CHAPTER - IV

INFLUENCE OF PERSO-ARABIC WORDS ON KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM’S POETRY

"Mera dil betab kiya teri abru-e kaman ;
Jala jata haye ishque me jan pereshan.
Here tumai dhani, chandra Kolonkini
Mori ki je bodoner shova, matoara pran ;
Bulbul Karte asachhe tai madhu pan."

Gun shot of your chastity made my heart rest less. My soul is perplexed and burning with love. Looking at you, moon faded. My soul mourn, seeing the beauty of your face. Nightingale drinks your honey.

In the above, Persian words are dil (heart), betab (restless), abru (honour chastity, shyness, shame), Kaman (gun), jan (soul), pereshan (agitated, perplexed), matoara (mourn), bulbul (nightingale); and mera (my), kiya (did, done), jala jata haye (burning down), mey (in, with) are Urdu words; where as ishque (love) is an Arabic word and the rest are Bengali words.

This is a poem composed by Kazi Nazrul Islam at the age of ten. In fact, this was the beginning of Nazrul as a poet. ¹ Arabi-Persi-Urdu mixed Muslim Bengali style was the beginning of the future revolutionary poet. This was because the influence of Arabic and Persian was hereditary to him as his father was truly an Islamic religious person with utmost sincerity having no hatred to other religions and having a fondness to Persi and Bangla poems and to recitation of the holy Quran which is in Arabic language. He (Nazrul’s father) was the Imam

¹) Dr. Sushil Sengupta : Nazrul charit Manos, Page - 49.
of a mosque and khadm of a Dargah, the two jobs required to use Arabic and Persian words oft and on, even in the home. Nazrul Islam got this inheritance from his father. Also, as any muslim child does, Nazrul Islam learnt in his village Maktab in the childhood how to perform Namaj, observe Ruja (fasting), recite Quran and fulfill other duties of religion, the language of which are always classical Arabic and explanation of them are either in Persian or in Urdu. Again, Nazrul Islam possessed in him a very inquisitive mind which always drove him out in his childhood to run after rural cultural congregations like Waz Mahfil, Milad Mahfil, Theatre, variety show etc. and to listen the items very attentively spending hours after hour until the theme was imprinted in his memory fully. One of his paternal uncle Kazi Bajle Karim, a well grounded man in Persiliterature, encouraged him always and gave him his company for long hours with guidance so much so that Nazrul Islam began to compose Arabi-Persi-Urdu mixed poems in Muslim Bengali style. Further, Nazrul had to learn Arabi-Persi- side by side his mother tongue Bengali to teach pupils in the Maktab at the age of ten to earn livelihood for the family after the death of his father, His performance as the Mullah of the village, or Imam of the mosque, or Khadim of the Dargah to fetch earnings also compelled him to learn Arabi-Persi-Urdu-Hindi linguafranca to get easy access to the mass.

Undoubtedly, Kazi Nazrul Islam acquired the easy process of utilising Arabic and Persian words in his language in the very childhood. One notices that he employed words of these languages in many poems of his early life. For example he wrote in poems in his early life as under:

i) "Nazrul Islam bole Kara bhai bandigi
Khuwaiona ajam gunate jindegi
Sharmendagi hobe hasharer majhe"
“Nazrul Islam says, Pray Lord, brother. Don’t lose life in great Sins, For you will be in repentence in the Day of Judgment’ Here, bandegi, (worship, salutation), khuwa (loss), guna (sin, vice) jindegi (life) and sharmendegi (shame, bash fulness) are Persian words and ajam(great, big) hashar (resurrection) are arabic words

ii) “Sarha prathame bandana gai tumari ogo Baritala Tarpare darud parhi Mohammad salliala.” ‘O Lord, I parise you in the begining. Then I wish peâce on Mohammad (P.H.)’ Here Baritala, Bari (creator, God) tala (exalted) Muhammad (praise worthy),salliala (peace be on him) are Arabic words and durud (bless ings. mercy)is Persian word

Similar were most of the poems of his childhood. He also composed satirical poems in his boyhood in the village-debates through songs like this :

“Palla sathe Letor leta laglo, charadar o duharra sab bhaglo, Oder chhanda surer mil naiko ganete............” ‘Irritation in Leto contest began. Singer with chorus party fled away. The tone of their songs have no harmony with rhymes.......’

Sheikh Goda, the leading poet of the Leto song party engaged Nazrul as his assistant. Nazrul composed songs for the party forth with as the situation demanded with his Arabi-Persi-Urdu mixed language. Sheikh Goda visualised the future of the boy and remarked that his tadpole (Nazrul) would become a snake (big, renowned) in future. Hafiz Nurun-Nabi was the teacher of Persian language at Shearsole Raj High School while Nazrul Islam was a student there.
He (Nurun-Nabi) had a deep knowledge in Persian and Persi poems were very
favourite to him. He found in Nazrul the potentiality of a future volcano. So he
taught Nazrul Islam the Persi language very carefully and attentively. There was
a Panjabi Moulabi in the 49th Bengali Regiment stationed at Karachi while Nazrul
Islam was the Quarter Master Havidar of that Regiment. The Moulabi had wide
knowledge of Persian literature and oftenly would recite poems of Hafij and
other poets of Persia. Nazrul Islam studied almost all-famous works of all re­
nowned poets of Persian literature through this Moulabi. He sank so deeply in
Persian literature that he wrote in his ‘Rikter Bedon’ in the story ‘Shalek’, his
imaginary meeting with the immortal Persian poet Hafij with whom he felt one­
ness of his soul in the manner,—“Amassing the remaining all strength of the
soul, Kazi Saheb asked in a hoarse voice, ‘who, o comrade, who are you?’ For
a long time, nothing could be heard. The tender echo of ‘who are you’ rebounded
in the quiet bank of the river. Then from the other side of the river, came trem­
bling a very soft low sound saying ‘mad Hafij.” Indeed, whenever he studied or
read or recited the poems of Hafij,
he felt himself present in a vast desert or in an oasis scented with Iranian roses
and in company of “Sakis” and drinking grape juice. The result was that he com­
pletely grasped the essence of all works of Hafij. In fact, he gathered in him the
essence of all the famous works of various renowned Persian poets while he was
stationed at Arabian sea shore (karachi) as a military man.

Along with drinking honey of Persian literature, he pressed his access to
the ‘Cream’ of Arabic Literature. He studied “Sab’a Muallaqa”, ‘Maqamatey
Hamasa Jamheratul-al-ari Arab’, Kitabul Aganis’ etc- all belong to literature of Arabia. Later on, he went through many Hadith of Prophet Mohammad (P.H.) and Al-Quran. Life stories of Prophets were also studied by him. Many times, he thought over “Muzeza’s’ (miracles) performed by prophets. Bible, Tripitak, Zendavesta, Bhagwat Gita and other religious books including epics like The Ramayana, The Maha Bharata etc. were in his study series. He was very much influenced by Hindu religious books and Islamic books in Persian. So some of his poems contain Perso-Arabic words and muslim environment while some other contain description of Hindu environment in words mostly used by Hindus.

His stay at Karachi made him perfect in employing Perso-Arabic words skillfully. Paltan life gave him the chance to acquaint himself deeply with Persian roses ‘Sura and Sakhi’ which is in tern mostly coloured with Arabian sands and oasis. So his pen subsequently roamed easily at differnt pitch of language mixed with Perso-Arabic elements and words without loosing its charms and elegence, rhyme and rhetoric. He used almost 3000 words of Perso-Arabic origin in his writings. He used this large volume of words with deepness in feeling and staggering connotations towards historo-geographic scene-scenario. His style and art of narration lead his readers at once to burren deserts filled with dates and grapes and enchanted with sweet songs of nightingales. Here is pulsed in his poems the influence of Perso-Arabic words which are not less forceful than his native language Bengali. Rather, these words made his writing more sweet, more enchanting, more appealing.

For example, the following lines depicted the inner excitement and feeling in the most sweeping manner-

"Aj amader khun chhuteche, hosh tuteche
Dogmogie josh utheche."

'Today our blood is flowing (rapidly in veins), over powering senses, our excitement (now) knows no bound; Here ‘Khun’, ‘hosh’, ‘josh are so appropriately employed that unless of them, the flow of the lines and feeling of the situation would hamper; even the meaning of the event would be distorted.

The following lines put forward an appealing call to unfortunates and faulties to re-establish their position-

"Islamer ay sawda loye alo nabin sawdagar.
Badnasib aye, aye gunagar, natun karey sawada kar".

'New merchant came with this Islam merchandise
O unfortunate, o faulty (come and) purchase a new.'

Here the words ‘Sawda’, ‘Sawdagar’, ‘badnasib’ and ‘gunagar’ express the meaning of idea intended by the speaker deeply without any hindrances.

Why Nazrul used so large a volume of Arabi-Persi words in his writings?
The answer is that he was very liberal poet in the truest sense of the term, He utilised all sources to enrich his mother tongue. He found no difference in man to man, in religion to religion. To him all are the assets of the world, and all Bengali speaking people are the sacred assets of Bengali nationhood. So, he said,

"Adam, Daud, Isa, Mosa, Ibrahim, Mohammad,
Krishna, Buddha, Nanak, Kabir bishwer sampad."

Adam, David, Christ, Moses, Abraham, Mohammad,
Krishna, Buddha, Nanak, Kabir-- all are assets of the world.'

And, Bengali race being consisted of dominantly Muslim people, why the words they used in their day to day life should not be used in their literary language?
Also, Hindu population of Bengali people being more advanced among Bengali race, the words used by them must be employed in literary works. So Nazrul wrote poems using words employed by both the religious groups in so excellence that his poems render appealing effect in every heart. To illustrate this, one may cite the following lines of Nazrul Islam,-

“Amon samoy alo musafir gaye ajarir chin
Bole ‘Baba ami bhukha-faka achhi aj neye sat din.’

‘This time came traveller bearing symptoms of ailment in the body
Said ‘Papa, I am hungry (and without food) since seven days.”

These lines contain the description of muslim environment.

The words ‘musafir’, ‘ajarir chin’ and ‘bhukha-faka’ are of Perso-Arabic group and always used by muslims in their day to day life. Where as the following lines-

“Jirna bastra, shirna patra, khuday kantha kheen-
Dakilo pantho, ‘dwar kholo baba, khaini ko sat din.’

‘Torn cloth, emaciated body, very low voice due to hunger,
Cried the traveller, ‘open the door o papa, (I) ate nothing since seven days.”

These lines depicted the cry of a hungry and weak begger begging food from the temple master. This create the environment of advanced class of Hindus belonging to Bengali race. These two illustrations clearly showed the skill and efficacy of the poet in employing words. Which render deep meaning and appropriate bearings of the situations. In fact, Nazrul did not import words anew from other languages, but he employed skilfully the words commonly in usage in day to day life of the society. His speciality is that he adjusted words of Perso-Arabic origin with those of Sanskrit origin in so nicely a manner that reader
easily understand meaning and force of the description and do not feel it hard in rhymes. A few examples are cited:-

(i) "Thik bolecho dost tumi,
Chost kotha, ai dekhi tor hosta chumi,
Mrityu era joi korche, Kanna kiser ?
Ab-jam-jam anle era, apne piye kalsi bisher.
Desh bachate apnari jan sheskorche Besh korche
Shahid orai shahid
Birer moton pran diache, khun oderi luhit.
Shahid orai shahid.")
‘Rightly spoken, O my friend
The truth. Let me kiss your hand.
Death they have conquered, why then weep on ?
Ab-jam-jam they brought, drinking from the pitcher of poison.
Who died ? Why you weep and fuss ?
Well they have done.
To save the country they gave their hves precious.
So they are true martyrs.
The true heroes have sacrificed themselves in blood-attires
They are true martyrs.'¹³

(ii) "Shat-el-Arab, Shat-el-Arab, putajoge joge tumar tir.
Shahider lohu, dilirer khun dheleche jekhane Arab bir.

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³) M. Nurul Huda : Poetry of Kazi Nazrul Islam in English Translation, Nazrul Institute, Dhaka.
Jujeche ekhane turk-senani,
Yunani Misri Arbi Kenani,
Luteche ekhane mukta ajad bedounder changa shir.
Nanga shir.
Shamser hate, asu akhe heta murti dekhechi bir-narir.
Shat-el-Arab, Shat-el-Arab, putajogejoge tumar tin "

‘For ever glorious, for ever holy,
Your sacred beaches, Shat-el-Arb,
Are bathed in gore, the blood of fighters
Of many races, and diverse colours.
Strewn on these sands lie the bones of Arab,
Egyptian and Turk and Greek and Bedouin. Also of woman, bold and daring
Who sobbed as they battled, reckless of danger.”

(iii) “Shahider id eseche aj
Shirupari khun luhit taj
Allar rahe chahe se bhikh ;
Jiarar cheye piara je
Allar rahe tahar de
Chahina fakir moni-manik.”

‘The martyrs Eid has come today.

On the martyrs head rests his blood-stained cap.
In the name of God he begs of us all;
Make your offerings of God
Who is more dear to you then your most precious Jewellery
I want no false pearls, no cheap trickery.”

(iv) “*Pathe pathe aj hakibo, bandhu, Eid-mubarak, Assalam, Thute thute aj bilabo, shirni ful-kalam, Bilie dewar ajike Eid.”*
‘Today I shall go about on the streets crying, Eid-Mubarak,
O my friends, Assalam! Today I shall distribute from lip
to lip the message of flowers as sweetmeat for the day.’

Association of words and their underlying meanings in the above citations impress the readers with admiration on the versatile creative geniusness of the poet. At the same time, the readers do not feel necessity of differentiating between the words of Perso-Arabic origin and Sanskrit origin, used in the citations. This is the case every where in Nazrul’s works where he used, side by side, the words of Sanskrit origin and Perso-Arabic modification.

From medieval age, Arabi-Persi words penetrated massively in Bengali Language. In almost all Puthi literature written by both Hindu and Muslim writers, there were extensively usage of these words. In modern time, among others, Saityendranath Dutta, Mohitlal Majumder and Rabindranath Tagore used Persian and Arabic words in their writings. But Nazrul caused flood of these words in Bengali language so forcefully that it changed the tendency and flow of the

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language when the influence of Rabindranath Tagore was all piercing in Bengali literary circles.

Kazi Nazrul Islam was an artist of language. He employed foreign words in the construction of his own language very skilfully to give vent to his own feeling and conception. He did not copy others. His style was his own creation. With Perso-Arabic words, he made his language more glittering', more sweet and more forceful. As an expert, he collected these words from colloquial Bengali and scattered them in literary language. Thereby he enriched Bengali language. (7) Appropriate use of these words was so natural to him that Rabindranath Tagore remarked about him in this connection, “Je pare se apani pare, pare se fulfutate” ‘He who can do, does himself, he can make flower to blossom.’8 Yes, Nazrul Islam made flower to blossom in his poems with Perso-Arabic words. Mohitlal Majumdar said in this respect praising Nazrul, “Rhyme followed idea, no where tresspassed its own boundary”9

To cite an example,-

“Abu Bakar, Osman, Umar, Ali Haidar
Darhi a je taranir, nai ore nai dor.
Kandari a tarir paka majhi malla
Darhi mukhe sari gan la-sharik Allah.”

‘Abu Bakar, Usman, Umar, Ali Haidar
Are the crew of this boat, hence, no fear. The captain and his companions

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are all expert hands and they are
enchanting, ‘Allah has no partner
Here rhyme does not tresspass its own
boundary, it follows faithfully the idea.

Kazi Nazrul Islam translated “Dewan-e-Hafij” and “Rubaiyat-e- Omar
Khaiyam” from Persian language and ‘Ampara’, the last and 30th part of the holy
Quran from Arabic language. His translation from Persian require special men-
tion as no other translator in any language could show such a mastery of the
matter as Nazrul did. Example-

_Persian lines of a poem-
“Yusuf-e gumgasht-e- baj ayad b ’kinan
Gom m ’khoor.
Kulbo-e ihjan shawad ruji gulistan
Gom m ’khoor.”

Nazrul’s translation of above lines in Bengali
“Duhkho Korona harano Yusuf
Kanan-e- abar asibe fire.
Dalito shuska a-moru punah
Hoye gulistan hasibe dhire.”

Idea of the lines in English-
“Do not mourn, for lost Yusuf will return to Kanan
This trodden and burren desert will blossom (flowers) again.”

One Rubai of Omar Khaiyam was translated by Nazrul as under-
"Khaja! tumar darbare mor acti shudhu arji ai,
Thamao upadesher ghota, mukti amar ai pathei.
Dristi doshe dekheho baka amar soja saral path,
Amay cherhe bhalo koro, jhapsa tumar ehukkhukei."

Kern translated these lines in English as under-
"O master! grant us only this, we prithee;
Preach not! But mutely guide to bliss, we prithee!
'We walk not straight'- Nay it is thou who squintest
Go, heal thy sight, and leave us in peace, we prithee!'"\textsuperscript{10}

The Persian words used by Nazrul in his translation do not make any obstacle to understand there meaning, rather they add elegance of the poem. Nazrul Islam translated the last part of holy Quran. It was named “Kaibye Ampara” The language of Quran is classical Arabic. The poet adjusted some Arabic classical words in Bengali translation in such a way that readers easily grasp thier meaning. Example:-

"Kumantrana dankari ‘Khannas’ Saitan
Manab-danab hote chahi paritran.”

"I take shelter (of the Lord of human beings) from the evil adviser satan- khannas in the form of either man or spirit."

or

"Palla hobe halka jar
(Hobe) ‘Habia’ dojakh mata tar.
‘Habia’ ki, tumi jano ki se?
Prajjalito bohni se."

‘One whose ballance will record lesser weight, ‘Habia’
will be his abode. Do you know what is ‘Habia’ it is ignited fire.’

In all these translation, Nazrul Islam used Arabic words which are easily understood by the readers. And these words lead the readers at once to the central idea of the narration.

Kazi Nazrul Islam successfully created muslim environment by using Perso-Arabic words in his poems wherever he felt it necessary to drift his ideas and emotion in concert to situation. Illustration-

"Anowar ! Anowar !
Dilwar tumi, jor tolwar hano, ar
Nest-o-nabud Koro, maro joto janowar.
Anowar, afsos !
Bakhter-i saf dosh,
Rokhter-o- nai bhai ar se je tap josh,
Bhenge geche samsher- parhe ache khap kosh !
Anowar ! afsos !"

‘Anwar ! Anwar !
Valiant as you are,
Drive your sword hard,
Kill them all, and annihilate those beasts.
Anwar, alas !
It’s but an irony of fate that
The blood has no more that warmth and Valour,
The Shamsir is broken, its scabbard left over.’

or

"Mora khunjushi bir, Kanjushi lekha amader khune nai
Di-e satya o naya-e badshahi, mora jalimer khun khai.
Mora durmad, bharpur mad
Khai ishker, ghat shamsheer fer nei buk nangay.
Lal paltan mora sachcha
Mora sainik, mora shahidan bir bachcha.
Mori jalimer dangay.
Mora asi buke bari hasi mukhe mori, 'joy sadhinata' gai.
Ore ay!
Oi moha sindhurpar hote ghono rono-bheri shunajay."

'We are bold and fearless, there is no timidity in our blood. Holding high
the standard of truth and justice, we shall destroy the tyrants. We are invincible,
we are full of love, yet we can bear at ease our chest before the sword! The
fighters are we, we belong to the breed of real martyrs, we gladly embrace death
fighting the tyrants. Smilingly we recieve the thrust of the sword on our breast.
We sing the victory of freedom! O come, come along! There sound the war-
drums from beyond the vast deep!'

Or "Kabe se khwali badshahi
Sei se otite ajo chahi
Jas musafir gan gahi
Felis asru jal.
Jak-re takht- taws
Jag-re jag behush.
Dubilo-re dekh kata Paraishya

12) M. Nurul Huda : Poetry of Kazi Nazrul Islam in English Translation, Page-79,
Nazrul Institute, Dhaka. : (translated by Kabir Choudhury).
Kata Rome Greek Rush,

Jagilo tara sakal,

• Jege ot hinball

Amara garhibo natun karia

Dhulay Tajmahal

Chal chal chal."

‘Does the memory of past glories
Bring tears to your eyes ?
Does the thought of royal stories
Draw from your bosom tender sighs ?
Oh, grieve not for the thrown and the crown,
You who have seen Persia, Greek and Rome drown
In seas of oblivion,
You who have seen them rise again with renewed vigour.
March on, March on, March on,
Rousing your selves from this fatal stupor.
Harken, there sounds the clarion call,
We must build a new Tajmahal
Out of this dust.
We must, we must, we must.”

Many examples of this sorts can be cited to illustrate the appropriate use of Perso-Arabic words to create particular environment by Kazi Nazrul Islam to express his feelings and ideas. These words acquired special sweetness in his hand and glitter in rhyme in the poems.

Kazi Nazrul Islam began to use Arabic-Persi-Urdu mixed language from the very boyhood. During that period his domain was mainly folk-based leto parties. He continued to enrich his vocabulary of those language upto his paltan life. So it was natural that whenever he exercised his mental disposition on muslim scene-scenario or on events relaing to Persia and Arabia, he abundantly used Perso-Arabic words side by side the words of his mother language very aptly. The influence of these words on his entire works relating to those aspects in particular is tremendous. Both the communities of Bengali race-Hindus and Muslims can easily understand the meaning of those words when they flow. in poems in marching speed. They render a special sweetness in hearing and spirit in mind when one recites those poems. None before Nazrul Islam could rouse excitement so boldly in readers by using Perso-Arabic words. And none after him could do so. His contribution to Bengali literature in employeing Perso-Arabic words is unique. These words played important roles in creation of Kazi Nazrul Islam as apoet of unquestionable difference in his time.

Deep understanding of Nazrul’s works overwhelms one with admiration for his skilful word-association and its underlying music. His poetic genius covered all Bengalees irrespective of caste, creed colour or religion. Naturally his poems contain words from different origin to expose feeling and ideas of different sections of the society. Perso-Arabic words used by the poet exposed excitement, anxiety, happiness etc. of the grater section of his society in such a masterly manner that they are understandable and sweet hearing to all Bengalees. For example,
"Waving her Ghaghri with a small pitcher of water on her waist goes the artful, amorous Zahora The Ambassadors of Heaven were captivated by that beauty and surrendered themselves at her rosy feet, drowned in the nectar of her lips like anar-juice ---The earthen pot of water was intoxicated with the blood-red juice of grapes." 14

or

"Nakiber turi futkari aj baruar sur-e kande, Kar tarbari khan khan kore chot mare dure chande ? Abubakarer dar dar ansu dariar para jhare, Mata Ayeshar kandone murche asmane tara dore !" ‘All happy tunes sound weak and subdued; a sad strain pervades the whole atmosphere. Whose sharp edged sword strikes at the distant moon ? Thars roll down Abu Bakr’s cheeks in an endless stream, and mother Ayesha’s cry frightens even the stars in the sky.”

Hundreds of similar examples can be cited to show the deep influence of Perso-Arabic words in the poems of Kazi Nazrul Islam.

14) M. Nurul Huda : Poetry of Kazi Nazrul Islam in English Translation, Nazrul Institute, Dhaka (translated by Abdul Hakim).