

## MIRZA GHALIB AND MUHAMMAD IQBAL: A STUDY IN COMPARISON

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### Abstract:

Both Mirza Ghalib and Muhammad Iqbal are brand names in the field of literature written in Urdu and Persian languages. Both have achieved a legendary status not only in the subcontinent but across the world. They made experiments in both form and content in poetry. They represent the best that has been written in these languages and have set a bench mark for the prospective poets for all times to come. They have many things in common between them which is validated by the fact that Iqbal dedicates a poem on Ghalib and he features in his famous poem *Javid Nama* too. For Ghalib creating poetry is like drawing the heart blood from the veins of speech and Iqbal shared this understanding with him. Ghalib believes in creating meaning out of nowhere which makes his poetry enriching. If Ghalib is a master in creating meaning, Iqbal not only adds meaning to things but he is a poet with a message also. His poetry has meaning as well as message. Both of them are rebels in terms of the style and themes. Emerson's famous adage, 'Who so would be a man must be a non-conformist' fits well to both the poets due to their originality and freshness. The present paper attempts to compare the two poets by critically analysing their biographies, their beliefs about poetry, the contribution that they made to both Urdu and Persian languages and above all the thematic concerns. The study shall also attempt to evaluate critically their poetry so as to foreground the common things between them.

**Keywords:** Stray Reflections, Rekhta, *Domini*, *turfaqi-e-khayal*, *jiddat-o-nudrat-e-mazaamin*

Ghalib and Iqbal are the two greatest poets of the sub-continent in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Ghalib was born either on December 17 or 27, 1797 and died on 15 February 1869. Iqbal was born on November 7 1877, almost 9 years after Ghalib's death and died on 21 April 1938. Both of them wrote poetry in Persian and Urdu languages and the best that has been written is in their Persian poetry as per their own opinion. Critics have gone to the extent of saying that Iqbal was born to take to the logical conclusion the unfinished mission of Ghalib. Before we come to analyse and compare their poetry let us take a look at what Iqbal says about Ghalib. It is well known to all that Iqbal treated Ghalib as his master and he has not only praised him in his poetry but in his prose too, that is, in *Stray Reflections* (1961). He records the

following impressions about Ghalib:

As far as I can see Mirza Ghalib-the Persian poet-is probably the only permanent contribution that we- Indian Muslims-have made to the general Muslim literature. Indeed he is one of those poets whose imagination and intellect place them above the narrow limitations of creed and nationality. His recognition is yet to come. (50)

Iqbal goes on to express his gratitude to Ghalib in the following way:

I confess I owe a great deal to Mirza Ghalib and Abdul Qadir Bedil as they taught me how to remain oriental in spirit and expression after having assimilated foreign ideals of poetry. (53)

In addition to this, Iqbal has also written a poem on Ghalib in which he highlights the worth and contribution of Ghalib as he writes:

فکرِ انساں پر تری ہستی سے یہ روشن ہوا  
چہ پر مرغِ تخیل کی رسائی تا کجا

Fikar-e- Insan Per Teri Hasti Se Ye Roshan

Huwa

Hai Per-e-Muragh-e-Takhayul Ki Rasayi Ta

Kuja

Through you the secret was revealed to the human  
intellect

That innumerable enigmas are solved by human intellect

(Khalil71)

لطفِ گویائی میں تیری ہمسری ممکن نہیں  
تجسسِ کاذب تک فکرِ کامل نہیں

Lutaf-e-Goyai Mein Teri Humsari Mumkin Nahin

Ho Takhayul Ka Na Jab Tak Fikar-e-Kamil Hum Nasheen

Matching you in literary elegance is not possible

Till maturity of thought and imagination are combined

(Khalil 71)

In this poem Iqbal glorifies Ghalib's creative imagination. He also compares Ghalib with Goethe and finds life in his songs. Khundmiri in his book *Some Aspect of Iqbal's Poetic Philosophy* argues, "This is not a mere poetic simile; there is a deeper kinship of spirit between Ghalib and Goethe. If 'ceaseless striving' has a meaning in itself for Goethe, 'Striving even if it is fruitless is a source of joy for Ghalib" (12). Such was the influence of Ghalib on Iqbal that he brings him together with the other poets- Byron, Browning and Rumi in his *Payam-i- Mashriq*. He does not stop here but he takes

Ghalib on a spiritual journey in *Javid Nama* in the company of Mansoor Al-Hallaj and Qurrat-ul-Ayn Tahira. Other than Iqbal, his close friend Sir Abd Al Qadir in the Preface to *Bang-i-Dara* also highlights the connection between the two poets in the following way:

No one knew that after the late Ghalib, someone would rise in India who would again inspire Urdu poetry with a new spirit and through whom the matchless imagination and the rare imagery of Ghalib would be created anew and would lead to the glorification of the Urdu literature. However, Urdu was fortunate in getting a poet of Iqbal's calibre, the superiority of whose literary elegance has impressed the Urdu knowing people of the whole of India and whose reputation has spread to Iran, Asia Minor and even to Europe. Ghalib and Iqbal share many common characteristics. If I were a believer in the transmigration of soul I would have certainly said that the love which Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib had for Urdu and Persian poetry did not allow his soul to rest in peace even in the Elysium and compelled him to reappear in another material form to render service to poetry, and was reborn in a corner of Punjab, called Sialkot and was called Muhammad Iqbal  
 (Bang-e-Dara Preface)

Before examining and analysing their poetry it is important to compare them from the biographical point of view. Both of them were proud of their ancestors. Ghalib was originally from Samarkand, Central Asia. His grandfather was a Seljuq Turk who had migrated to India in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. His father Mirza Abdullah Beig was an employee of the Nawab of Lucknow, the Nizam of Hyderabad and then he took service with Rao Raja Bakhtawar Singh, the ruler of Alwar. It is here that he was killed in a battle in 1803. Since his ancestors were from Turkey, Ghalib also referred to himself as a Turk and was proud of his ancestry. In a letter of February 15, 1867 he briefly describes the history of his family as, "I am of Seljuk, Turkish stock. My grandfather came to India from beyond the river (Transoxiana) in Shah Alam's time" (Quoted by Ralph Russel 23). The reference to his ancestral family is made by Ghalib frequently in his writings and he held a very high opinion about the fact that his ancestors were soldiers for a hundred generations. Another claim of superiority that Ghalib made was his mastery of Persian language as this language represented the culture of the whole Islamic world for several centuries and thus Persian was par excellence the language of literature and Urdu by contrast, an inferior language for poetry. According to Ralph Russel, the third claim that Ghalib makes about himself is about his poetry. Ghalib writes, "the love of poetry which I had brought with me from eternity assailed me and won my soul" (Quoted in Russel 28). Iqbal was born in Sialkot and his ancestors were originally Kashmiri Brahmins who had migrated to Sialkot in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Like Ghalib, Iqbal was also proud of his ancestors as he himself writes, "Look at me, in India you will not see another man of Brahmin descent who is versed in the mysteries of Rum and Tabriz" (1927 11).

Ghalib became an orphan at the age of 5 and subsequently his uncle Nasrullah Beg looked after him for some time as he himself passed away in 1806 after falling off an elephant. In spite of father's early death his mother made it sure that it does not affect his education and accordingly he showed outstanding performance in both Persian and Urdu languages. He knew the basics of Arabic too. He was lucky to be a student of a renowned teacher of Agra Muazzam Ali who recognized his abilities and encouraged him accordingly. He also had the privilege of being a student of Mulla Abdul Samad,

a distinguished scholar of Persian from Iran. He taught him for two years when he was only 14 years of age. It is said that Ghalib was so thankful and attached to him that he brought him to Delhi when he himself shifted there and kept writing to him even after he left India. Iqbal was five when he was sent to the local mosque to learn the Quran and Persian language. He, like Ghalib was also lucky to be a student of a reputed teacher Sayyid Mir Hassan, who was also a distinguished scholar of Arabic language and the Quran. Iqbal continued to be under the tutelage of Mir Hassan at Scotch Mission School and College where Mir Hassan was the professor. Both of them were influenced by influenced by Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil (1642-1720) a famous poet of India. Like Iqbal's confession above, Ghalib also acknowledges the influence of Bedil on him as is evident in the following verse:

طرز بیدل میں ریختہ کہنا  
اسد اللہ خان قیامت ہے

Tarz-e-be-dil meñ reḳhta kahnā  
asad allāh ḳhaañ qayāmat hai  
Writing Urdu after Bedil's style  
Is a difficult task O Assad!

(Diwan-e-Ghalib 138)

At the age of 14, Ghalib got married to Umrao Jan who was then thirteen only. She was a daughter of Nawab Ilahi Baksh and niece of the Nawab of Ferozpur Jhirka. Although it was a common practice those days to get married at this age yet one can discern the fact clearly they Ghalib and Umrao were married before being mature enough. All that is known about them is that she gave birth to seven children but none of them survived beyond a few months. Thus it has often been said that he was unhappy in his married life and had disagreements with her for many reasons. This is further validated by his letters which he wrote to his friends from time to time. When he was in sixties he heard of the demise of Umrao Singh-his disciple's second wife and that he had young kids and has therefore no option but to marry for the third time. Ghalib responds in his unique style:

I feel sorry for Umrao Singh but I'm envious of his situation. Allah! Allah! His chains have been broken twice. And look at me. For the past 50 years I have had this noose around my neck. Neither the noose breaks nor my neck gives in. You should tell him, my brother, I can help you raise your kids. Why is he eager to have this calamity visit him again?  
(153)

Like Ghalib Iqbal was also a victim of early and incompatible marriage. Although Iqbal married thrice but his first marriage took place at the age of 15 in 1892. He was married to Karim Bibi. The marriage lasted for 16 years but he stayed away from her for a long time first at Lahore and then in Europe. He makes an admission of his failed marriage in a letter to Miss Aitya Faizee written on April 9, 1909 when he had come back from Europe. The letter reads: Life is extremely miserable; they forced my wife upon me, I have written to my father that he had no right to arrange my marriage,

especially when I had refused to enter into any alliance of that sort. I am quite willing to support her, but I am not prepared to make my life miserable by keeping her with me. As a human being, I have a right to happiness-if society or nature deny that to me, I defy both. (Qtd. in Ish Kumar 17)

It is said that Ghalib was attracted to an enticing female singer and this claim is validated by a letter which he wrote to Hatim Ali Beg in which, reminiscing about his youthful days, talks about a *domini* (a singing dancing girl) who had fallen madly in love with him as he writes:

We Mughal lads are outrageously passionate. If we fall in love with someone, we really kill her with our love. I am also a Mughal. In my life I too afflicted a *domini* with my love. May God bless the lovers and the two of us because we have experienced the wound of the loss of loved ones! This happened nearly forty or forty-two years ago. Although I am not into this game anymore and I no longer possess the skill of managing a love affair, I do remember her and her enchanting ways. I will never forget all my life how she died.  
(106)

The name of the *domini* was Mughal Jaan and Ghalib was deeply fascinated by her. Anisur Rahman argues that Ghalib's romantic life did not come to an end with Mughal Jaan. He claims that Ghalib was also in contact with a respectable lady from a well off family but this affair also did not last long. Rahman further argues:

He found another beautiful being yet again who would give all he wanted-emotional solace and physical contact. This lady was an admirer of poetry and poets and Ghalib undoubtedly was the one whose companionship any poetry lover would pine for. She used to send her ghazals to him for his opinion. This brought both of them closer to each other although she was a minor poet and Ghalib would not have otherwise drawn closer to her but for his amorous nature. Ghalib referred to her as the "Turk lady" and enjoyed her special companionship the most. Their affair went on secretly and reached a stage where every excuse would only bring greater damage to their reputation than repair it. Fearing the onslaughts of the society for doing an inexcusable wrong, the lady chose to sacrifice her life. This put Ghalib to great agony.

(rekhta.org)

As far as Iqbal he is also said to have developed a strong affection for a singing girl, Ameer Begum, from the city of Lahore, around 1903-04. Khurram Ali Shafique, a noted biographer of Iqbal in his book also argues that the affair with the singing girl lasted for a year. He goes on to say:

She is mentioned by name in a letter to a friend and anonymously called the 'raison d'être' of his grand poem 'The Pearl-laden Cloud' (1903)...Reportedly, the girl's mother resented her daughter's attraction to the frugal professor and eventually stopped her from seeing him at all. (2006 18)

In Europe Iqbal made a number of friends and some of them got very friendly with him. One of them was Aitya Fyzee, a liberal aristocrat from Bombay. They met on April 1 1907 in London and developed a lifelong

friendship with each other. On his return from Europe, Iqbal wrote many letters to her in which he shared his personal problems. She eventually married the prominent artist and writer Samuel Fyzee-Rahamin in 1913. After the partition they migrated to Pakistan and settled down there. In 1947 she made some startling comments about Iqbal. She wrote, “In India, an individual is obligated to bow before the wishes and orders of his family. In view of this, many men and women, though endowed with extraordinary intellectual abilities have ruined their lives.” She measured Iqbal’s life in the light of these parameters and called Iqbal’s life “a cruel tragedy”. (Dawn.com) The other woman who Iqbal was closely associated with is Emma Wegenast from whom Iqbal took German language lessons which helped him to complete his Ph.D. Shafique in his book comments:

Emma Wegenast was indeed a very different case from Atiya Fyzee. Iqbal met her during his brief stay at Heidelberg in the summer of 1907, and it seems that he became emotionally attached to her. It has also been speculated that the two wanted to get married but were prevented because Emma’s family did not allow her to leave Germany for settling down in British India. (51)

After his return from Europe, Iqbal is believed to have written to her in German, “I’ve forgotten all my German, except for one word: Emma!” (Qtd by Shafique 2014: 52). Pertinently Emma gains importance for Iqbal biographers after 1980s when the poet’s letters came to the forefront through a Pakistani research tourist. It is said that Emma had handed over the letters to the Pak- German Forum before her death in 1960s (2014 50).

Ghalib was a free thinker and he never claimed to be a practicing Muslim. There are two things in him which make him a Muslim which he thought were enough for his salvation. Altaf Hussain Hali writes, “from all the duties of worship and the enjoined practices of Islam he took only two—a belief that God is one and Immanent in all things, and a love for the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his family. And this alone he considered sufficient for salvation” (1969 35). He had two main consolations in his life. One is his sense of humour and the other is his poetry and it won’t be wrong to say that he vented out his pain, frustration and all the other things. In fact his sense of humour attained a proverbial status with every passing day. The more he suffered the more humorous and witty he became and he either displayed his wit primarily in his letters and in his poetry too. He displayed his presence of mind and ready wit with his friends and acquaintances during the conversations too which made him dear to one and all. The other mainstay of his life was his poetry which would keep him going on. The remarkable magic that he does in his poetry is that he turns his grief into poetry and even presumes himself dead in many of his poems.

رنج سے خوگر ہوا انسان تو مٹ جاتا ہے رنج  
مشکلیں مجھ پر پڑیں اتنی کلاساں ہو گئیں

rañj se khūgar huā insāñ to mit jaatā  
hai rañj mushkileñ mujh par paDīñ  
itnī ki āsāñ ho ga.iiñ

When man becomes used to sorrow, the pain of sorrow is alleviated  
So many hardships have fallen on me that they have become easier to endure  
(2002 432)

Iqbal on the contrary was a staunch Muslim. For him Islam did not stand for only *Tawheed* and *Risalat* as Ghalib held, but much more than that. The Quran was the basic source of inspiration for him and much of his poetry is motivated and determined by the teachings of it. All his major poetic works and his prose works too including *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, are influenced by the teachings of the religion of Islam. As far as the creation of poetry is concerned, Ghalib firmly believed in the inspirational nature of poetry as he says:

آتے ہیں غیب سے یہ مضامین خیال میں  
غالب صریر خامہ نوائے سروش ہے

aate haiñ ghaib se ye mazāmīñ khayāl meñ  
'ghālib' sarīr-e-ḳhāma navā-e-sarosh hai  
These themes I write of come into my mind from  
the unseen Ghalib, the sound my moving pen  
makes is an angel's voice

(Russell 186)

And he defined poetry as 'the creation of meaning, not the matching of rhymes' there is hardly any poet who can match Ghalib in terms of creation of meaning. Altaf Hussein Hali in his book *Yadgar-e-Ghalib* highlights two features of Ghalib's poetry which are, *turfaqi-e-khayal* or ingenuity of thought and *jiddat-o-nudrat-e-mazaamin* or innovative freshness of subjects (Narang Preface ii). Although these features can be found in other poets of Sabke Hindi but Ghalib's treatment of them is different. His poetry is multi-layered and multidimensional having a great appeal which makes our senses come alive. The concerns in his poetry are down- to-earth as he focuses on human beings, their wishes and the inherent paradoxes of life. His creative ability is such that he uses simple words and commonplace expressions and shapes them in a way which gives rise to a trove of meaning as he himself says:

تکجینہ معنی کا ظلم اس کو سمجھیے  
جو لفظ کہ غالب مرے اشعار میں آوے

Ganjina-e-maani ka tilism us ko  
samajhiye Jo lafz ki 'ghalib'  
mere ashar men aave

Think of it as a magical treasure of  
meaning Every word that appears in  
my verse, Ghalib.

(2002 662)

The idea is that his verses cannot be kept in water tight compartments as, once written, they spread around in different directions, and hence, it is not possible to draw any boundary line. Ghalib further talks about the function of a poet and poetry in the preface to his Persian work *Panj Ahang* (1988) in which he states:

There should be something virginal in the nature of verse. In essence it should be pure novel and in spirit it should have the capacity to melt. It should have the sweetness of kindness and the salt of plaintiveness. It should have the joy of song and the sorrow of tears. It should have the elegance of fitness and the wisdom of greatness. It should reveal the secrets of life, give a message of beautification and should elicit praise.

(427)

Narang, suggests that, "Ghalib's life and poetics are a true reflection of our yearning for freedom." (Narang Preface v). Ghalib does not subscribe to any particular ideology or school of thought. He rises above all and probably this is the reason that he called himself the 'nightingale of a garden which is yet to come into existence' in the following verse:

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

hoon garmi-e-nishat-e-tasavvur se  
naghma-sanj main andaleeb-e-  
gulshan-e-naa-aafariidah hoon

I sing with the heat (excitement) of the delights (joy) of the things I imagine and foresee.  
I am the nightingale of the garden that is yet to be born.

(blogspot.com)

Ghalib's contemporary poet, Agha Jan Aesh is on record to have said about him:



کلام میر سمجھے اور زبان میرزا سمجھے  
مگر ان کا کہا یا آپ سمجھیں یا خدا سمجھے

Kalame Mir Samjhe , Kalame  
Meerza Samjhe Likha Tera Too  
Samjhe Ya Tera Khuda Samjhe

We did understand the verses of Mir, and what Sauda says-  
But Ghalib's verses!-Save he and God, we know not who can understand them  
(1979 8)

It was Agha Jan Aesh who said this about Ghalib thus confessing the fact that he did not understand Ghalib's poetry like many others. He rejected all the conventions and dogmas and is therefore ahead of his time. When he chose the grammar and the style of poetry, he did not follow the beaten track of age old stilted thought structures but challenged all the traditional practices. Hali categorically admits that, "we shall have to come up with a different standard to judge the quality of Mirza's fine couplets, which I hope people with good judgement will accept" (Hali 1897:107) Hali, time and again highlights Ghalib's ingenuity of thought and innovativeness of topics. Ghalib sheds more light on the function of poetry by highlighting the interpretative and representational role of poet in his *Panj Ahang* in the following way:

Rhythmic speech which is called poetry has a different place in every heart and has a different colour for every eye, and as far the poets, every stroke of their plectrum brings out a new sound every instrument they use, a different melody. (428)

Iqbal too held that poetry is an instrument of pleasure but he firmly believed that poetry should serve the purpose of life. He assigns a fresh role to poetry and for him the poet does not entertain only but has a definite role to play. He inspires the masses, caught in a state of oblivion, to action. He expects the poets to be a "trumpet of prophecy" like Shelley. For him the function of the poets is that 'a poet is a part of a prophecy' as he himself says:

شاعری جزویست از پیغمبری

Since he was not only a poet but a philosopher also and he used his poetry as a medium to communicate his philosophy. Although he started his poetic career as a conventional poet writing about nature, nationalism and lover/beloved relationship etc. But the bulk of his poetry is motivated by the vision which he had for the whole humanity in general and Muslims in particular. He, like Ghalib, also creates meaning but at the same time his poetry has a message as he comments:

مری نوائے پریشاں کو شاعری سمجھ  
کہ میں جہنم سے اڑوں سینہ

Meri Nuwa-e-Preshan Ko Shayari Na  
Samajh Ke Main Hun Mehram-e-Raaz-  
e-Darun-e-Maikhana

Take not my rhymes for poet's art,  
I know the secrets of  
wineseller's mart.  
(Wine symbolically used)

(Bal-e-Jibril-48)

Iqbal did not approve of the philosophy of art for art's sake. He draws his inspiration for writing poetry from the Holy Quran and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In an article "The literary opinions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) Iqbal quotes an example of Imraul Qais-the 6<sup>th</sup> century Arab poet about whom the Prophet (PBUH) said, "The best of the poets and their guide to Hell" (1964 144-145). Taking this tradition as the yardstick Iqbal argues:

The ultimate end of all human activity is Life—glorious, powerful and exuberant. All human art must be subordinated to this final purpose and the value of everything must be determined in reference to its life-giving capacity. The highest art is that which awakens our dormant will-force and nerves us to face the trials of life manfully. All that brings drowsiness and makes us shut our eyes to reality around, on the mastery of which alone life depends, is a message of decay and death. There should be no opium-eating in Art. The dogma of "Art for the sake of Art" is a clever invention of decadence to cheat us out of life and power.

(Qtd. in Abbasi 462)

Iqbal, like Ghalib, also believed that he is a poet for the future generation as he says:

من نواے شاعر فردا ہوں      نغمہ امہ زخم بے پروا ہوں  
یوسف من بہر ایں بازار نیست      عصر من دانتہہ اسرار نیست

I have no need of the ear of Today,  
I am the voice of the poet of To-morrow  
My own age does not understand my  
deep meaning My Joseph is not for the  
market

(1980 27)

Apart from the above similarities there is one more feature in common between Ghalib and

Iqbal and that is their love and admiration for Hazrat Ali (RAA) and *Shohada-e-Karbala* (Martyrs of Karbala). Both of them have written poems on this subject in which they express their strong admiration for them. About Ghalib, Hali says, “Ghalib’s real religion was enmity towards none, but he was inclined towards Shia beliefs and held..... (Ali), after the prophet of God, to be pre-eminent... There was not a man in the court who did not know that Ghalib was a Shia, or at least a *tafzili* (one who, though not a Shia, acknowledges the pre-eminence of Ali)” (Quoted by Russel 100). He expresses his fervent love in one of the verses like this:

غالب مے نوش ہونے پر گر جنت نہ جاسکوں  
حسرت یہ ہے کہ بعد مرگ کچھ کام آسکوں  
ایندھن بنا دے مجھ کو جہنم کا اے خدا  
ہر دشمن علی کا کلیجہ جلا سکوں

*Ghalib, mai-nosh honay par gar Jannat na  
ja sakoon, Hasrat yehi hai kay baad-e-  
marg kuch kaam aa sakoon; Eendhan bana  
dey mujh ko Jahannum ka, aye Khuda, Har  
dushman-e-Ali (A.S) ka kalaija jala sakoon*

Ghalib! If I can't go to Paradise for being  
a wine bibber I wish that I be of some use  
after my death

I implore you to convert me into a fuel of Hell  
That I can burn the hearts of the enemies of Ali (A.S)

(digitalakhbar.com)

In the line above, Mirza Ghalib expresses his heartfelt love for the progeny of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad and hatred against the enemies of Ahle-Bait-E-Athar. He also pays glorious tribute to Hazrat-e-Imam-e-Hussain (a.s) in many of his verses like this:

سلام اُسے کہ اگر بادشاہ کہیں اُسکو  
تو پھر کہیں کہ کچھ اسکے سوا کہیں اُسکو  
نہ بادشاہ نہ سلطان یہ کیا ستائش ہے  
کہو کہ شمس آل عبا کہیں اُسکو

Salaam usay, ki agar badshah  
kahay usko Tu phir kahay, ki  
kuch iske siwa kahay usko Na  
badshah, na sultan, yeh kya  
satayesh hai Kaho ki khamis,  
Aal-aay Aba kahay usko

Blessings on him who deserves to be  
called a king Or if not then let us call  
him something higher You do not call  
him either a king or a sultan  
Let us call him the Panjatan

(digitalakhbar.com)

Similarly, Iqbal also draws inspiration from Karbala which according to him transcends all sectarian barriers. He conveys a universal message to mankind to follow Imam Hussain (a.s) who gave a sacrifice of his life and his family in the cause of Truth. Iqbal has written about Imam Hussain (a.s) in many of his poems as:

حقیقت ابدی ہے مقام شبیری

بدلتے رہتے ہے انداز کوفی و شامی

Haqeeqat e abadi hey maqaam e  
Shabbiri Badaltery rehtey hei'n  
andaaz e kufi o shami

The place of Husain (a.s), the Martyr great is fact, not bound to  
Space or Date,

Though the Syrians and the Kufis may often change their wont  
and way. (Bal e  
Jibril)

Iqbal in the verse above argues that Hussain (a.s) remains a representative of truth and love of God. His glorious martyrdom shall continue to inspire and be a model of standing for justice and fighting injustice and oppression. Hussain (a.s) through his martyrdom has become an eternal truth while on the contrary the people who ruled Kufa and Syria shall keep on changing colours like chameleon and attempt to gain power by means of deceit, manipulation, fraud and trickery. Iqbal praises Hussain (a.s) and his companions elsewhere also in the following way:

دشمنان چون ریگ صحرا لاتعداد  
دوستان اوبہ یزدان ہم عدد

Dushmanaan chun reg-e-sehra la ta  
dad Dostane ba yazdan ham dad

Like the grains of desert sands His (Hussain's) enemies  
were countless While the number of his friends  
equalled God (yazdaan)

(1977 60)

The idea of Iqbal in the above verse is that Hussain's (a.s) enemies were countless who are likened to the sand grains of desert but Hussain's (a.s) companions are equivalent to God Himself as the 72 companions are equivalent to the numeral summation of alphabets in 'Yazdaan' which means God.

Similarly, both Ghalib and Iqbal made experiments with the form and content. Ghalib shunned old popular clichés full of idioms and revolted against the available style. He created his own original metaphors taken from different sources which made him an incomprehensible poet. The imagery that he used was uneven, irregular, abstruse, far-fetched and mysterious. In comparison, Iqbal was exquisite and clear cut and he mostly used conventional metaphors but put them in different and fresh contexts. He was not vague and ambiguous like Ghalib but direct and candid and his statements were like hammer strokes by means of which he made his point. They also wrote about sorrow and Ghalib is through and through sorrowful in his poetry while as Iqbal's poetry has sorrowful associations but much of it is a complaint. Ghalib's natural inclination was more towards Persian language as he tells us himself:

فارسی ہیں تابہ بینی نقشہاے رنگ رنگ  
بگوار از مجموعہ اردو کہ بے رنگ من است

Look at my Persian; there you see the full range of  
my artistry And leave aside my Urdu verse, for there  
is nothing there of me.

(Islam 82)

He further seconds it in his letters in which he claims that the Persian language and

eloquence have been bestowed upon him in eternity. The variety of Persian that he used in his poetry is pure classical Persian and not the vernacular Persian like that of Iqbal. Likewise, Iqbal also did not imitate the traditional style of his predecessors. Although he did follow the Indo-Persian style (*Sabke Hindi*) but this period lasted only for some time as he broke the barriers of it. He also wrote much of his poetry in Persian and his preference and first choice of Persian is mentioned in *Asrar-i-Khudi* in the following way:

I am of India: Persia is not my native tongue  
 I am like the crescent moon: my cup is not full  
 Although the language of Hind is sweet as sugar  
 Yet sweeter is the fashion of Persian speech.  
 Because of the loftiness of my thoughts  
 Persian alone is suitable to them

(1994 33)

Iqbal achieved tremendous fame as an Urdu poet in India but his Persian poetry made him famous across the world particularly in Iran, Turkey and Russia. Just as Ghalib stood for freedom and assertion of personality Iqbal also followed the tradition and took them to new heights in his poetry. Ghalib's features of poetry like revolt and rebellion, respect for the dignity of man and joy in life are equally shared by Iqbal too. Unfortunate for both of them is the fact their Persian poetry did not receive much attention in Iran and other places where this language is a mother tongue.

Another common thing between Ghalib and Iqbal is that they lay bare their inner self through their letters which they wrote to their friends from time to time. Ghalib's letters are a huge legacy which display his wit, self-irony and acute observation. He unveils himself in these letters by talking about his sorrows, sufferings and joys in such a way as if he were talking to them face to face. In short, his letters give us an important account into Ghalib's inner self. Similarly, Iqbal is also famous for having left a heritage of letters which he wrote to his friends like Atiya Fyze and Emma Wegenast. They also give us an insight into Iqbal as he pours his heart out by talking about his failed and imposed marriage and other personal problems. He also wrote letters to Muhammad Ali Jinnah which, it is believed, gave rise to the idea and creation of Pakistan.

To sum up the discussion, Iqbal had set ideas behind writing poetry while as Ghalib did not subscribe to any tenets or philosophy whatsoever. His poetry can be called a profound reflection on life while as Iqbal, particularly in his later poetry, writes with a purpose and a definite agenda. Ghalib had an extraordinary sense of humour and had many friends from all walks of life while as Iqbal was reticent and had few personal friends. Ghalib was an open book and Iqbal did not reveal himself to everybody. Ghalib deals with general concerns of life which appeal to all and sundry while as Iqbal has particular concerns in his poetry and therefore does not appeal to all. The last phase of both Ghalib and Iqbal was also common as both were plagued by prolonged illness. Ghalib suffered from

various health and even lost his eye sight too. Iqbal's health was far worse than Ghalib and he also died due to his illnesses. The last days of Ghalib were miserable and he would often lose consciousness. Just before some days to his death, he dictated a letter to Alauddin saying, "What do you want to know about my condition? You may ask my neighbours in a day or two" (19). He remembered God too much before his death often saying 'there is no God but God' and as far Iqbal, he quoted a Persian verse to his brother just some days before his death which reads:

نشان مردِ مومن با تو گویم  
چون مرگ آمد تبسم بر لب اوست

nishan e mard e momin man ba tu  
goyam marg aayad, tabassum bar lab e  
oost.

You ask me a sign of the sign of the man of faith?  
When death comes, he has a smile on his face

(1988 21)

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