

The Aesthetic Mould

Reflections on Islamic Art and Literature

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مادرِ پیالہ عکسِ رخِ یارِ دیدہ ایم
اے بے خبرِ لذتِ شربِ مدام ما (حافظ)

*We have seen the reflection of the beloved's visage in the cup;
O you who are unaware of the bliss of our eternal drinking.*

A very significant *hadith* of the Prophet (SAW) says:

اللَّهُ جَمِيلٌ وَ يُحِبُّ الْجَمَالَ¹

Allah is the Beautiful and loves beauty.

The same verb (*habba, ahabba*) is used in the famous *hadith al-Qudsi*

كُنْتُ كَنْزًا مَخْفِيًّا فَأَحْبَبْتُ أَنْ أُعْرَفُ فَخَلَقْتُ خَلْقِي²

I was a treasure hidden; then I loved to become known and created My creation.

We have two equations here: Allah is the Beautiful and loves beauty and Allah was a hidden treasure and loved to become manifest. The clear implication is that Allah's self-exposure is the manifestation of beauty and since the universe of creation is God's self-exposure, it is cast in the mould of beauty. Order, balance and harmony, which characterise all aspects of creation, are facets of this mould of beauty. This constitutes one of the dominant motifs of the Qur'ānic descriptions of the universe:

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مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَافُوتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ
كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ حَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ (الملك- ٤-٣)

You will not see any disharmony in the creation of the All-Merciful; send back your gaze, do you detect any loophole; then turn your gaze again and again, it will come back to you dismayed, aweary. (67:3-4)

Allah is spoken of as *ahsan al-khaliquin* (23:14), the most beautiful of creators because every bit of his creation is drenched in beauty.

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ (السجدة-٧)

He who has made beautiful everything that He created (32:7)

The lovely canopy of the heaven above, the cradle of the earth which rocks and nurses us, the seas that girdle us around like a blue undulating canvas of silk, and all else contained in the immeasurably vast universe, is apparelled in beauty:

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا لِلنَّاظِرِينَ (الحجر-١٦)

Verily we have arranged towers and mansions (for the stars) in the sky and made them beautiful for the lookers-on. (15:16)

وَمَا ذَرَأَ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ. وَهُوَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لِتَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا
وَتَسْتَخْرِجُوا مِنْهُ حَلِيَّةً تَلْبَسُونَهَا وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَاحِرَ فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (النحل: ١٣-١٤)

And whatsoever He created for you in the earth, of diverse colours; in this indeed is a sign for people who learn and remember. He it is who has made the sea subservient so that you eat fresh flesh from it and extract from it ornaments to wear, and you see the ships ploughing through it so that you seek His bounty and perhaps render thanks. (16:13-14)

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْزُونٍ (الحجر-١٩)

And the earth we spread it out (like a carpet) and set on it firm mountains and caused to grow from it each thing pleasantly balanced. (15:19)

The Qur'ān draws our attention to the presence of this beauty in spots where we least expect it, in the rhythmic movement of animals as they leave for meadows and turn back in the evening:

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ وَحِينَ تَسْرَحُونَ (النحل-٦)

And for you there is beauty in them as you bring them home and as you take them to pasture. (16:6)

The Qur'ān, no doubt, draws our attention also to the utilitarian aspect of the objects of creation – the Sun, the Moon, the alternation of day and night, water, stones and trees. But even as it describes their uses and advantages, it implicitly poses a significant question. If water was merely meant for drinking, why not just store it in huge reservoirs? Why this enduring water cycle which leads to sweetly murmuring brooks, musically flowing rivers, raging seas and the singing of the rain? If wood was to serve as fuel and timber only, why the lush green forests covering the hills and fanning us gently around and acting as balm on our eyes, this is equally true of other forms of creation. Their use comes to us always clothed in beauty.

Now if beauty pervades the universe so overwhelmingly what is there in the human nature and constitution which it is meant to cater to. If our surroundings abound in articles of food and the earth looks like a richly arranged table, there is hunger in us which it is meant to satisfy. If water is provided in such plenty, it is meant to slake our thirst. What is that particular requirement in us which the all-enveloping beauty is meant to serve? It is the sense of beauty, the aesthetic sense. This aesthetic sense is one of those special features which distinguish man from other species of creation. He has this gift in him because he is essentially Divine – the repository of a portion of the Spirit of God. In this capacity he is inherently capable of not only appreciating beauty but also creating beauty. The universe is a work of art and God, its creator, is an artist one of whose beautiful names (*al-asma al-husna*) is *al-Musavvir* (the Artist who bestows forms). Man cannot fulfil himself in full measure unless he shares, in a relative sense, this Divine attribute.

The Qur'ān also tells us repeatedly that indissolubly ingrained in the beauty of creation is another element which it calls *haqq* (truth, purpose, meaning). The universe is simultaneously *takhleeq bi-al-husn* and *takhleeq bi-al-haqq*:

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لِأَعْيُنٍ - مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ (الدخان -

(٣٩ - ٣٨)

And we did not create the heavens and the earth and what lies between them for (idle) sport. We created them not but with truth. (44:38-39)

مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ (الأحقاف - ٣)

We did not create the heavens and the earth but with truth. (46:3)

In other words the universe is a work of art with a purpose, combining beauty and truth indistinguishably. This supplies us with the criterion to judge the value of human art which should try to emulate the Divine artistry as far as it is humanly possible. A genuine work of art is an attempt at realizing the Infinite, the Eternal and the Universal in human measures which are finite, transitory and particular. It does so by combining in itself beauty and truth and pointing beyond itself to the Ultimate Reality. If it does not go beyond itself, it freezes into a lesser or no work of art. It has therefore got to be inevitably symbolical like the natural phenomena in God's work of art, called the universe. Such an attempt at the approximation of the Divine has to grapple with inherent limitations. Frithjof Schuon, writing in the context of the Sacred art, makes a very profound observation:

...the fact that masterpieces of sacred art are sublime expressions of the Spirit must not make us forget that, seen from the standpoint of this same Spirit, these works already appear, in their more ponderous exteriorizations, as concessions to the world and recall the saying in the Gospels: "All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." Indeed, when the Spirit has need of such a degree of exteriorization, it is already well on the way to being lost; exteriorization as such bears within itself the poison of outwardness, and so of exhaustion, fragility and decrepitude; the masterpiece is as it were laden with regrets and is already a swan song... All the same, from another point of view, we can ask ourselves which is more precious, the summits of sacred art, inasmuch as they are direct inspirations from God, or the beauties of nature inasmuch as they are divine creations and symbols. The language of nature is doubtless more primordial and more universal, but it is less human and less immediately intelligible than art.³

Within the framework of *takhleeq bi al-husn* and *takhleeq bi al-haqq* which characterises the universe of creation Islamic art covers the whole range – plastic, sonoral and literary.

Among the plastic arts it excludes the portraiture of living things including human beings because it runs counter to *takhleeq bi al-haqq* and may lead, as it has actually led, to idolatry. But painting of non-living things has not been forbidden while calligraphy together with architecture has emerged as the supreme illustration of the plastic arts in Islam.

Calligraphy tries to realize the inexhaustible significance, grace and beauty contained in the surface as well as the depths of God's word – al-Qur'ān. It developed as the believers in the Holy Book tried to find as many ways as possible to love God by loving His word. The various styles of Qur'ānic calligraphy and the associated decorations and arabesques as well as ways of illuminations developed as independent though related arts embellishing homes, mosques, things of daily use like rugs, carpets, cups and plates so that Heaven permeated the terrestrial life.

In architecture, as Iqbal, has rightly pointed out, Islam's soul has found its true expression so far. The gardens laid by Muslims from Spain to India could never have been conceived by anyone except them as they are earthly representations of the gardens of *al-jannah* beneath which streams flow:

تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ-

Islamic architecture as a whole tries to realise the Infinite in the finite. To some it may appear as belonging to space-time framework but it is actually a reaching out to the Eternal through and in the temporal; it is grasping the Spaceless (*la-makan*) through and in space. Rene Guenon rightly terms the preoccupation with physical space as characteristic of the reign of quantity.

In most of the sacred traditions, the infinite has been symbolised as *Nur* (light). Zoroastrianism sees it as *Shidh* (light). Shiva means light and the Qur'ān says:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ (النور-٣٥)

Allah is the light of the Heavens and the Earth. (24:35)

Islamic architecture is the most exquisite illustration of art, embodying light. From the common mosque to the architectural wonders like Alhamra and the Taj, Islamic architecture mirrors light in all its aspects. Iqbal said about the Mosque of Cordoba:

تیرے دروہام پر وادی ایمان کا نور

تیرا منار بلند جلوہ گہرہ جبرئیل⁴

*Your door ways and roof tops are decorated
By the light of the valley of Aiman in Sinai;
Your lofty minarets are there
Where Gabriel's glimpses are often seen.*

This verse is applicable to all specimens of Islamic architecture of which Alhamra and the Taj mark the climax. About Alhamra I borrow the inimitable words of Titus Burckhardt:

Among the examples of Islamic architecture under the sway of the sovereignty of light, the Alhamra at Granada occupies the first rank. The Court of Lions in particular sets the example of the stone transformed into a vibration of light: the lambrequins of the arcades, the friezes in *muqaranas*, the delicacy of the columns which seem to defy gravity; the scintillation of the roofs in green tile-work and even the water-jets of the fountains, all contribute to the impression...By analogy one can say of Muslim architecture that it transforms stone into light.⁵

The Taj is indeed a glaring example of this truth. As we lift our eyes at the entrance two things coincide: the inscription of *al-Fajr* (the Dawn) before the eyes and the Taj in front, breaking upon our sight like the effulgent dawn – the marriage of heaven and earth indeed. Right, no doubt, are those who have argued that the emperor Shah Jahan, set a whole group of Islamic scholars the task of trying to extract from a deep study of the Qur'ān the image of *Arsh* of Allah as far as human imagination could capture it so that architects could model the Taj on this image.

With regard to the status of the sonoral arts in Islam, there has been some debate and controversy concerning music. Music is not a taboo unless absorption in it acts as a distraction from serious pursuits and duties of life – unless, in other words, a serious disturbance is caused to the fine balance that Islamic art should

maintain between beauty and truth. In Islam recreation should remain recreation and not swallow the whole of life; it should be a part of culture but not the whole of culture. How can a blanket ban on sonoral and plastic arts be consistent with the vision of a book which presents the bird-song and the play of sunshine and shade as forms of worship and glorification of Allah (SWT)? About music one of the foremost scholars of the last century (the 20th Century), Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad, has this to say:

اس بات کی عام طور پر شہرت ہو گئی ہے کہ اسلام کا دینی مزاج فنونِ لطیفہ کے خلاف ہے اور موسیقی محرماتِ شرعیہ میں داخل ہے حالانکہ اسکی اصلیت اس سے زیادہ کچھ نہیں کہ فقہانے سدّ و سائل کے خیال سے اس بارے میں تشدد کیا اور یہ تشدد بھی بابِ قضا سے تھانہ کہ بابِ تشریح سے۔ قضا کا میدان نہایت وسیع ہے ہر چیز جو سوء استعمال سے کسی مفسدہ کا وسیلہ بن جائے، قضااءِ روکی جاسکتی ہے۔ لیکن اس سے تشریح کا حکم اصلی اپنی جگہ سے نہیں ہل جاسکتا قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ⁶

The idea has gained a general currency that Islam's temperament is hostile to the fine arts and that music is among the things forbidden by *Shariah*. The truth of the matter is that our jurists took an extreme view about music in order to prevent it from becoming a possible means to evil. This was a juridical precaution not a legislative decree. The juridical area is very flexible and can be stretched to ban anything whose misuse may be suspected to lead to evil. But this cannot affect the original legislation 'say who forbade the adornment which God has brought forth for his servants (human beings) and clean and pure things of sustenance.'

Noteworthy in this regard is a significant comment by Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn-al-Arabi al-Maliki (to be distinguished from Ibn 'Arabi, the Shaikh al-Akbar) about music in his exegesis on ayat 31 of surah *Yunus* (10:31). Maliki, as quoted by Mawlana Abdul Majid Daryabadi in his Urdu tafseer (*Tafseer-i Majidi*, vol. II) says:

And as far as *ghina* (music) is concerned, most of the 'ulamā, including Malik bin Anas, consider it a *lahw* (idle pursuit) which excites the heart. But there is no evidence from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah to establish its *hurmah* (prohibition). On the other hand an authentic *hadith* grants permission (*ibahah*) for it. The *hadith* relates that Abu Bakr visited the home of the Prophet (SAW) on the day of 'Eid and found Aaishah and two of her friends (girls from Ansar) singing together. Abu Bakr exclaimed how a Satanic pursuit was on in the home of Allah's messenger. The Prophet told Abu Bakr to leave the girls alone.

"If", says Maliki, "music were haram (unlawful), it would not have been allowed in the home of Allah's messenger."

As mentioned above, the criterion to be observed in respect of music or any other form of art is that it should not in any manner disturb the fine balance that Islam strikes between beauty (*husn*) and truth (*haqq*). An important aspect of *haqq* is the cardinal Islamic belief that this world is transitory and this life ephemeral. Life in this world is to be used as an inevitable means to achieve success in the Eternal life that follows after death. If any art form like music absorbs us in a way as to deflect our attention from the Eternal life, it becomes *haram* (unlawful). About this the Qur'ān is explicit:

فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَن تَوَلَّىٰ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا - ذَٰلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ - (النَّجْم - ٢٩-٣٠)

Turn away from him who turns away from our remembrance and seeks nothing beyond this world's life; that is the ultimate reach of knowledge of such people.

(53:29-30).

One of the prayers of the Prophet (SAW) exquisitely reflects the spirit of this Divine commandment:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلِ الدُّنْيَا أَكْبَرَ هَمِّنَا وَلَا مَبْلَغَ عِلْمِنَا (ابن كثير)

Our Lord, make not this world our greatest and main concern nor make it the ultimate reach of our knowledge. (*Ibn Katheer*).

To the modern materialistic civilization this world is the be-all and end-all of everything. That is why sport and art-forms like music have become its defining characteristics, its very life and soul, and ceased to be mere means of recreation.

In this light we can appreciate the profound verses of Sa'di in which he says whether music (*sama*) is lawful or unlawful depends ultimately on the character of the recipient. Says the Shaikh:

نه گويم سماع اے برادر که چييت مگر مستمع را بدانم که کييت
گر از بُرج معني پرد طير او فرشته فرو ماند از سير او
وگر مرد سهواست بازي و لاغ قوی تر شود ديوش اندر دماغ
چويشال شود گل به بادِ سحر نه هيضم که نه شگا فندش بُزتر⁷

*I will not say brother, what sama' (spiritual concert is),
But I know who the listener is.
If he takes flight from the tower of meaning,
The angel may not be able to keep pace with him.
But if he is non-serious and indulges in play and vanity,
The Devil in his mind will become stronger.
The rose is torn apart by the morning breeze
But not the log which axe alone can split.*

Sama'-i rast (right kind of sama') as Rumi tells Iqbal in the dialogue poem of *Bal-i Jibreel* entitled *Pir-u Murid*, has got to be the ideal:

بر سماعِ راست هر کس چير نيست
طعمه هر مرغی انجیر نيست⁸

*Everyone is not committed to the right kind of sama'
Nor does every birdie have access to fig for food.*

Taking a balanced view, Islam's basic position with regard to music is that the urge to it is a legitimate natural urge to be gratified in an Islamically legitimate way. Islam regards natural urges and impulses as positive sources of energy for the individual and collective evolution of man provided that they are appropriately channelized in a way which is consistent with the spiritual and moral vision of Islam. Preoccupation with music runs counter to this vision. Converting music into a culture, organizing musical concerts in which men and

women mix together, holding musical competitions and instituting awards for those who excel in the field is unacceptable on this view. Music as individual recreation and as light and civilized merry-making on festive occasions like Eid, but not in mixed assemblies, is permitted. This is my understanding; والله اعلم بالصواب

Be that as it may, Islam's sonoral art par excellence is undoubtedly psalmody, the art of recitation of the Qur'ān. In fact just as the painting potential was diverted by Islam to calligraphy and arabesques because of the ban on the painting of living beings, so the musical talents found their outlet in *tajweed*, the recitation of the Holy Word yet another instance of bringing heaven to the lap of the earth.

In Islamic fine arts literature naturally occupies the most distinguished place because of the essential kinship of the words with the Word. Literature makes use of language which is a gift from above and has intrinsic connection with the Supreme Reality:

الرَّحْمَنُ - عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ - خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ - عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ (الرَّحْمَنُ - ١ - ٤)

The All-Merciful taught the Qur'ān, created man and gave him utterance. (55:1-4).

Secondly the medium of language is capable of greater, wider and more accurate communication than are the mediums of inarticulate sound, colour, brick and stone. In addition to this amongst all the mediums of fine arts, language possesses such elasticity, flexibility and pliability that it can be charged with multiple meanings, used and reused, made and remade. Other mediums may suggest feelings and inspire ideas but fall below language in extent, depth, clarity and degree of precision. In the written form of language, products of human creativity, become more enduring in time and much more universal and translatable into other languages. Through the medium of language again, because of its metaphysical origin, human creativity can transcend the bounds of time and space. Language, no doubt, has an undeniable temporal and spatial dimension but is inherently capable of conquering space and time through and in the space and time. That is why the great works of literature continue to remain relevant hundreds and thousands of years after they are written. The best illustration of this quality of language is the word of God. In the Qur'ān, the word of God exists in its pristine purity. Amongst its first recipients through the Prophet (SAW), there were eloquent poets whom the Qur'ān made tongue-tied.

Many of them stopped writing poetry, exclaiming how they could use language as creatively as the Qur'ān does.

Even so Islam has achieved prodigious feats in the domain of creative literature. The writings of Mawlana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, Sa'di, Farid-ud-Din Attar, Hafiz, Hakim Sanai, Amir Khusraw, Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil, Asad-ul-Lah Khan Ghalib and Muhammad Iqbal mark some of the peaks of this literary glory.

With regard to creative literature, especially its finest form, poetry, there are certain misgivings which owe their origin to certain religious extremists with a predominantly exoteric bent of mind and over-enthusiastic social reformers whose thought, like that of Plato, fails to find a place for poetry. In this debate, the Qur'ān is also cited as an advocate. However, taking a balanced view of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, this opinion seems untenable. Aayat 224-227 of surah *al-Shu'ara* are considered to be decisive in this regard, let us have a look at them.

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ - أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ - وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ - إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا (الشعراء-٢٢٤-٢٢٧)

And as for poets, it is the misguided who follow them; do you not see how they stray in every vale and practise not what they profess. The only exception is those who believe and do good deeds and remember Allah much. (26:224-227).

Now these aayat make the statement of a fact and that too in a special context. The Prophet's adversaries said that he was *majnoon* (possessed). The Qur'ān asked them whether a *majnoon* has ever brought about a cataclysm in individual and social life, purifying it of all dross and producing men of sterling character who later turned the whole world upside down. The adversaries said he was a soothsayer. The Qur'ān said how abjectly and miserably did the soothsayers collect their pennies by making their ambiguous predictions. Here is a man who has risked all that he has to cleanse the world and this without the least taint of selfishness. The adversaries then said, he was a magician. The Qur'ān asked them to look at the magicians, their social status and position and their base ways of living.⁹ The adversaries then said that the Prophet was a poet. The Qur'ān said that the poets in general live a lackadaisical, carefree and undisciplined life and are surrounded by men of their own ilk, not by Abu Bakrs, Umars and Alis. They let their imaginations roam freely in all directions and indulge contradictory

whims and ideas. Above all there is a wide gap between what they say and what they do. At the same time, however, the Qur'ān made an exception in case of those poets who commit themselves to faith, good deeds and remembrance of Allah. The remembrance of God seeps to the depths of their being, their subconscious minds and permeates their poetry through and through so that it mirrors truth and the glory and light of heaven.

The Prophet himself, the only unquestionably authentic interpreter of the Qur'ān, explained the meaning of the Qur'ānic pronouncements by his word and deed. On the one hand he described the famous Jahili poet, Imra-ul-Qais, as a prime poet but one who will lead the poets of a particular category to Hell, drawing the subtle distinction between the aesthetic and moral dimensions of poetry. The poetry of Imra-ul-Qais and poets of his category was divorced from truth and limited to apparent charm. Such a poetry would awaken and satisfy animal desires and instincts alone. The Prophet (SAW) denounced such poetry and remarked:

أَمْسِكُوا الشَّيْطَانَ لِأَن يَمْتَلِي جَوْفَ أَحَدِكُمْ قَيْحًا خَيْرًا لَهُ مِنْ أَن يَمْتَلِي شِعْرًا¹⁰

Resist Satan; it is better that the interiors of a person are filled with pus than that they are filled with verse.

On the other hand he (S.A.A.W.S) remarked that poetry could cast a spell and communicate wisdom. When the Jahili poet, Labid bin Rabi'a's verse,

Lo, everything save God is naught

was read out to him, he exclaimed that this was "the truest word that a poet ever spoke."¹¹

Similarly he said about the Jahili poet Umayyah bin Abis-Salt:

أَمَّنَ شِعْرُهُ وَكَفَرَ قَلْبُهُ¹²

His verse believes even as his heart disbelieves.

For his own poet, Hassan bin Thabit, he had a special pulpit built in the mosque and asked him to defend him from his enemies telling him, 'say and Gabriel is with you'. He also prayed:

اللَّهُمَّ أَيِّدِ الْحَسَّانَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ¹³

O Allah, help Hassan with the holy spirit.

Umar bin Khattab, the connoisseur of the mysteries of Prophethood, told the Governor of Kufah, Abu Musa Ash'ari:

Ask those before you to learn poetry for that leads to loftiness of morals and right judgement and knowledge of genealogy.¹⁴

In fact the over-all effect of creative literature, especially poetry – sensitization and humanization – supplements the holy task of religion, awakening the soul and building life on spiritual and moral lines centred on the fountainhead of spirit, Allah (SWT).

Notes and References

- ¹ *Sahih al Muslim* and *Musnad Ahmad*.
- ² Allama Abdul Ali, *Risalah Wahadat al-Wujud* quoted by Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi in *Tarikh-i Dawat-u Azeemat*, vol. IV, P.264. The *hadith* has also been quoted by Reynold Nicholson in *The Mystics of Islam*, P. 100 and A.J. Arberry in *Sufism*, P, 28.
- ³ *Understanding Islam* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1963). Pp. 134-135.
- ⁴ Iqbal, *Kulliyat-i Iqbal: Urdu* (Aligarh: Educational Book House, 1975) P.388.
- ⁵ Quoted by S.H. Nasr in *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (OUP, 1990), P.61.
- ⁶ *Ghubar-i Khatir* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi. 1967), P.283. The *aayah* at the end of the quotation is from surah *A'araf* (7:32).
- ⁷ Quoted in *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, P.169.
- ⁸ *Kulliyat-i-Iqbal*, Urdu, P.427.
- ⁹ The forgoing sentences do not use the Qur'ānic words exactly but what is clearly implicit in the Qur'ānic response to the accusations against the Prophet (SAW).
- ¹⁰ *Bukhari* and *Musnad Ahmad*.
- ¹¹ *Bukhari*.
- ¹² *Ibid*.
- ¹³ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁴ Ibn Rashiq Quirwani, *al-Umdah*.