

Iqbāl-Nāmah

a quarterly publication about the South Asian poet-philosopher Muḥammad Iqbal (1877–1938)

Volume 3, Number 2, Spring 2003

Youngstown State University
Iqbal Academy Pakistan

“I Stayed up at Night with Muḥammad Iqbāl”: Shaykh Ramaḍān al-Būṭī’s Response to Iqbal’s Poetry

Andreas Christmann, University of Manchester

Part I

Part II, below, provides a translation of a text from a work by Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī. The work, first published in 1972, consists of essays that had appeared in various Arabic journals in the 1950s and 1960s.¹ An attempt to revitalize Islamic religious thought, the essays reflect the author’s praise for poets, scholars, writers, and literary works that have deeply impressed him or have inspired him in his mission. Some of the essays are dedicated to individual writers,² while others describe, in more general terms, the potential power of poetry and literature as a vehicle for a renewal of the Islamic religion. The article on Muhammad Iqbal indicates al-Būṭī’s source of inspiration for his quest for spiritual change. Written around 1960 for young Arab-Muslim students who were studying Islam and *Sharʿah* at Syrian universities, it was part of an initiative to introduce Iqbal’s thought to a wider Arab readership in the period after the Second World War.³ Its style is that of a eulogy composed by a novice for his spiritual master: it portrays Iqbal as a guide whose views and perspectives carry great authority. It vividly reflects the tremendous influence Iqbal exercised over young Muslim intellectuals such as al-Būṭī, who regarded Iqbal’s poetry as a source of hope and comfort at a time of profound intellectual crisis in the Muslim world.

Al-Būṭī was born in 1929 in Kurdish Anatolia (*Jazīr al-Būtān*). In 1934, his family migrated to Damascus, Syria, where he received private instruction from his scholarly father, Mullā Ramaḍān al-Būṭī, a Shāfiʿī jurist, and Ḥasan Ḥabannakah al-Maydānī, with whom he studied the principles of Islamic law (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), logic, rhetoric, and Arabic grammar. He studied law and education at al-Azhar in Cairo (1955–1956), and, after a short period of teaching *Sharʿah* at a teacher training college in Ḥuṣṣ, he returned to Cairo to pursue a doctoral program in Islamic *fiqh* (1965). After obtaining his doctorate, he took up several junior and senior positions in the *Sharʿah* Faculty of Damascus University, where he has been working ever since.⁴ Al-Būṭī is well-versed in the traditional, text-based disciplines of *fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, *sīrah*, *kalām*, and *taṣawwuf*. At the time of the publication of the essay on Iqbal, al-Būṭī, only thirty years of age, was about to start his scholarly career.

Impatient and not yet settled, he shared Iqbal's criticism of "Mullaism" and "Sufism" as he waged his own moral war against the conservatism of the *ulama*.

Today, as a professor in the Department of Islamic Doctrine at Damascus University and as an *imām* of the *Rifā'i* mosque in the Damascene quarter of Rukn ad-Dīn, al-Būṭī has indeed become a public institution in Syria. He appears regularly on television, radio, and the Internet, and his numerous printed lectures and sermons circuit the national and international book markets. With the support of the president and government of Syria, he has acquired the status of a public spokesperson of "official" Islam, though he has, in this role, also evoked the disapproval of the regime's most ardent critics. Al-Būṭī, who frames his thought carefully within the parameters of Ba'ṯist nationalist ideology and the government's religious politics, is accused by his opponents of conformism, political quietism, and social conservatism. It does seem as if al-Būṭī has lost the revolutionary élan that marked his early writings.

Yet, al-Būṭī has never been interested in political activism, but solely in a spiritual and moral revolution. All of his writings stress the need to change the way in which Muslim scholars study Islam and educate Muslims. The need prompted him to listen to Iqbal's message. Like Iqbal, he believed—and still believes—that the political weakness and economic stagnation of the Muslim world are rooted in a spiritual and moral malaise and do not require, as essential remedy, institutional or political change. To al-Būṭī, the acquisition and execution of political power is a secondary concern since true progress and development, in his view, starts with moral regeneration and spiritual growth. Like Iqbal, he is convinced that the moral decadence and spiritual impoverishment of the Muslims of today is a direct result of their exposure to the West and its materialistic civilization. New concepts of life and personal conduct that came with Western ideologies, such as modernism, liberalism, materialism, and secularism, have uprooted the Muslim youth and alienated them from the Islamic ethical and religious heritage, consequently helping the West to colonize, rule, and dominate the Muslim world.⁵ Even now, many Muslims, though disillusioned with Western culture, remain locked in a confused state of mind since they have not been presented with a true alternative to that culture. For al-Būṭī, as for Iqbal, Islam is the only remedy for today's "decadent" society. The application of this remedy, however, requires not an outward struggle to compete with the West in the areas of political system, financial institutions, or military weapons, but an internal struggle to change personal conduct and social attitudes, as well as to revive the spiritual tradition of Islam.⁶

Al-Būṭī's interest in Iqbal is rooted in his belief in poetry as the ideal means to achieve the above-stated goal. The text given in Part II, below, nicely reflects the author's admiration for Iqbal, whose words effortlessly work their way into hearts and are powerful enough to change people's views on life and their attitudes toward society. The power of the poet's words can effect complete harmony between the author and the reader, with the reader fully absorbing the poem's content or meaning. "When I left his company, his poetry had affected me so deeply as no other poetry had ever had. I found the live coal of his love in my heart as I felt the pain of his grief in my throat." The appeal of poetry for a jurist like al-Būṭī lies in poetry's being the most effective way of reaching one's heart or the core of one's being. It is the logic of the heart—or the logic of love (*manṭiq al-ḥubb*), as al-Būṭī calls it⁷—and not the logic of the intellect that enables one to experience truly the ultimate source of all creative energy and sound morality—the divine realm.⁸ Furthermore,

it is the heart, the seat of the human soul (*nafs*), and not rational debate that sets one on the path of spiritual refinement and of the moral betterment of society.

The whole human existence will be uplifted to the highest possible level of [spiritual] intoxication when loving hearts inhale through their tears, sing through their suffering, and chant through their ecstasy. Love's exuberant blossoms will exhale their fragrances and sing their finest melodies in all parts of our society.⁹

Thoughts like these indicate to us where al-Būṭī's interest in poetry comes from and why he is so keen to integrate "emotional" literature into his œuvre. Al-Būṭī is particularly inspired by the mystical tradition of Persian and Arabic love poetry. In his work, he frequently quotes the accounts of mystical experiences by the great medieval mystics, such as Rūmī, Ḥallāj, Bisṭāmī, Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, 'Abdallāh al-Mubārak, and others, while he is eager to let the reader absorb fully the emotional effect of their words.¹⁰ Al-Būṭī wrote a long, passionate essay on his and Iqbal's exemplar, the poet-teacher Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī, in which he asserts the pedagogical superiority of Rūmī's poetry over that of metaphysical speculation.¹¹ Al-Būṭī believes that the stylistic beauty of a poem enralls readers justifiably only if the poem fulfills its educational role of teaching the core of Islamic religion: spiritual love. His own attempt to teach love through poetry took the form of an Arabic adaptation of Aḥmad al-Khānī's Kurdish love epic *Mam ū Zin* (1956), which he "dressed in a language of enchantment, a language of matchless divine eloquence (*luḡhat al-bayān al-ilāhī al-mufjīz*)," for the "emotional and aesthetic nourishment of the reader."¹² No wonder that al-Būṭī, together with Iqbal, criticizes poetry that is not purposeful or didactic but is purely artistic or is composed solely to provide entertainment.¹³

Another reason why, for his mission, al-Būṭī chooses literature in conjunction with legal and theological texts is that he believes that true poets represent the ideal or perfect man. According to him, if poetry is the product of an inspiration of true, divine provenance, then it must be the product of the pure and spiritually rich conduct of the poet, who otherwise would have failed to compose such poetry. Al-Būṭī believes that, unlike philosophy, which can be produced by a sound mind and a corrupt heart, true poetry is the product of a sound mind *and* a sound heart—since a sound heart will always lead to the creation of a sound mind. To al-Būṭī, Iqbal is one of those poets who epitomize this ideal synthesis, which sets him up as a model for people to follow and imitate, and so he urges Muslim youths to "get up and learn the sublimity of love and passion from Iqbal's heart." In his attempt to portray Iqbal's poems as a record of the most authentic religious sentiment and mystical experience, all other aspects of Iqbal lose in significance. Al-Būṭī gives no biographical details about Iqbal and no bibliographical citations for the works of Iqbal that he quotes. Nor does he attempt to preserve the rhyme and meter of Iqbal's poetry since the selected portions of this poetry are fully integrated into al-Būṭī's running text. Finally, there is nothing to suggest that either a comprehensive thematic or doctrinal interpretation of Iqbal's concepts or a discussion of the more controversial aspects of Iqbal's thought was intended. Al-Būṭī's only interest lies in the creation of Iqbal's experience in the reader's heart and soul.

Al-Būṭī's style of representation, too, has an apologetic dimension to it. Like many poet-mystics before him, Iqbal was accused of promoting heretical beliefs and blasphemous ideas through supposedly licentious love poetry. Al-Būṭī preempts potential criticism against his orthodox colleague by carefully selecting only those passages from Iqbal's poetry that give evidence of the latter's pure intention and sincere motivation

(spiritual love) and in which Iqbal is seen as praising the—unadultered—Arabic roots of Islamic religion and Muḥammad’s *Sunnah*. The hidden or tacit subtext of the essay, therefore, seeks to prove that a pure, loving heart cannot be corrupted by heretical ideas. In numerous articles of a biographical—or rather, hagiographical—nature, al-Būṭī repeats this maneuver by stressing the essential link between a person’s inner state, on the one hand, and his words or outward acts, on the other.¹⁴ Words, al-Būṭī wishes to show, ought to be judged and evaluated in light of the character traits and attitudes of the person who uttered them, just as a person’s virtue or merit is to be assessed in light of how that person’s inner state is manifested in his good or bad deeds. In defending those Muslim writers against whom a charge of unbelief was brought (*takfīr*), al-Būṭī highlights their immaculate character and lifestyle. Thus, in his *Shakhsīyyāt Istawqafatnī*, he defends ‘Abdallāh al-Mubārak, Ibn al-‘Iyāḍ, Muṣṭafā as-Sibāṭī, Rūmī, and Roger Garoud and clears the names of those who were charged by some with *taḥrīm* (commission of unlawful acts)—for example, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and Ḥasan Ḥabannakah—by citing their absolutely sincere and correct utterances.¹⁵ Al-Būṭī realizes that a spiritual revolution needs guidance and instruction by individuals of exemplary behavior. Yet, he fears that an overcritical examination of Islam’s intellectual past on purely doctrinal considerations could bring the whole heritage into disrepute. His counterstrategy, therefore, is to imbue his readers’ hearts with sympathy and loving affection for the poet-mystics, who are then shielded against any doubt and, so, cannot be impugned by any adverse judgment resulting from a purely rational or intellectual investigation.

In his praise of Iqbal, al-Būṭī presents no thorough introduction to or commentary on Iqbal’s ideas. Having picked out a few passages from Iqbal’s extensive work, he is satisfied to give his readers a flavor of Iqbal’s style and thought rather than the depth of his argument. One might adjudge al-Būṭī’s approach to be superficial, but it is evident what aspects of Iqbal he wishes to stress: the poet’s quest for a spiritual revival of humankind; his frustration with Western culture and his aversion to Muslims’ imitation of that culture; and his interest in the Arabic origin of Islamic civilization—before this civilization was corrupted by Greek philosophy.¹⁶ There is no room for a more nuanced view of Iqbal since al-Būṭī is only concerned, in the homiletic manner of a mosque preacher, to get his message across: the modern world’s ills can be redeemed by a return to the state of consciousness that existed at the time when God conveyed his message to the Prophet Muḥammad. History, however, will not repeat itself, and no return to seventh-century Arabia is intended. Even so, al-Būṭī wishes to “import” from the early history of Islam into the modern period the attitude of God-centeredness and the belief, held by the *Ṣaḥābah* (Muḥammad’s Companions) and the *Salaf* (pious elders), in God’s interference, overt or covert, in human life. It is debatable whether al-Būṭī knew Iqbal’s work intimately or whether he understood his philosophy correctly.¹⁷ What matters, however, is that he regards Iqbal as an advocate of his, al-Būṭī’s, own message and as a contemporary who shared both his ideals and his anxieties. When al-Būṭī says that he accompanied Iqbal on his journeys and stayed up at night with him, we can be sure that al-Būṭī is not merely using a literary convention but is giving expression to an honest and genuine feeling.

Part II: The Text¹⁸

Last night, I stayed up with Dr. Muḥammad Iqbāl . . . and accompanied him on a long journey around the world. I stood listening to his grief in the Cordova Mosque. . . . I humbled myself along with him as he let out his grief and sorrow atop the hills of Palestine. . . . I watched him as he traversed the banks of the Thames, unburnt by the West even though he lived in the midst of its blaze. . . . I listened to him as he stood atop the mountains of the Punjab, his heart rent as he gave sincere counsel to the Arab nation. . . . I followed him as he escaped to spring's luxuriant trees, drinking intoxicants from the palms of their hands and watering them with cups of his philosophy and feelings drawn from his heart. . . . Then I accompanied him as he moved in the direction of the Ḥijāz, his longing scattering the sand of the path about and he himself imploring the caravan guide to slow down in his march and have pity on his fast-beating heart—all this as there welled up, inside him, profound feelings of love, the lyre of his poetry causing the countenance of the desert to rock and sway.

When I left his company, his poetry had affected me so deeply as no other poetry had ever had. I found the live coal of his love in my heart as I felt the pain of his grief in my throat. I came to believe that this was the poet in whose poetry one would find the pleasant odor of his burning heart. I came to believe that this was the poet whose poetry deserved to be celebrated and venerated since his poetry was a message (*risālah*), his love was faith (*īmān*), and his feelings were a spiritual awakening (*intifādah rūḥiyyah*)—these three traits making him out to be the renewer (*mujaddid*) of the world in which he lived. Listen to him as he composes the following verses while inside the Cordova Mosque, his heart afire with rapture:

Between you and me, O majestic mosque, there is a bond of faith and tenderness, a stirring up of affection and of sorrow. Indeed, man is, in point of substance, a handful of clay. And yet, he has a breast that is no less noble and glorious than the Throne, for it is lit up with the light of its Lord and has borne the Trust of God. The angels are distinguished by their ceaseless prostration, but how will they ever have the ardor that distinguishes the prostration made by man?

Listen to his lament at the end of his *qaṣīdah*:

Indeed, every heroic deed and every creative act is deformed and incomplete if the last spark of life has not burnt within it. Every tone and every song is but useless amusement and nonsense, with no future for it in the world of ideas, if the blood of the heart has not gushed forth with it.

Listen, with me, to his verses as he is intoxicated by the pride of his association with the Ḥijāz and its light—remember that he is a non-Arab, an Indian! —an association that transformed his heart into a pearl that was not burnt up by the furnace of the West and the civilization of the West.

The glitter of the Western sciences could not dazzle my heart or veil my sight because I had rubbed my eyelids with the salve of Medina's antimony.

I dwelled in the furnace of Western teaching, and I got out of it just as Abraham got out of Nimrod's fire.

As for Iqbal's grief over the Muslim youth, over the loss of their personality in the personality of the West, and over the draining of their hearts of the pain of love, it is a

bitter grief that reduces to tears those who are possessed of conscience and feelings. He says:

O Lord, wound the hearts of your youth with the arrows of pain. Awaken the slumbering hopes in their breasts. Provide them with the provision of ardent love in their hearts. Give them my love and my knowledge. O Lord, give them my sighs of the morning, and let the hawks of Islam grow wings.

And he says:

Yes, the educated youth's glass is empty. Their lips are thirsty, their faces are shiny, and their souls are dark. From their Muslim earth the foreigners build churches and temples. Being in love with Western civilization, they stretch out their palms to foreigners that the latter may give them barley bread in charity. It would appear to you that they are alive and well-fed, but, in fact, they are dead and their life is borrowed from the West. And you, teacher of that generation—may Allah preserve the life of your youth!—teach them self-esteem and self-confidence. Teach them to be proud of their souls and to have confidence in their personality. Teach them how to split rocks and how to make mountains flat, for the West has taught them nothing except how to make glass.

Heaving sighs, he turns toward the Arabs and says:

How disgraceful is your decline and stagnation, O inhabitants of the desert! You were one nation, but have become many nations today. You were one group, but have become many groups. O Bedouin, O master of the desert, return to your power and resolve. Seize time by its forelock and hold the reins of history. Lead the caravan of mankind toward the ideal goal. The desert will never be large enough to host you, so pitch your tent in your own self, which is large enough to accommodate the horizons. Be speedier than the hurricane, more forceful than the flood, that your mounts may speed up in the track of life and may outstrip the wind.

In the end, he says:

Forgive me, great men of the Arabs! This Indian means to say a few candid words to you. Do not say, then, O nobles, "An Indian giving counsel to Arabs?" You, who are leaders, were the first among all the nations to recognize the true essence of the religion. Your union with Muhammad, upon him be peace, will not be perfect until you have made a break with Abu Labab. Belief in Allah will not be valid without denying the Rebel (Yaghūt). The Arab world, O leaders, is not constituted of frontiers and borders only; it rests on the foundation of this religion of Islam and on the bond with Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

His love and passion come across clearly in the following:

In my poetry, I roam after the flame that once filled the world with heat and light. I spent all my life in search of past glory and of the heroes that have passed away. In my poetry, I have shed my tears and my blood, I have poured out in it my soul. I pray that God may not diminish this passion of mine; rather, I pray to him for more of it and for its renewal.

So, O youth, who search for love in the mire, O you who search for intoxication in Europe's wine, and O you who seek poetry and literature at the feet of women . . . O Arab and Muslim youth, come and learn the sublimity of love and passion from Iqbal's heart. Come and drink wine from the sacred spring from which Iqbal drank. Come and study poetry and literature in the school of Iqbal, the school of your glory at whose ruins stands sobbing a non-Arab from India, while you are dancing to the tunes of the lyre arising from the brothels of Europe!

Notes

¹Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī, *Min al-Fikr wa-l-Qalb* (From the Mind and the Heart), 2nd ed. (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr; first published 1972). In the revised edition of 1994, two essays, written in the 1970s, were added. All of al-Būṭī's works have been published by Dār al-Fikr in Damascus. In citing other works by him, therefore, we will only give the year of publication in each case.

²These essays deal with the life and work of, among others, the Kurdish Islamic activist Saʿīd Nūrsī, the Tunisian Shaykh al-Azhar, Muḥammad al-Khiḍr Ḥusayn, and the Romanian writer Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu, especially his novel *The 25th Hour*.

³In the 1950s, for example, Egypt's Ministry of Information started publishing, in its journal *al-Waḍy*, a series of introductory articles on Muḥammad Iqbal, including: ʿUthmān Amīn, "Falsafat adh-Dhāt ʿinda Muḥammad Iqbal" (1956); Shakīb al-Umawī, "Muḥammad Iqbal" (1957); Taqī ad-Dīn al-Hilālī, "Iqbal" (1958). Also, in some Arab countries, Pakistani embassies officially held Iqbal Day events, that in Damascus (1955) being the first. Translations into Arabic were commissioned or officially sanctioned, such as the translations of Iqbal's Persian works *Asrār-i Khudī*, *Rumuz-i Bikhudī*, and *Payām-i Mashriq* by ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ʿAzzām, Egypt's ambassador to Pakistan, who also wrote a monograph on Iqbal, *Muḥammad Iqbal: Siratuhū wa-Shḥrubū wa-Falsafatuhū* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1985; first published 1954).

⁴For a more detailed account of his life, see Andreas Christmann, "Islamic Scholar and Religious Leader: A Portrait of Shaykh Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī," in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 9 (1998), 2:149–169.

⁵Al-Būṭī, "Mushkilat al-Ḥaḍarāh fī Mujtamaʿinā" (The Problem of Civilization in Our Society), in *Min al-Fikr wa-l-Qalb* (1976), 115–120, and "Mushkilat al-Baḥṭh wa-n-Naqḍ fī Mujtamaʿinā" (The Problem of Study and Criticism in Our Society), *ibid.*, 121–124. For a more detailed explanation, see *Ḥiwār ḥawla Mushkilāt Ḥaḍariyyah* (Discourse about Problems of Civilization), 3rd ed. (1990).

⁶It is difficult to name a single book or article as a point of reference since encouraging the revival of true Islam has been a constant theme in al-Būṭī's work and very often appears in only slightly varying forms. The theme is, however, very explicit in al-Būṭī's adverse judgment, in *Al-Jihād fī l-Islām*, against the more militant interpretations of the Syrian Muslim brotherhood and other radical groups in the Arab-Muslim world. See his *Al-Jihād fī l-Islām: Kayfa Naḥmuhū wa-kayfa Numārisuhū?* (Jihad in Islam: How to Understand and Practice It) (1993), and, for the debate that followed the publication of this book, *Zawābiḥ wa-Aḥdāʾ warāʾa Kitāb al-Jihād fī l-Islām* (Storms and Reverberations Caused by the Book *Jihad in Islam*) (1994).

⁷"Mantiq al-Ḥubb," in his *Al-Insan wa-ʿAdālat Allāh fī l-Ard* (n.d.), 88–93.

⁸Best summarized in his *Ḥajat al-Maktabah al-Islāmiyyah ilā l-Adab al-Islāmī* (The Need for Islamic Libraries to Have Islamic Books).

⁹"Ad-Dīn wa-l-Ḥubb" (Religion and Love), in *Min al-Fikr wa-l-Qalb*, 179.

¹⁰Recently, al-Būṭī edited a three-volume work, containing his commentary and glosses, on Ibn ʿAṭāʾ-Allāh's *Ḥikam*. See *Al-Ḥikam al-ʿAṭāʾiyyah: Sharḥ wa-Taḥlīl* (ʿAṭāʾ's Aphorisms, Explained and Analyzed), 1–3 (2000–2002).

¹¹"Jalāl ad-Dīn ar-Rūmī," in *Shakhsīyyāt Istawqafatni* (Personalities that Caught My Attention) (1999), 135–153.

¹²*Mam ū Zin: A Love Story that Germinated on Earth and Blossomed in the Heavens*, 2nd ed. (1958), 10.

¹³His polemics belong in the best tradition of orthodox writings against "profane" eroticism in poetry. See his "Limā dhā Ana Lā Aktubu ʿan al-Ḥubb?" (Why Do I not Write about Love?), in *Min al-Fikr wa-l-Qalb*, 172–174. The sheer possibility that his own literary adaptations of love poetry might be interpreted as hedonistic love lyrics led al-Būṭī, at one stage of his life, to question the success of his efforts: "I fear that I am talking about [spiritual] love whereas they take me to be one who advocates their physical urges, wine, nightlife, and sins" (172).

¹⁴An excellent example is his biography of his father, *Hādḥā Walīdī* (This is My Father) (1992).

¹⁵*Shakhsīyyāt Istawqafatni* and *Hādḥā Walīdī*.

¹⁶For a good summary, see the still unsurpassed work of Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: Brill, 1963).

¹⁷Research on Iqbal shows that his philosophy is deeply influenced by Western thought (Hegel, Bergson, Nietzsche), as he himself acknowledges. This fact would call in question al-Būṭī's outright dismissal of any European influence on Iqbal. See the relevant articles by Freeland Abbott, B. A. Dar, A. H. Kamali, and S. A. Vahid in Hafeez Malik, ed., *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

¹⁸“Laylah ma‘ Rawā‘i‘ Iqbal” (A Night with Iqbal’s Masterpieces), in *Min al-Fakr wa-l-Qalb*, 234–236. The English translation here provided of Iqbal’s verses is that of al-Būṭī’s Arabic rendering of them and may differ from English translations made by other writers.

Biographical Note

Andreas Christmann (MA and PhD, University of Leipzig, Germany) has been, since 1999, on the faculty of the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at Manchester University, where he teaches contemporary Islam. His current research interests include Qur’ānic hermeneutics in the context of nineteenth and twentieth century Islamic thought as well as modern Islamic scholarship as represented in the life and work of the Damascene Kurdish scholar Muḥammad Sa‘īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī. He serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Semitic Studies*, heading the journal’s Islamic studies section. His publications include:

“A content analysis of the film ‘The Guests of God—The Road to Makkah,’” in *Islam in den Medien*, ed. Medienprojekt Tübinger Religionswissenschaft (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagsanstalt, 1994), 150–169.

“Islamic Scholar and Religious Leader: A Portrait of Muhammad Sa‘īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 9 (1998), 2:149–169.

“Une piété inventée: le ramadan dans les mass media syriens,” in *Ramadan et Politique*, ed. Fariba Adelkhah and François Georgeon (Paris: CNRS-Éditions, 2000), 55–80.

“‘The Form is Permanent, but the Content Moves’: Text and Interpretations in the Writings of Mohamad Shahrour,” in *Die Welt des Islam* 43 (2003), 2:143–172.

“Authentizität und Adaption: Zur Rezeption des Mystischen Erbes Ahmad al-Khanis im Werk von Muhammad Sa‘īd Ramadan al-Butis,” in *Kurden in Syrien*, ed. Eva Savelsberg, forthcoming in the series of the Berliner Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Kurdologie.

Center for Islamic Studies

421 DeBartolo Hall
Youngstown State University
Youngstown, Ohio 44555-0001, USA
(330) 941-1625 & (330) 941-3448
(330) 941-1600 (fax)
www.as.yzu.edu/~islamst
mmir@ysu.edu

Iqbal Academy Pakistan
www.allamaiqbal.com
iqbalacd@lhr.comsats.net.pk

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 264
Youngstown, Ohio