئیں آنکھیں
اک لوح یہ بولی میری آئیں آنکھیں
کیوں کوچہ خیام میں جا کر تو نے

A tablet said this to my eyes why did you go to Kocha Khayyam?
No, even though I rolled my eyes fight the eyes with Leila Marani

Sadequain explains that he was at wrong place where poetry was not good for him because he was saying verses without any reason and expression of guidance. Omer Khayam philosophy about life and poetry abandonment of the individual in the world. Sadequain is not Existentialists he believe that society restricting an individual's life or actions and stopping inhibit to have its free will. Every person need to contribute its part for benefiting and believing other growth.

ہر جال کو حیرت کی نظر سے دیکھا
شوخی نہ شرارت کی نظر سے دیکھا
لوحر نے شکایت کی نظر سے دیکھا
میں خانہ تصویر میں پہنچا جب آج
بالکل ہی تو اجنبی وہاں تھا پیارے
کہتی ہے کہ اب تک تو کہاں تھا پیارے

Happiness did not look with mischief
When I arrived at the box office today
He looked at Har jal (everywhere) with amazement
Lohr looked at the complaint. That alley is not yours, dear
Now the box pictures every tablet from me
Absolutely, the stranger was there, dear
She says where you have been so far dear

Sadequain explains that he discourages himself to produce art which reflects joyous attributes in it. His painting reflects Iqbal's concept of art for reason discussed above. He narrates about going wrong way in his prose written on painting at Lahore Museum. An artist must discover within the depth of his own being. It is our light which is reflected in everything which is in surrounding.

In the world God has made nothing wrong, it's just that one has to open the eye within and look around with its third eye to speculate things and relate it to one self in right way.

تصویر میں ساحری کی سو جھی کیوں تھی
عرفی کو مصری کی سو جھی کیوں تھی
کل میں نے بھی کہہ لئے تھے اردو مصرعے

مل مجھ کو بھی شاعری کی سوچھی کیوں تھی
رکھتے ہوئے موقلم نکھاری اک رات
وہ زلف قلم لیکے سنواری اک رات
تفریح میں یوں سفر میں چلتے چلتے
خیام کے کوچے میں گزاری اک رات

Why was there is no understanding in the picture?
Why he was saying poetry Lu (nickname) he had no understanding?
Yesterday I had also asked why I had an understanding of poetry
One night he kept the pen and decorated it
I spent a night in a tent coach while traveling in this way for fun.

Sadequain says that he is holding pen to write but why he is doing it if he does not know its use. Secondly, he regrets about time for which he was convinced by the Omer Khayyam's concept of intoxication. He further says, it was wastage of all efforts done for writing and painting in past if that work has no light for others.

Conclusion:

Iqbal says to poet that when one is away from something, is better than having something because the struggle to achieve it is more important. To achieve something one should struggle all the time and it should carry on till the end of life.

Then again poet reinforces that poetry cannot be detached from life. He believes that real poetry springs out from the actual experience of human life. An artist makes an art alive by pouring his soul into it. Poet says in his verses that philosophy and knowledge is the only understandable way when one has to do a lot of effort to make it understandable.

Poet again argues in his verses no matter if one wants to have mastery in painting, music or sculptor he has to strive hard, otherwise it is in vain. By poet's point of view passion or intensity are the forces lying behind on a work of Art. A work of art is the outcome of passion or intensity hidden inside the poet. And this is the main factor which will be visible whatever art work is done.

Iqbal further explains that the poet is gifted with the quality to not only look into the future but also to instigate struggle done by humanity and achieve the destiny. Iqbal says that poets has great responsibility because they are the eye of the nation. Iqbal expresses

that the spiritual health of the people depends on the inspiration of its poet and artist. Iqbal insisted again and again that a life denying idea can destroy a nation more than anything else.

Iqbal's concept to express art and poetry is didactic and is depicted in Sadequain's painting present at museum collection. It also expresses his thought for skills, interest of individualism and the way to benefit the society through quest of self-realization. This concept for representing skills and through verses is followed by Sadequain. Iqbal interlaces verses and concept to introduce the didactics in all fields of Art, design and craft. This concept is followed by many others over the years. Art, design and craft are represented in different modes and mediums. But with reference to above verses Iqbal emphasizes on the work particularly which brings change for the humanity, the skills which represent the approach of living and growing a person as individual. He also insisted that your work must not dragging you away from reality and practical approach. It must give you practical approach in which your view towards religion and everyday life is balanced.

Iqbal disapproves the concept of art which does not move the people to bring about a change while on the other hand he says how European society was up-grading for bringing change. He wanted the same for his own nation.

Notes and References

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