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DECODING ISHQ: CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS AND SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY IN ALLAMA IQBAL’S URDU POETRY

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the metaphorical system of Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal with particular reference to the conceptualization of *Ishq* (Love) in his Urdu poetry. The research argues that metaphor in Iqbal’s poetry is not merely a stylistic or rhetorical device; rather, it serves as a fundamental medium for the expression of his philosophical, spiritual, and civilizational vision. Drawing upon Lakoff and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), the study examines how Iqbal employs metaphors to communicate abstract concepts related to faith, selfhood, spiritual awakening, moral transformation, and the relationship between humanity and the Divine. The article first highlights the broader significance of Iqbal’s metaphorical system as an intellectual and cultural framework through which he translated complex philosophical ideas into accessible poetic symbols. It further demonstrates how Iqbal’s metaphors function as repositories of collective memory, preserving and transmitting Islamic intellectual heritage, ethical values, and civilizational aspirations across generations.

Particular attention is devoted to the metaphor of *Ishq*, which occupies a central position in Iqbal's philosophical discourse and serves as the foundation of his vision of human perfection and spiritual realization. Through a close textual analysis of selected verses from *Zarb-e-Kaleem* and *Bang-e-Dara*, the study investigates various conceptual manifestations of *Ishq*, including *Ishq as Madness*, *Love as a Miracle*, *Love as a Source of Peace*, *Ishq as an Angel*, and *Ishq as Conviction*. The findings reveal that these metaphors collectively portray *Ishq* as a transformative spiritual force that transcends the limitations of reason, materialism, and worldly power. Furthermore, the study establishes that Iqbal's metaphorical representations of love function as cognitive and interpretive structures through which deeper philosophical truths are communicated and understood. The research concludes that *Ishq* in Iqbal's poetry is not merely an emotional or aesthetic phenomenon but a comprehensive philosophical principle that shapes his understanding of faith, selfhood, morality, and human destiny. Moreover, Iqbal's metaphorical system represents a significant literary innovation in Urdu poetry and serves as an enduring vehicle for the preservation, dissemination, and reinterpretation of his intellectual legacy.

KEYWORDS: Allama Muhammad Iqbal; *Ishq* (Love); Conceptual Metaphor Theory; Lakoff and Johnson; Urdu Poetry; Metaphorical System; Khudi; Spiritual Awakening; Islamic Philosophy; Literary Symbolism; Civilizational Thought; Cognitive Metaphor; Faith and Conviction; Iqbal Studies.

Among the great poets and thinkers of the modern Muslim world, Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal occupies a unique position because of his ability to transform profound philosophical ideas into powerful poetic symbols and metaphors. His poetry is not merely a collection of aesthetic expressions; rather, it is a comprehensive intellectual project aimed at awakening the individual, reforming society, and revitalizing the Muslim community. One of the most significant instruments through which Iqbal communicated his philosophy was his sophisticated metaphorical system. For Iqbal, metaphor was not simply a literary ornament or rhetorical device; it was an effective medium for conveying complex spiritual, philosophical, cultural, and civilizational meanings.

Iqbal understood that abstract ideas often remain inaccessible to the common reader when expressed in purely philosophical language. Therefore, he translated his intellectual vision into vivid metaphors and symbols that could appeal simultaneously to the intellect, imagination, and emotions of his audience. Concepts such as *Khudi* (Selfhood), *Shaheen* (Eagle), *Mard-e-Momin* (The True Believer), *Ishq* (Creative Love), *Parwaz* (Flight), *Sahar* (Dawn), and *Zanjeer* (Chains) became central components of his poetic language. Through these metaphors, Iqbal communicated ideas of self-realization, spiritual freedom, moral courage, creativity, and collective revival.

The metaphor of *Khudi* is perhaps the most influential example of Iqbal's intellectual use of metaphor. It is not merely a poetic image but a comprehensive philosophical concept that explains human potential, self-awareness, and the relationship between man and God. Similarly, the *Shaheen* symbolizes freedom, independence, vision, courage, and lofty aspiration. Through the image of the eagle, Iqbal

sought to inspire Muslim youth to rise above passivity and dependence and embrace a life of action and excellence. These metaphors transformed abstract philosophical concepts into memorable cultural symbols capable of influencing generations.

The significance of Iqbal's metaphorical system extends beyond literary innovation. His metaphors represent an intellectual and cultural *ijtihad* within Urdu literature. By employing familiar cultural, religious, and natural symbols in new and creative ways, Iqbal expanded the expressive capacity of Urdu poetry and introduced a dynamic mode of philosophical communication. He demonstrated that poetry could serve not only as a medium of aesthetic pleasure but also as a means of intellectual awakening and social transformation.

Moreover, Iqbal's metaphors function as repositories of cultural memory. They preserve within themselves the spiritual experiences, historical consciousness, ethical values, and civilizational aspirations of the Muslim community. Through recurring symbols and images, Iqbal encoded his worldview in forms that could be easily remembered, interpreted, and transmitted. As a result, his poetry became a living archive of ideas that continues to educate and inspire readers long after the historical circumstances in which it was written.

Another important aspect of Iqbal's metaphorical system is its role in ensuring the continuity of intellectual heritage. Philosophical arguments may become obsolete or difficult to access over time, but metaphors possess remarkable durability. They travel across generations, cultures, and linguistic boundaries while retaining their interpretive richness. The enduring popularity of concepts such as *Khudi* and *Shaheen* demonstrates how Iqbal's metaphors have transcended their original

context and become permanent elements of South Asian Muslim intellectual culture.

Furthermore, Iqbal's metaphors actively involve the reader in the process of meaning-making. Rather than presenting fixed conclusions, they invite reflection, interpretation, and personal engagement. In this way, every new generation becomes a participant in the reconstruction of Iqbal's thought. The reader does not merely receive a message but becomes an interpreter and transmitter of that message, ensuring the continuous renewal of Iqbal's intellectual legacy.

Iqbal's metaphorical system represents far more than a collection of literary devices. It is a carefully constructed framework for the communication of philosophical ideas, spiritual values, and civilizational aspirations. His metaphors constitute a major literary innovation in Urdu poetry and serve as a bridge between thought and imagination, philosophy and culture, past and future. Through these symbols, Iqbal preserved his intellectual heritage and provided a powerful mechanism through which his vision could be transmitted from one generation to another. Consequently, the study of Iqbal's metaphors is not merely a literary exercise; it is an exploration of one of the most effective vehicles through which a great thinker ensured the survival and continuity of his ideas.

METAPHORS OF ISHQ (LOVE)

The concept of *Ishq* (Love) occupies a central position in Iqbal's philosophical and poetic discourse. Indeed, it may be regarded as the foundational principle underlying the entire message that Iqbal sought to communicate through his poetry. Although the literal meaning of *Ishq* is "love," Iqbal's conceptualization of the term extends far beyond its conventional understanding. In his poetic universe, *Ishq* is not merely an emotional state or a linguistic expression; rather, it

functions as a profound conceptual metaphor through which he articulates his philosophical vision of human existence, spiritual development, and the relationship between humanity and the Divine.

For Iqbal, *Ishq* represents a dynamic and transformative force that encompasses devotion, selflessness, service, sacrifice, and the willingness to surrender one's personal interests for a higher moral and spiritual purpose. It serves as the driving power behind human creativity, moral excellence, and spiritual elevation. Consequently, the metaphor of *Ishq* should not be understood merely in terms of romantic affection; instead, it symbolizes a comprehensive worldview that integrates faith, action, commitment, and the pursuit of higher ideals.

(I). ISHQ AS MADNESS

(Zarb-e-Kaleem-011) “Ilm-o-Ishq (Knowledge and Love)”

علم نے مجھ سے کہا عشق ہے دیوانہ پن
عشق نے مجھ سے کہا علم ہے تخمین و ظن

Ilm Ne Mujh Se Kaha Ishq Hai Diwana-Pan

Ishq Ne Mujh Se Kaha Ilm Hai Takhmeen-o-Zan

Translation:

Knowledge said to me, Love is madness;

Love said to me, Knowledge is calculation.

In this couplet, Iqbal presents a symbolic dialogue between *Ilm* (Knowledge) and *Ishq* (Love), treating both as living entities capable of conversation. This personification enables him to dramatize one of the most significant tensions within his philosophy: the distinction between rational knowledge and spiritual intuition. Through this metaphorical exchange, Iqbal contrasts the

limitations of purely intellectual reasoning with the boundless and transformative power of *Ishq*.

According to Iqbal, *Ishq* is the force that empowers human beings to transcend limitations, overcome obstacles, and fulfill their divine mission. It inspires individuals to align themselves with the will of Allah and to participate actively in the creative unfolding of life. In contrast, intellect (*Aql*) and empirical knowledge, though valuable, remain restricted by calculation, probability, and rational estimation. Therefore, while knowledge may analyze reality, *Ishq* possesses the power to transform it.

The metaphor of *Ishq* as “madness” is particularly significant. At first glance, madness appears to carry a negative connotation, suggesting irrationality and loss of control. However, Iqbal reinterprets this notion and invests it with a positive spiritual meaning. In his view, this “madness” signifies complete devotion, unwavering commitment, and absolute absorption in the pursuit of truth (Iqbal, 1930/2013; Schimmel, 1963). It is a state in which the individual transcends selfish concerns and becomes wholly dedicated to a higher purpose. According to Iqbal, *Ishq* is a dynamic spiritual force that elevates the self and enables it to participate creatively in the unfolding of reality (Iqbal, 1930/2013; Mir, 2006).

From a conceptual metaphorical perspective, the image of madness reflects the idea that true love cannot be confined within the boundaries of reason, calculation, or worldly interests. Just as a person deeply in love appears indifferent to conventional constraints, the seeker motivated by *Ishq* rises above fear, hesitation, and material considerations (Iqbal, 1977; Schimmel, 1963). In Iqbal’s thought, reason (*‘aql*) serves an important function, yet it remains limited unless complemented and transcended by *Ishq*, which alone provides the courage, vision, and spiritual energy necessary for genuine self-realization (Dar, 1977; Mir, 2006). Consequently, Iqbal

employs the metaphor of madness to illustrate the intensity and limitlessness of spiritual love.

Furthermore, the metaphor suggests that genuine *Ishq* operates beyond the realm of measurement and rational calculation. Unlike knowledge, which proceeds through analysis and inference, *Ishq* is characterized by boundless passion, faith, and surrender (Iqbal, 1930/2013; Schimmel, 1963). Through this symbolic representation, Iqbal encourages Muslims to cultivate an infinite and unconditional love for Allah—a love that transcends intellectual speculation and inspires spiritual awakening, moral courage, and purposeful action (Iqbal, 1977; Mir, 2006).

Thus, the metaphor of *Ishq* as Madness serves as a powerful vehicle for expressing one of the central themes of Iqbal's philosophy: that spiritual transformation and human greatness are achieved not merely through intellectual knowledge, but through an intense, passionate, and limitless devotion to the Divine (Iqbal, 1930/2013; Nicholson, 1920; Schimmel, 1963).

(II). LOVE AS A MIRACLE

(Zarb-e-Kaleem-011) “Ilm-o-Ishq (Knowledge and Love)”

عشق کے ہیں معجزات سلطنت و فقر و دین
عشق کے ادنیٰ غلام صاحب تاج و نگین

Ishq Ke Hain Maujazat Saltanat-o-Faqr-o-Deen

Ishq Ke Adna Ghulam Sahib-e-Taj-o-Nageen

Translation:

Kingdom, faith, and faqr are all miracles of Love

The crowned kings and lords are base slaves of Love

In these verses, Iqbal presents *Ishq* (Love) as a miraculous and transformative force capable of shaping both the spiritual and material dimensions of human existence. The couplet reflects one of the central themes of Iqbal's philosophy: that true power, authority, faith, and spiritual excellence originate not from material resources or intellectual accomplishments alone, but from the dynamic energy of *Ishq*. Through this conceptual metaphor, Iqbal elevates love from a mere emotional experience to a universal principle that governs individual and collective transformation.

The expression "*Saltanat-o-Faqr-o-Deen*" (kingdom, spiritual poverty, and religion) is particularly significant because it encompasses both worldly and spiritual domains. By describing these realities as "miracles of love," Iqbal emphasizes that the greatest achievements of humanity—whether political authority, religious commitment, or spiritual elevation—are ultimately rooted in the power of *Ishq*. In this sense, love functions as the creative force behind all meaningful human accomplishments and becomes the source of both temporal and spiritual success.

Iqbal's treatment of *Ishq* should not be understood as an attempt to romanticize the concept of love. Rather, he employs it as a profound philosophical metaphor to articulate his vision of human empowerment and spiritual awakening. In the historical context of Muslim decline and colonial domination, Iqbal sought to inspire Muslims to recover their lost confidence and rediscover their civilizational vitality. He believed that such regeneration could not be achieved solely through political strategies or intellectual pursuits; instead, it required the awakening of a deep spiritual passion grounded in faith and devotion to Allah.

Consequently, *Ishq* emerges in his poetry as the primary catalyst for personal and collective renewal.

Furthermore, the couplet highlights two recurring themes in Iqbal's philosophical thought: *Deen* (faith) and *Faqr* (spiritual detachment and self-sufficiency). For Iqbal, genuine love for Allah cultivates unwavering faith and nurtures the spiritual attitude of *Faqr*, which liberates individuals from dependence on worldly possessions and material power. Through *Ishq*, the believer develops a profound relationship with the Divine and acquires the moral and spiritual strength necessary to fulfill his or her higher purpose.

Another important dimension of this metaphor is found in Iqbal's reference to "*Sahib-e-Taj-o-Nageen*" (the possessors of crowns and jewels). Conventionally, kings and rulers symbolize power, authority, and prestige. However, Iqbal reverses this hierarchy by portraying them as mere slaves of *Ishq*. This metaphorical inversion demonstrates the supremacy of spiritual power over material authority. According to Iqbal, individuals who cultivate the transformative force of love attain a level of greatness that surpasses even the most powerful rulers and emperors. Their strength is derived not from external possessions but from inner conviction, faith, and spiritual realization.

From a conceptual metaphorical perspective, *Love as a Miracle* represents the idea that *Ishq* possesses the ability to transform ordinary human beings into extraordinary personalities. It empowers them to transcend worldly limitations, strengthen their faith, and attain spiritual excellence. Through this metaphor, Iqbal communicates that the true source of human dignity and greatness lies not in wealth, political power, or social status, but in the intensity of one's love for Allah and commitment to divine ideals.

Thus, the metaphor of *Love as a Miracle* serves as a powerful expression of Iqbal's belief that *Ishq* is the ultimate force behind spiritual awakening, moral transformation, and civilizational revival. It is through this boundless and transformative love that individuals and nations can achieve both worldly success and eternal fulfillment.

(III). LOVE AS A SOURCE OF PEACE

(Zarb-e-Kaleem-011) “Ilm-o-Ishq (Knowledge and Love)”

عشق سکون و ثبات، عشق حیات و ممات

علم ہے پیدا سوال، عشق ہے پنہاں جواب!

Ishq Sukoon-o-Sabat, Ishq Hayat-o-Mamat

Ilm Hai Paida Sawal, Ishq Hai Pinhan Jawab!

Translation:

Love is peace and permanence, Love is Life and Death:

Knowledge is the rising question, Love is the hidden answer.

In these verses, Iqbal presents *Ishq* (Love) as the ultimate source of peace, stability, and existential fulfillment. Through a series of profound conceptual metaphors, he associates *Ishq* with both life and death, thereby emphasizing its all-encompassing and transformative nature. For Iqbal, love is not merely an emotional experience; rather, it is a spiritual force that enables human beings to comprehend the deeper realities of existence and to attain inner harmony amidst the uncertainties of life.

The expression “*Ishq Sukoon-o-Sabat*” (Love is peace and permanence) highlights Iqbal's belief that genuine tranquility and stability can only be achieved through spiritual devotion and sincere attachment to

higher ideals. In a world characterized by constant change, conflict, and uncertainty, *Ishq* provides a firm foundation upon which individuals can build meaningful and purposeful lives. Thus, love functions as a source of psychological, moral, and spiritual equilibrium.

Iqbal further extends this metaphor by declaring that “*Ishq Hayat-o-Mamat*” (Love is Life and Death). This expression suggests that *Ishq* encompasses the entirety of human existence. It guides individuals during their worldly lives and continues to shape the significance of their existence beyond death. In Iqbal’s philosophical framework, love gives meaning to life and transforms death from a mere biological event into a stage within a larger spiritual journey. Consequently, *Ishq* becomes the key through which human beings understand the purpose of both life and mortality.

A central feature of this couplet is the contrast between *Ilm* (Knowledge) and *Ishq* (Love). Iqbal personifies these concepts and presents them as complementary yet distinct modes of understanding reality. Knowledge is described as “the rising question,” symbolizing the analytical and inquisitive nature of the human intellect. Through reason and education, human beings continuously generate questions and seek explanations regarding the mysteries of existence. However, Iqbal suggests that intellectual inquiry alone cannot provide complete satisfaction or ultimate certainty.

In contrast, *Ishq* is characterized as “the hidden answer.” This metaphor conveys the idea that many of life’s deepest questions cannot be resolved solely through rational investigation. While knowledge identifies problems and expands the horizons of inquiry, love offers intuitive insight, spiritual certainty, and existential meaning. The answer remains “hidden” because it cannot be fully grasped through logical reasoning alone;

rather, it is discovered through spiritual experience, devotion, and inner realization.

This metaphor should not be interpreted as a rejection of knowledge or education. Rather, Iqbal seeks to establish a hierarchy in which knowledge and love perform different functions. Knowledge equips individuals with the means to understand the external world, whereas *Ishq* enables them to comprehend the inner dimensions of existence and their relationship with the Divine. Thus, the limitations of reason are complemented by the boundless possibilities of spiritual love.

Moreover, Iqbal uses this metaphor to address the condition of the Muslim community. He argues that intellectual advancement, although important, cannot by itself restore the vitality of a declining civilization. What is equally necessary is the revival of spiritual passion, faith, and mutual love. According to Iqbal, the reawakening of *Ishq* among Muslims would lead to moral renewal, collective strength, and a deeper awareness of their spiritual mission.

From a conceptual metaphorical perspective, *Love as a Source of Peace* reflects Iqbal's conviction that *Ishq* is the ultimate solution to the fundamental questions of human existence. It provides inner peace, spiritual stability, and a sense of purpose that transcends the limitations of worldly knowledge. By portraying love as the "hidden answer," Iqbal emphasizes that the deepest truths of life are not merely objects of intellectual discovery but realities that must be experienced through faith, devotion, and spiritual commitment.

Therefore, this metaphor serves as a powerful expression of Iqbal's belief that true peace and fulfillment can only be attained through *Ishq*. While knowledge may generate questions and expand human understanding, it is love that ultimately unveils the

hidden meanings of life, death, and the human relationship with the Divine.

(IV). ISHQ AS AN ANGEL

(Bang-e-Dra-027) “Ishq-o-Mout (Love and Death)”

فرشتہ تھا اک، عشق تھا نام جس کا
کہ تھی رہبری اس کی سب کا سہارا

*Farishta Tha Ek, Ishq Tha Naam Jis Ka
Ke Thi Rahbari Uss Ki Sub Ka Sahara*

Translation:

An angel called Love there was

Whose guidance everyone's hope was

In this couplet, Iqbal presents *Ishq* (Love) through the metaphor of an angel, thereby elevating it from a mere emotional or psychological experience to a spiritual and guiding force. This metaphor reflects one of the most profound dimensions of Iqbal's philosophy, in which *Ishq* functions as a source of moral guidance, spiritual illumination, and existential direction. By associating love with an angelic being, Iqbal emphasizes its sacred nature and its indispensable role in the spiritual development of humanity.

The concept of *Ishq* occupies a central position in Iqbal's philosophical system. Throughout his poetry, he consistently portrays love as the force that enables individuals to transcend worldly limitations and establish a deeper connection with Allah. According to Iqbal, material power, political authority, and worldly status are ultimately insignificant when compared with the transformative power of *Ishq*. As he suggests elsewhere in his poetry, even kings and rulers become subordinate to those who possess genuine spiritual love and unwavering faith in God.

Furthermore, Iqbal's philosophy links *Ishq* with *Faqr*, a state of spiritual independence and detachment from worldly possessions. He believes that the cultivation of *Faqr* and the attainment of spiritual immortality are possible only through the development of sincere and selfless love. Consequently, individuals are encouraged to direct their attention away from excessive attachment to worldly affairs and instead devote themselves to fulfilling divine commandments and serving humanity for the sake of Allah.

The metaphor of *Ishq as an Angel* also highlights the ethical and spiritual responsibilities of human beings. In Iqbal's view, the ultimate purpose of life is not the pursuit of material gain but the cultivation of love for God, service to humanity, and the realization of one's true self. Thus, *Ishq* becomes a transformative force that strengthens human intentions, purifies beliefs, and inspires individuals to strive for higher moral and spiritual ideals.

A noteworthy aspect of Iqbal's treatment of *Ishq* is its recurring association with divine reality. In *Masjid-e-Qurtuba*, for example, Iqbal presents *Ishq* as closely connected with the creative and eternal command of Allah. Such representations demonstrate that *Ishq* is not merely an emotional state but a metaphysical principle that sustains faith, creativity, and spiritual vitality. Through love, individuals develop a stronger conviction in the existence of Allah and cultivate a deeper awareness of their spiritual purpose.

From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Iqbal constructs a structured metaphor in which the source domain is the *angel* and the target domain is *Ishq* (Love). The qualities commonly associated with angels—guidance, purity, obedience to divine commands, and spiritual assistance—are transferred to the concept of love. By doing so, Iqbal conceptualizes

Ishq as a benevolent and guiding force that leads individuals toward truth and righteousness.

The phrase “*Ke Thi Rahbari Uss Ki Sub Ka Sahara*” further reinforces this interpretation. Here, love is depicted as a universal guide whose leadership serves as a source of hope and support for all people. Just as angels are traditionally viewed as messengers and servants of God entrusted with guiding humanity, *Ishq* is portrayed as a spiritual companion that directs individuals toward self-realization and divine proximity.

Moreover, the metaphor carries a broader civilizational significance. Iqbal believed that the decline of the Muslim community was fundamentally a consequence of spiritual stagnation rather than merely political weakness. Therefore, he envisioned *Ishq* as the guiding force capable of reviving the Muslim nation and restoring its lost vitality. By presenting love as an angelic guide, he communicates the idea that the regeneration of individuals and societies can only be achieved through the revival of faith, spiritual consciousness, and devotion to divine ideals.

Thus, the metaphor of *Ishq as an Angel* serves as a powerful expression of Iqbal’s spiritual philosophy. It portrays love as a sacred, guiding, and transformative force that nurtures faith, strengthens moral character, and illuminates the path toward divine realization. Through this metaphor, Iqbal emphasizes that genuine guidance does not arise solely from intellect or worldly experience; rather, it emerges from the angelic power of *Ishq*, which inspires humanity to seek truth, serve others, and draw closer to Allah.

(v). ISHQ AS CONVICTION

(Zarb-e-Kaleem-011) “Ilm-o-Ishq (Knowledge and Love)”

عشق مکان و مکین، عشق زمان و زمین

عشق سراپا یقین، اور یقین فتح باب!

Ishq Makan-o-Makeen, Ishq Zaman-o-Zameen

Ishq Sarapa Yaqeen, Aur Yaqeen Fatah-e-Bab!

Translation:

Love is the Space and the Creation, Love is Time and Earth!

Love is conviction entire, and conviction is the key!

In these verses, Iqbal presents *Ishq* (Love) as an all-encompassing and universal reality that permeates every dimension of existence. By associating love with space, creation, time, and earth, he elevates *Ishq* beyond the boundaries of ordinary human emotion and conceptualizes it as a fundamental principle underlying the cosmos. This metaphor reflects Iqbal's broader philosophical vision in which love serves as the sustaining force of both the physical and spiritual universe.

The expression "*Ishq Makan-o-Makeen, Ishq Zaman-o-Zameen*" portrays love as inseparable from existence itself. Here, *Makan* (space), *Makeen* (the inhabitant), *Zaman* (time), and *Zameen* (earth) collectively symbolize the totality of creation. By linking these concepts with *Ishq*, Iqbal suggests that love is not confined to a particular sphere of human experience but is present throughout the universe as a dynamic and creative force. This conceptualization demonstrates the pervasive nature of *Ishq*, which transcends temporal and spatial limitations and connects all aspects of existence to their Divine origin.

A central objective of Iqbal's philosophy is to cultivate within individuals a profound and meaningful relationship with Allah (Iqbal, 1930/2013; Schimmel, 1963). To achieve this, he employs the universally

understood concept of love as a vehicle for communicating complex spiritual truths. Although love is commonly associated with affection and emotional attachment, Iqbal expands its meaning significantly. In his poetic and philosophical framework, *Ishq* represents the spiritual path that leads human beings toward self-realization and ultimately toward the realization of Divine Truth (Nicholson, 1920; Mir, 2006). Thus, love becomes both the means and the destination of the spiritual journey (Iqbal, 1977; Schimmel, 1963).

The universality of this metaphor is particularly noteworthy. One of the defining characteristics of conceptual metaphors is their pervasiveness and accessibility within human experience. As emphasized in Lakoff and Johnson's theory of Conceptual Metaphor, metaphors derive their effectiveness from familiar concepts that allow individuals to understand more abstract realities (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In a similar manner, Iqbal utilizes the common and universally recognizable concept of love to communicate profound metaphysical and spiritual ideas (Mir, 2006; Schimmel, 1963). Through this strategy, he transforms an ordinary human experience into a powerful medium for expressing his philosophical worldview (Iqbal, 1930/2013; Nicholson, 1920).

The second verse introduces another significant dimension of the metaphor by equating *Ishq* with *Yaqeen* (conviction or certainty). The phrase "*Ishq Sarapa Yaqeen*" suggests that love is the embodiment of absolute conviction. In Iqbal's thought, *Yaqeen* refers not merely to intellectual belief but to an unwavering faith in Allah, His unity, and His purpose for humanity. Such conviction is not achieved solely through rational inquiry; rather, it emerges from a profound spiritual experience rooted in *Ishq*. Consequently, love becomes the source from which genuine faith and certainty arise.

The subsequent phrase, “*Aur Yaqeen Fatah-e-Bab*” (and conviction is the key), further reinforces the significance of this relationship. Conviction is presented as the key that unlocks spiritual success, self-realization, and proximity to God. Since *Ishq* generates *Yaqeen*, love itself becomes the foundation of spiritual advancement and the gateway to higher levels of consciousness and understanding. Through this metaphorical construction, Iqbal emphasizes that certainty and faith are not merely intellectual achievements but are products of a deeply rooted spiritual love.

From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the relationship between *Ishq* and *Yaqeen* illustrates a conceptual mapping in which the abstract notion of conviction is understood through the experiential and transformative force of love (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The metaphor conveys the idea that love nurtures certainty, while certainty enables spiritual growth and success (Iqbal, 1930/2013; Schimmel, 1963). In this way, Iqbal bridges the gap between emotional experience and religious conviction, presenting them as mutually reinforcing dimensions of human existence (Mir, 2006; Dar, 1977).

Moreover, this metaphor may also be interpreted as an orientational and existential framework through which Iqbal explains the relationship between faith and reality. By associating love with the entirety of time, space, and existence, and then identifying it with conviction, he establishes *Ishq* as the central organizing principle of both the universe and the believer’s inner life (Iqbal, 1930/2013; Nicholson, 1920). Love is therefore not merely a feeling; it is a mode of being, a source of certainty, and a path toward spiritual fulfillment (Schimmel, 1963; Mir, 2006).

Thus, the metaphor of *Ishq* as Conviction represents one of the most profound expressions of Iqbal’s philosophy. It portrays love as a universal force

that permeates all existence and serves as the foundation of unwavering faith (Iqbal, 1977; Schimmel, 1963). Through this conceptualization, Iqbal emphasizes that true conviction emerges from spiritual love, and that such conviction is the key to unlocking the deepest mysteries of life, faith, and Divine reality (Iqbal, 1930/2013; Nicholson, 1920; Mir, 2006).

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis demonstrates that the metaphor of *Ishq* occupies a central and indispensable position in Iqbal's philosophical and poetic framework. Far from being a mere literary device, *Ishq* functions as a comprehensive conceptual metaphor through which Iqbal articulates his vision of human existence, spiritual awakening, moral transformation, and civilizational revival. Through diverse metaphorical representations—such as *Ishq as Madness*, *Love as a Miracle*, *Love as a Source of Peace*, *Ishq as an Angel*, and *Ishq as Conviction*—Iqbal reveals the multifaceted nature of love as a dynamic force that transcends the limitations of intellect, materialism, and worldly power. These metaphors not only communicate profound philosophical and spiritual truths but also demonstrate Iqbal's remarkable ability to transform abstract ideas into accessible and culturally resonant symbols. From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Iqbal's treatment of *Ishq* illustrates how metaphor serves as a cognitive and interpretive tool for understanding complex realities. More importantly, his metaphorical system functions as a repository of Islamic intellectual heritage and a vehicle for transmitting ethical, spiritual, and civilizational values across generations. Thus, the study concludes that *Ishq* in Iqbal's poetry is not merely an emotional or aesthetic phenomenon; it is the foundational principle of his thought and one of the most powerful instruments through which he

communicates his enduring vision of faith, selfhood, and human destiny.

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