

Poem No.

12

Ruba'iyat

(Allama Muhammad Iqbal)

Faith is like Abraham at the stake: to be
 Self-honoring and God-drunk, is faith. Hear me,
 You whom this age's way so captivate!
 To have no faith is worse than slavery.

Music of strange lands with Islam's fire blends,
 On which the nation's harmony depends;
 Empty of concord is the soul of Europe,
 Whose civilization to no Makkah bends.

Love's madness has departed: in
 The Muslim's veins the blood runs thin;
 Ranks broken, hearts perplexed, prayers cold,
 No feeling deeper than the skin.

Glossary

stake	strong wooden frame used for tying a person to be burnt alive
captivate	fascinate
concord	harmony, agreement

Theme

In this modern age of allurements, strong faith like that of Hazrat Abraham (عليه السلام) is required. Though he was thrown in the fire by his opponents, he was saved by his faith in Allah. Muslim harmony depends upon true faith in Islam. The poet addresses the modern man, whom the life style of this age appeals to the core, and tells him that a man without faith is worse than a slave. The national harmony amongst the Muslims depended upon a blend of Islamic strong and basic values with the local feelings. This blend created a national

harmony. The modern European soul is empty of this harmony. They have no resemblance with the Makkan civilization. The spark igniting love has disappeared. The blood running in the veins of the Muslims has thinned and has lost its warmth. As a result of all this the Islamic unity has broken. That is the reason the hearts of all the Muslims are perplexed, the prayers have become artificial and the feelings have become superficial and devoid of love.

EXERCISE

Answer the following questions.

1. Who was Hazrat Abraham (عليه السلام)?
2. What is worse than slavery?
3. Who cannot compete with the civilization of Makkah?
4. What has made the efforts of Muslims fruitless?
5. What is the moral lesson of the poem?
6. What is the present state of the Muslims as given in the last stanza of the poem?
7. Explain the last two lines in the second stanza of the poem.