

**BETWEEN POETRY AND PHILOSOPHY:
A STUDY OF MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S SELF-
PORTRAITURES**

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI

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MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S SELF-PORTRAITURES**

by

SALIHA SHAH

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Submitted

in fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

to the



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OCTOBER 2022

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Between Poetry and Philosophy: A Study of Muhammad Iqbal’s Self-Portraits**” submitted by **Saliha Shah** to Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a record of the bona fide research work done by her. She has worked under my guidance and supervision and has fulfilled the requirements, which to my knowledge, have reached the requisite standard for the submission of this thesis. The contents of this thesis have not been submitted in part or full to any other Institute or University for the award of any degree or diploma.

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Abstract

This dissertation is a study of Muhammad Iqbal's self-portraits. Though a function of poetic technique, self-portraits constitute in Iqbal's work a site where a novel kind of philosophical activity takes place. Foregrounding how they bring together the poetic and the philosophical in ways that blur, and render undecidable, even inconsequential, the disciplinary boundaries, this dissertation shows how self-portraits function as an important, hitherto underexplored, point of departure into Iqbal's complex body of work. It demonstrates how self-portraits function as the principal means of access not only to the ways in which Iqbal poses and pursues his key philosophical, metapoetic, ethical, and political questions, but, more importantly, to the philosophically significant ambivalences, ambiguities, and hesitations that mark Iqbal's engagement with them.

The dissertation takes up five key aspects of Iqbal's self-portraits - ambivalence about being, and being perceived as, a philosopher, divided persona as a poet, avowal of strangerhood, disavowal of gender identity, insistence on being a perpetual traveller - and demonstrates how they constitute exemplification of the five key concepts posited in Iqbal's corpus respectively- reason, desire, selfhood, gender, travel. The dissertation allows us to see how in Iqbal's body of work it is not only the concept of reason finding exemplification in the figure of the philosopher, but Iqbal playing the philosopher struggling to inhabit and abandon the station of philosophy in equal measure. Similarly, the concept of desire has its embodiment in the figure of the poet Iqbal models himself after; the concept of intractable, asocial, uncontainable selfhood is instantiated in the figure of the stranger enacted by Iqbal himself; the concept of acculturated, gendered subjectivity is exemplified in the figure of the cultural diagnostician that Iqbal identifies himself with; the concept of selfhood as an onward movement towards, and past, various stations is embodied in the figure of the perpetual traveller played again by Iqbal himself. The dissertation draws our attention not only to the extensive employment of figures in Iqbal's writings, and how they exemplify concepts and ideals, but also to the ways in which Iqbal casts himself as a figurative embodiment of the key elements of his own conceptual repertoire.

Keywords: self-portrait, exemplification, selfhood, reason, individuation, desire, travel, onwardness,

सार

यह शोध मुहम्मद इक़बाल के आत्म-चित्रण का अध्ययन है। इक़बाल की रचनाओं में आत्म-चित्रण काव्यात्मक तकनीक होने के अलावा, एक विचित्र ही दार्शनिक गतिविधि का प्रतीक है। यह शोध केंद्रित करता है कि किस प्रकार आत्म-चित्रण काव्य और फलसफे के बीच के अंतर को धुंधला कर उन्हें केवल अस्पष्ट ही नहीं, बल्कि महत्वहीन कर देता है और दर्शाता है कि कैसे आत्म-चित्रण इक़बाल की जटिल रचनाओं को समझने का एक विशिष्ट ज़रिया है, जो अब तक अनन्वेषित रहा है। ये प्रदर्शित करता है कि आत्म-चित्रण न ही केवल इक़बाल के लिए एक मुख्य स्रोत है अपने केंद्रीय दार्शनिक, मेटापोएटिक, नैतिक और राजनीतिक प्रश्नों के प्रस्तुति और अनुकरण के लिए, बल्कि उससे भी अधिक, दार्शनिक तौर पे ख़ास उन उभयवृत्तिता, अस्पष्टता, और हिचकिचाहट के लिए भी, जो इक़बाल के लेखों में चिन्हित हैं।

यह शोध इक़बाल के आत्म-चित्रण के पांच मुख्य पहलुओं पर केंद्रित है -- दार्शनिक होने की उभयवृत्तिता, काव्यात्मक व्यक्तित्व का विभाजन, विचित्रता का स्वीकरण, लैंगिक पहचान का खंडन, एक सतत यात्री होने पर विशेष आग्रह--और यह प्रदर्शित करता है कि कैसे ये उन पांच मुख्य पहलुओं का दृष्टान्त है जो इक़बाल संग्रह में प्रस्तुत है : चैतन्य, अभिलाषा, व्यक्तित्व, लिंग, और भ्रमण। यह शोध न केवल इक़बाल के लेखन में पैकर के उपयोग की ओर हमारा ध्यान आकर्षित करता है, और कैसे वे अवधारणों और आदर्शों का दृष्टान्त देते हैं, बल्कि इस ओर भी कि किस प्रकार इक़बाल खुद को अपने वैचारिक कोष में प्रतीकात्मक अवतार की भूमिका देते हैं ।

मूल शब्द: आत्म-चित्रण, व्यक्तित्व, चैतन्य, अभिलाषा, भ्रमण

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