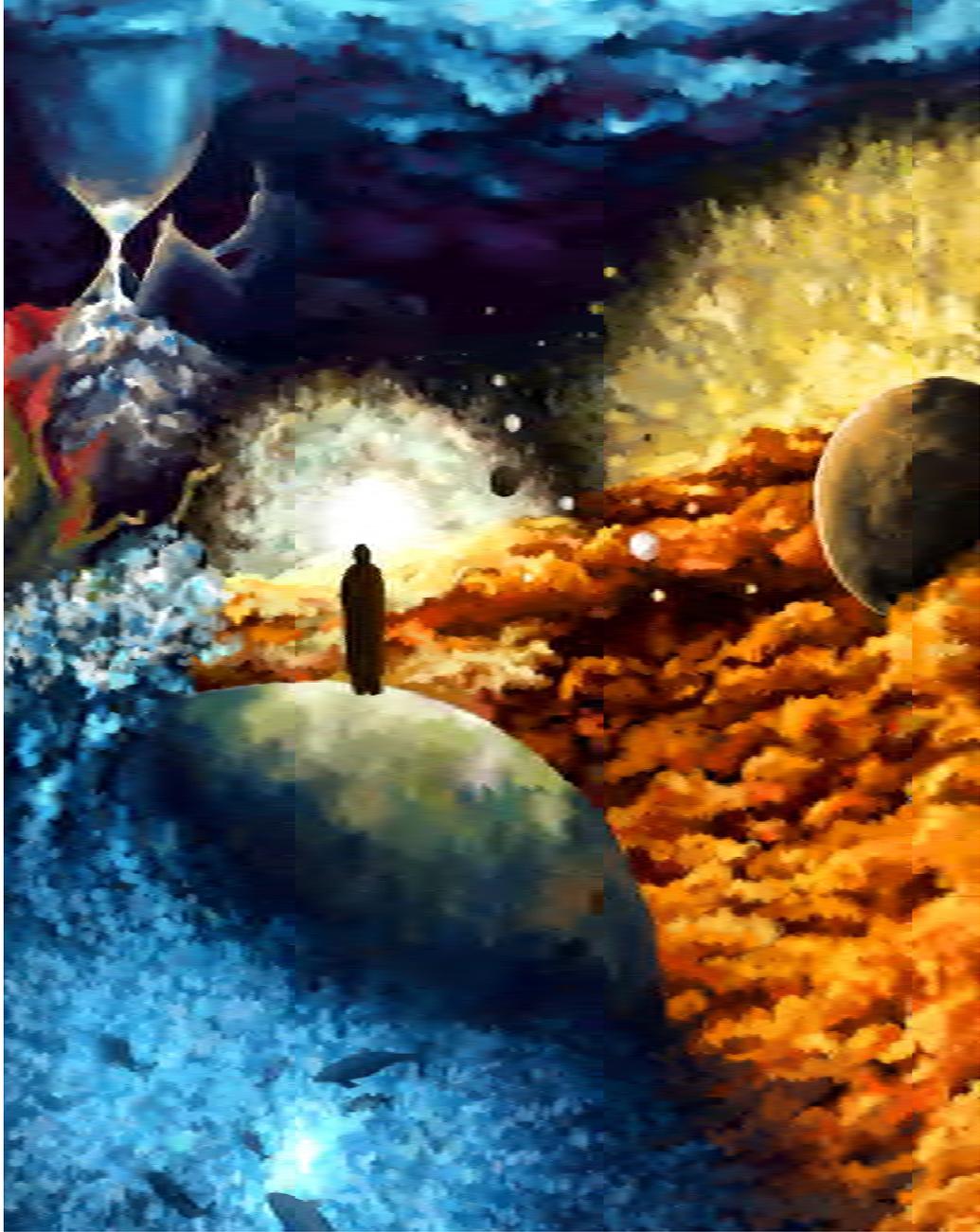




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# IQBAL

## AN ILLUSTRATED BIOGRAPHY



Khurram Ali Shafique

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PUBLISHER  
MUHAMMAD SUHEYL UMAR  
DIRECTOR  
IQBAL ACADEMY PAKISTAN  
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

6th Floor, Aiwan i Iqbal Complex, Off Egerton Rd, Lahore, Pakistan

Tel: 92-42-6314510/9203573

Fax: 92-42-6314496

Website: [www.allamaiqbal.com](http://www.allamaiqbal.com)

Email: [director@iap.gov.pk](mailto:director@iap.gov.pk)

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I am born in the world as a new sun,  
I have not learned the ways and fashions of the sky:  
Not yet have the stars fled before my splendor,  
Not yet is my quicksilver astir;  
Untouched is the sea by my dancing rays,  
Untouched are the mountains by my crimson hue.  
The eye of existence is not familiar with me;  
I rise trembling, afraid to show myself.

*SECRETS OF THE SELF, l. 21–28*

Translated by R. A. Nicholson

# PREFACE

The present volume was conceived both as a book as well as an exercise in visual art. One of the ways a piece of art greatly differs from a plain statement of facts is that it provides a virtual experience and stimulates feelings. The artistic aim of this book is to simulate a sense of consulting several resources instead of just one. Through juxtaposition of visuals and words, sometimes in an unusual manner, this volume seeks to create the impression of a well-equipped library where one can check cross-references or even take a break with entertaining diversions and then resume study.

In terms of information, this book presents:

- (a) a biography of Iqbal;
- (b) brief introductions to the events and people most relevant to his life and thought;
- (c) synopses of all published works and major uncollected writings;
- (c) extracts from collected writings; and
- (d) complete texts of four important masterpieces: (i) the posthumously published notebook *Stray Reflections*; (ii) the much talked about *Presidential Address* presented in Allahabad in 1930; (iii) 'The Mosque of Cordoba,' which is regarded by some as the greatest poem in Urdu literature; (iv) text of the 'New Year Message' broadcast in the last year of Iqbal's life.

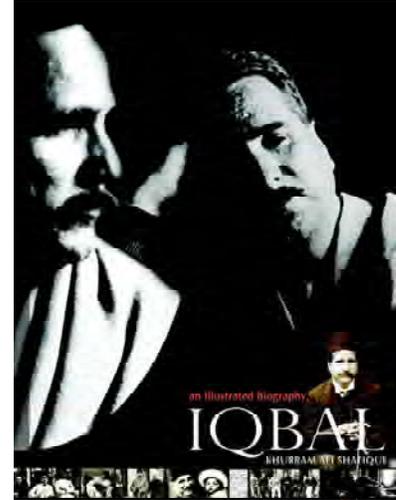
Nearly all available pictures of Iqbal are also included here, some being printed for the first time. Also included are facsimiles from first drafts and manuscripts of his works.

I am obliged to M. Suheyl Umar for his support. Not only in his capacity as the Director of Iqbal Academy Pakistan had he a vision for undertaking a project of this magnitude but also as a scholar and a friend his input at each stage of preparation was indispensable.

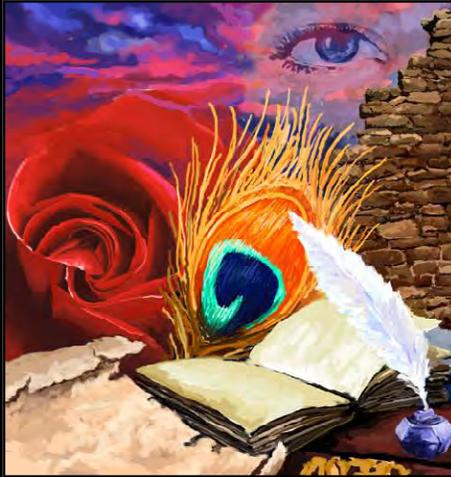
Others who helped me are numerous but I must mention Dr. Rafiuddin Hashmi, the good-natured Iqbal scholar whose affection and patronage is almost proverbial among the younger generation of scholars working on the subject.

I am stylistically indebted to Mary Renault's *The Nature of Alexander*, which served in some ways as a model for writing the biography of a great mind.

KHURRAM ALI SHAFIQUE



On a personal note I would like to add that the idea of this book emerged when I met Mr. Suheyl Umar. His input was so synergetic that it is difficult for me to say whether the final product is something I wanted to do, or something that he always had in his mind. I think, it is both.



Many a poet was born after his death,  
Opened our eyes when his own were closed,  
And journeyed forth again from nothingness,  
Like roses blossoming o'er the earth of his grave.

*SECRETS OF THE SELF, l. 21–28*

Translated by R.A. Nicholson

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**PROLOGUE:**  
**VOICES**



On April 21, 1938, Iqbal died in Lahore. People swarmed to his house; they included Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. His friends selected a vacant spot on the left side of the steps of the gigantic Mughal mosque as his burial place. The site belonged to the archaeological authorities and hence the Chief Minister of Punjab Sir Sikander Hayat Khan had to be contacted in the middle of his Calcutta visit. He refused (and later got himself buried on the other side of the same entrance). The British Governor was more helpful and through him the permission was secured from Delhi by the afternoon.

By that time the newspapers had printed special supplements so that when the funeral procession started in the evening it contained no less than twenty thousand people. Children from the orphanage of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam paid their homage by holding little black flags in their hands and standing silently in a queue on a nearby road. They lowered their flags when the procession passed by. It was not forgotten that the poet had started out as a fundraiser for parentless children some forty years ago.

The body was lowered into the grave at 9:45 pm after the funeral prayer had been offered twice – once in the playgrounds of the Islamia College (where, we are told, some fifty thousand people attended it) and a second time in the grand Mughal mosque where he had seldom missed the biannual Eid prayers in his life.

His last book, an imaginary travelogue to Madinah in Persian verse was still unpublished. It came out later that year by the title he had given to it, *Armughan-i-Hijaz*; his last unfinished Urdu anthology was appended to it as an additional section.

In March 1940, less than two years after Iqbal's death, the All India Muslim League held its annual session in Lahore – at Minto Park, just outside the Mughal complex in which he was buried. A resolution was passed to create a Muslim state in the Northwestern provinces of India and two years after that Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Quaid-i-Azam, published a bunch of letters written to him by Iqbal in his last days. Referring to the recent expansion of his party's influence to the majority provinces in addition to the minority

Pictures on the preceding pages:

p.1 (*frontispiece*): 'Himalaya and Ganges' by Tabassum Khalid illustrating Iqbal's allegory of tradition versus modernity from Iqbal's didactic poem *Asrar-i-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self).

p.2 (*inside frontispiece*): 'In the Divine Presence' by Tabassum Khalid, illustrating the culmination of the heavenly voyage in Iqbal's epic *Javidnama*.

p.3 (*inner-title*): Detail from an award-winning portrait of Iqbal by Ajab Khan (See p.103 for a larger picture)

p.4 Detail from painting by Shireen Najib, illustrating the landscape of Iqbal's earlier nature poetry (tones have been changed).

p.6 'Literature' by Tabassum Khalid, illustrating a chapter from *Asrar-i-Khudi*.



Right: Photographs of Iqbal's funeral procession corroborate the eye witness accounts of thousands of people swarming the streets of the city.

provinces, he paid tribute to Iqbal, who had “played a very conspicuous part, though at that time not revealed to public, in bringing about this consummation.”

The nationalists read this statement with suspicion. They claimed that Iqbal had only forwarded a proposal for rearrangement of provinces while he would have never approved of partitioning the country since he too had been a nationalist once. Jinnah succeeded, however, and Pakistan was carved out of India when the British gave independence to the country on August 15, 1947. Since the astrologers in India regarded the day as inauspicious, the Prime Minister designate Jawaharlal Nehru called the first session of his parliament on the 14th and let it linger on till midnight when he could greet the awakening of his country with a moving speech. The session did not adjourn until Suchitra Kirplani, who would later become the first woman Chief Minister in an Indian province, had sung Iqbal’s *Saray jahan say achha Hindustan hamara* (Our India is better than the whole world) alongwith *Jana mana gana* of the national poet Tagore.

The next morning in Karachi, Jinnah hoisted a green and white flag to start the first day’s work in the state that was officially seen as the brainchild of Iqbal. Here, each successive ruler would feel obliged in one way or another to pledge commitment to the ‘message of Iqbal.’

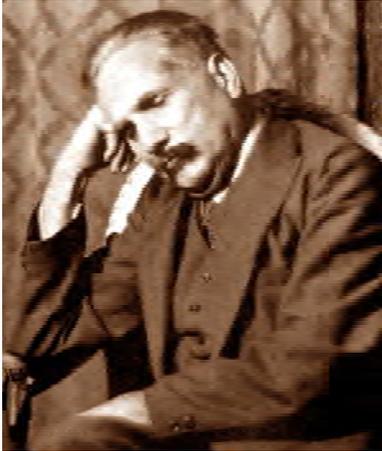
The two states fought three wars against each other in less than three decades but Iqbal remained dear to them both. Twenty-six years later his birth centenary was celebrated in India while the Prime Minister was Nehru’s daughter – an apocryphal story went round to the effect that her late father had enjoined upon her to always honor the memory of Iqbal since he was indebted for being mentioned in Iqbal’s greatest work, *Javidnama*. She initiated a second round of accolades for Iqbal by way of an international conference in New Delhi when Pakistan announced its own centennial of the poet four years later. However, it would be wrong to guess that such appreciation in India was restricted to the Nehru family – Morarji Desai, who wrested power from Indira Gandhi in the meanwhile, took pains to ensure that the conference in New Delhi takes place as planned.



Indian nationalism and Pakistan’s two-nation theory were not the only schools of thought disputing to claim him as their own. The ‘progressive’ writers of South Asia, generally having a Marxist orientation, had formed an association in 1936 and even their condolence essays on the poet’s death affirmed their literary descent from him. In some later writings Faiz Ahmad Faiz stated that Iqbal represented the new middle class against the decadent aristocratic tastes in Urdu literature. This class had emerged as a result of exposure to modern education offered by the British, said Faiz, but it was surprising that no other poet presented the experience of knowledge in his poetry. “The poetry of ideas reached perfection through Iqbal in our own times,” he wrote a year after Iqbal’s death. “The task required a great personality.” He used the case to prove that poetry of ideas could be spontaneous too.



Pakistan, founded by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (above) in 1947, is officially seen as the brainchild of Iqbal. Although the poet-philosopher never lived to see the birth of this state, he enjoys the prestige of its national poet as it is claimed to be born out of the vision he presented at the annual session of the All India Muslim League in 1930: “In Islam God and the universe, spirit and matter, church and state, are organic to each other. Man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interest of a world of spirit situated elsewhere. To Islam matter is spirit realizing itself in space and time...” (See pp.136-150 for the complete text of Iqbal’s Presidential Address)



*Above: The picture of Iqbal resting his head on his arm is famous, but contrary to the common perception, this might not be a thinking pose: actually he was resting after a fit of cold and fatigue from a walk in Paris, 1933 (See pp. 165-66 for more detail).*

In the earlier writings the progressives had denounced Iqbal – for instance, the seminal essay by their thinktank Akhtar Husain Raipuri in 1935 accused him of being a fascist. Their change of heart came from a realization that without him, the progressive thought in Urdu poetry might not have been possible. Their own contribution to the understanding of his works was to create a widespread confusion about whether he was a socialist or not.

Yet another type of opinion was represented by those who felt envy, resentment or aversion. He was not a poet and could hardly write a line without making errors, was a common slogan of the school that had its origins in the pangs of jealousy felt by contemporary poets when at the age of twenty and something he attained more renown than any other Urdu poet had acquired at a similar age. In the beginning he attempted to refute such objections with philological arguments and precedents from authentic texts but soon gave it up with a sarcastic indifference: he was a messenger and didn't wish to be known as a poet, he said.

Like all other celebrities, he too was a popular subject for gossip. In his own lifetime he was sometimes enigmatic and therefore always under the risk of being misrepresented, as he himself complained even in his earliest poems. Later, his fame gave rise to a wholesale industry of synthetic fables about his life, especially private life, until there were people claiming to have been his neighbors in cities he had never visited. Consequently there emerged a group of scholars who, perhaps finding the area of serious discussion saturated, turned their attention to a 'psychological study' of his mind – of course excluding his thought, which could have been too tough for these popstars of the academic world. The letters of Iqbal to Atiya Faizi (written in 1909-11 but published in 1947) were a godsend, and soon there were half-baked psychological studies of Iqbal. On closer analysis they were neither psychological nor succeeded in studying anything. The shortcomings of such writings gave birth to the complaint that Iqbal's life was whitewashed and the true picture could emerge only if there were more details. Supply follows demand, and rumors came forward to fill the gaps.

Last, but not least, was a group of hardworking and sincerely devoted but artistically challenged scholars who suffered from an irredeemable overdose of Western philosophy and an unctrollable urge to display their familiarity with difficult subjects. 'Iqbal and Bergson,' 'Iqbal and post-Kantian voluntarism,' 'Iqbal and Schopenhauer,' and every other possible conglomeration of this sort became the vogue and produced copious volumes of unreadable essays, papers and books. On the shelves of *Iqbaliyat* in public libraries, colleges and universities these lethally boring products pushed aside the slim and slender volumes of Iqbal's own cheerful and alive prose, which was now regarded incapable of explaining his thought. Readable efforts at critical appreciation of his works (of which there were many) came to be seen as less prestigious.



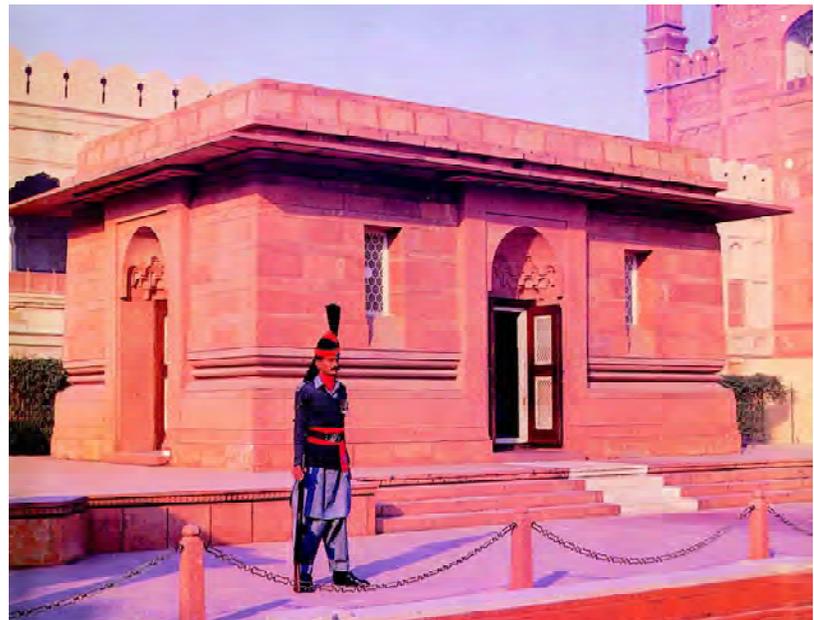
Meanwhile, Iqbal's friends had been busy erecting a suitable mausoleum over his earthly remains. One design was rejected because it had a Catholic ethos. Another design, submitted by an architect from Hyderabad (Deccan) was found more suitable but rather too delicate. Its architect Zain Yar Jang was called to Lahore where Iqbal's trustee Chaudhry Muhammad Husain took him to the poet's grave. "Look, Nawab Sahib!" He said, "On one side is the mosque, which represents the religious glory of the Muslims; on the other is the fort, which represents their worldly power. The tomb between them would look nice only if it effuses simplicity with strength. Besides, these were also the prominent aspects of Iqbal's own temperament."

Construction started towards the end of 1946 according to Zain Jang's second design and completed in 1950. Funds came from devotees without necessitating a general appeal to the public. The Government of Afghanistan donated lapis lazuli for the platform, sarcophagus and tombstone – Zahir Shah was the king at that time and Iqbal had raised funds to support the struggle of the Shah's liberal father to gain the throne, visited Afghanistan on his request and mentioned him in his poems.

That same year the provincial government of Punjab in the newly created Pakistan also established an Iqbal Academy in Lahore. The name was changed to Bazm-i-Iqbal when an act of Parliament created another Iqbal Academy under the federal government in Karachi in 1951 (which has since then also moved to Lahore and currently functions under the Ministry of Culture and Sports). One of the first initiatives of Bazm-i-Iqbal was to commission a standard biography from a renowned journalist, Abdul Majeed Salik, who had personally known the subject. *Zikr-i-Iqbal* was published in 1955. Among those who vehemently criticized it were Agha Shorish Kashmiri, another journalist, who did the right thing for the wrong reason. Representing the morbid conscience of the masses, he complained, not that the book was superficially written as it was, but that it did not present Iqbal as a perfect role model for the youth of the nation; he should have been presented as a flawless human being.

With a few exceptions owing to individuals who ran these organizations at different times, both Bazm-i-Iqbal and Iqbal Academy commendably resisted to act as censors and remained busy with organizing and disseminating knowledge on Iqbal's life and thought. The world of Iqbal scholarship will be endlessly indebted to the efforts of these institutions as well as numerous private publishers, authors and amateurs, who laboriously preserved invaluable primary data that would have been otherwise lost with time.

*Below: Iqbal's tomb in Lahore*





*Javid Manzil (Lahore), where Iqbal spent the last three years of his life, is now the Iqbal Museum. Seen on this page are (top:) the facade of the building; (above:) the wall clock from his personal use - set at the time of his death; (above right:) his dressing table - of which he may have had very little use in his life, since he was well-known for disregard to personal appearance; and (right:) his death-bed along with his shawl, pillow and the famous hookah.*



Morbid censors have existed in the society, however, and mainly known by three names: textbooks, newspapers and television. Each of these (with the recent exception of some private channels on television) have usually been guided by trends that reduced the discourse on Iqbal to a handful of harmless and meaningless clichés. The man who was known for an exuberant sense of humor in his own lifetime is often presented on these mediums as one who might never have said or done anything of the slightest human interest. Showing reverence to this incongruous effigy and quoting him as your favorite poet, philosopher and guide is a national duty, these sources tell the unsuspecting masses – innocent children included.



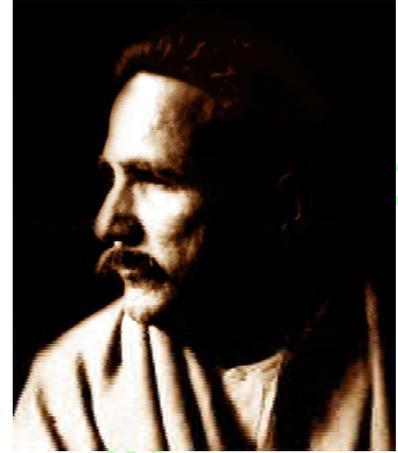
The process of recognition beyond his own region, which started in his lifetime, did not diminish after his death. In England and Germany there are university chairs in his name and scholarship on him exists in many more countries, including the US, the Soviet Union and many countries in Africa and Asia.

Within the Muslim World his position as the last flowering of the Persian wisdom poetry, and an important thinker of the modern times, is pre-eminent. Divergent opinions, however, are present – accused by some mystics for criticizing Hafiz, and by some staunch radicals for being too mystical, Iqbal seems prophetically true to his early verses: “Some think that Iqbal is a Sufi, while others accuse him of running after lovely dames. I am right there before everyone and yet opinions differ so much about me – what would happen if perchance I were to disappear.”



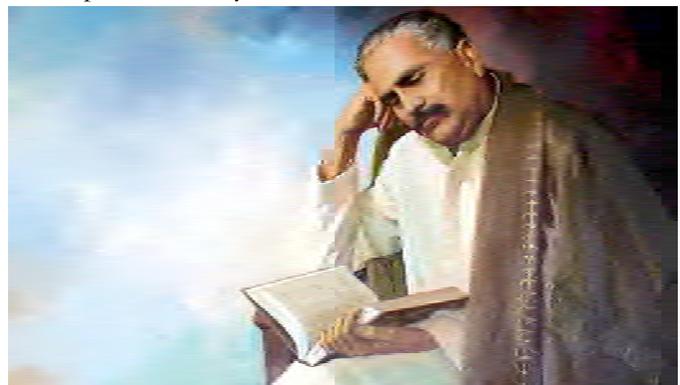
India celebrated the Iqbal Centenary in 1973 and Pakistan in 1977 (owing to disagreement over his date of birth). In retrospect the two centennaries seem to be the closing of curtains on the first phase of scholarship in the field, which remained dominated by his peers and younger contemporaries. They were too close to his own times and, more significantly, they had witnessed the unfolding of his ideas so gradually that they were set against elemental difficulties in taking a bird’s eyeview of his life and thought. Their contributions were crucial – without them the existing bank of primary sources would not have been as large. However, reorganization and reassessment was needed.

A new age of Iqbal scholarship dawned and its harbinger was, not coincidentally, Javid Iqbal. He was the younger son whose name had been used as a metaphor of the future generations. From 1979 to 1984



*Above: This profile is now a household picture. It was taken in Simla (India) in 1929, while Iqbal was at the residence of his friend Nawab Zulfikar Ali Khan (See pp. 116-18 for detail).*

*Below: It is interesting to notice how the popular imagination has replaced the Western attire in Iqbal’s Paris photograph (p. 10) with the Kashmiri shawl of the Simla photograph (above) and given him a book instead of an opportunity for the much needed rest. The indoor background also gives way to the vast expanse of the clouded sky, signifying the magnificent atmosphere of his works. Portrait by Saeed Akhtar*



he published the first authoritative biography of his father in three volumes, *Zindab Rud*. "I was only thirteen and a half at the time of Iqbal's death," he wrote in the foreword of the first volume. "Therefore I cannot claim to be his contemporary but my distance from his times makes it easier for me to keep an objective approach." With the same intellectual humility that was a prominent feature of his father he stated that he was writing this book for those who would come after him because they might be able to understand his father better than him; "after all, Iqbal is a poet of tomorrow and of the future."

Merely a couple of years after the publication of the last volume of *Zindab Rud* came the first variorum edition of Iqbal's poetry – although restricted to the early period. Incidentally, it was compiled by a Hindu scholar from India. The next important resource book also came from the same side of the border; it was a complete collection of letters arranged in chronological order.

The landmark works of the new age of Iqbal scholarship have made it possible for the present cohort to take a holistic view of him. The older stylistics, where a favorite line was arbitrarily picked up and subjectively expanded or a fleeting emotion taken as guideline for an entire thesis is now giving way to a newer set of more detached but also more balanced writings on the life and works of Iqbal.

Filtered and refracted through these layers of meaning, emotion, and contradictory opinions – 'a thing inseparable from him alive or dead' – the voice of Iqbal has come down to us.

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CHAPTER  
ONE



**THE YOUNG  
POET-PHILOSOPHER**

1877  
to 1905



Above: This earliest picture of Iqbal dates from circa 1899 when he was around twenty-two.

Picture used on p. 15 was painted by Ajab Khan from this photograph.

Iqbal's parents came together in 1857. Shiekh Nur Muhammad was a middle class Kashmiri from Sialkot; his wife, Imam Bibi, was also of Kashmiri descent. Nothing but an arranged marriage could have brought together such divergent personalities as these two, and their long years of common happiness may indicate some extraordinary sensitivity in both. Nur Muhammad was an ascetic, whose lack of formal education couldn't prevent him from mastering complex themes of divine love from the gatherings of mystics. Imam Bibi was a down to earth woman with an acute sense of everything related to the practical world.

Shiekh Muhammad Iqbal, their fourth child to survive infancy, is now generally thought to have been born on November 9, 1877 (see 'Chronology' for other possible dates of births). He was preceded by a brother (about eighteen years older), and two sisters. He was followed by two younger sisters.

He was around two when leeches were applied to his forehead as a traditional remedy for some illness. This affected his right eye, which became useless for the rest of his life. "I never remember seeing anything with my right eye," he was later going to report. Apart from the obvious difficulty it might have caused in perception of distances, the dysfunction of one eye also became an impediment when he later applied for civil service. He was disqualified on medical grounds. Although 'vision' and 'sight' are conventional metaphors in religious discourse and mystical poetry, yet it might be less than a coincidence that these found an unusual mention in Iqbal's verse, especially in the early period.

The house was teeming with caring relatives by the time he grew up and by all reports he was a very social child. Of course, he excelled in recognizing the Arabic alphabet and learning the verses of the Quran by heart – almost the entire syllabus of his early childhood education in a mosque school. He was a little above four when he met the person who changed the course of his life. This was a vernacular teacher, Syed Mir Hasan.

Syed Mir Hasan was some sort of a social rebel and a staunch follower of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. He was also a supporter of Urdu, an effective preacher in his own aloof manner and – what turned out to be most significant for Iqbal's career – a trusted friend of Shiekh Nur Muhammad. It is said that he noticed Iqbal while visiting the mosque school and used all his powers of argument to change the long-cherished plans of Shiekh Nur Muhammad. The mystic father had always dreamed of dedicating his younger son to the service of Islam – which meant to him a religious education culminating in a lifetime of leading prayers in some mosque or serving a Sufi order. The plans were now altered and Iqbal was admitted to the Scotch Mission School where he studied modern subjects till the 12<sup>th</sup> Grade before leaving for further education in Lahore at the age of eighteen. Much had changed in his life by then.

As a child he was drawn to music and poetry. He delighted in bringing popular ballads from the market and reciting them to the women in the house who were working till late in the night. Reportedly, the child also parodied these ballads to make fun of people he knew. Before passing the high school he mastered the classical skills of the craft of poetry, such as *arooz* (the science of metre) and even *abjad*, or the numerology of verses. He could write chronograms, compose *ghazals* and had some working knowledge of the classical Indian music (later he could also play *sitar*).



In the first twenty-eight years of his life he appears as a natural poet growing up against a background of material progress and social change around him while disappointments in personal life only prompt him to be, on one hand, more ambivalent about his poetic talent, and on the other, more down to earth in his analysis of philosophical ideas.

The material progress was set in motion by the onslaught of industrialization and Western enlightenment in the wake of the British subjugation of India. Sialkot's transformation into a prosperous town with an industry in sports goods took place right in front of the adolescent Iqbal; the modern education also promised, or was seen as promising, instant gratification through lucrative government jobs or successful careers in such fields as law.

Of course, there was resistance to the 'evils of modernization' – aspiring for material progress was disdainful in a society where professions were hereditary and stepping up the ladder of social status was properly obscene. It was precisely this state of mind that Ram Mohan Roy and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan aimed to change in the Hindu and Muslim sections respectively.

In retrospect, it seems that the community spirit nurtured for centuries by feudalism and blind obedience was now merely changing its character. 'One for all and all for one' was still the watchword but the direction was reversed: instead of looking backward the community was now geared towards changing together.

The post-enlightenment European concept of individualism was nowhere in the picture (except as a latent idea in the writings of the great Syed, who was far ahead of his times in almost everything). The spirit of change and eagerness to participate in community service in the Victorian India was seemingly based on the assumption that the individual had no identity save as a part of the larger mass of people. This larger mass was the *biraderi*, literally meaning fraternity or community but also conveying a mystifying awe to the Eastern mind – it was the lowest common denominator to which the individuals must submit their ego, their desires and their souls. Also, one could belong to various communities at the same time. For instance, Iqbal was a Kashmiri by caste, a Muslim by religion and a Brahmin by race (which last identity his ancestors forfeited when they converted to Islam a few centuries ago).

In his subsequent works and in his psyche we find lucid documentation of this conflict between the individual and the community. While he would denounce 'the unthinking masses' he would also preach to the individual to find salvation, not through annihilation in God but through annihilation in the national ideals.

God, individual and the community was, in a way, the love triangle he had to deal with from the very beginning. Readjusting the roles of these coordinates was the task he assigned to himself before very long.

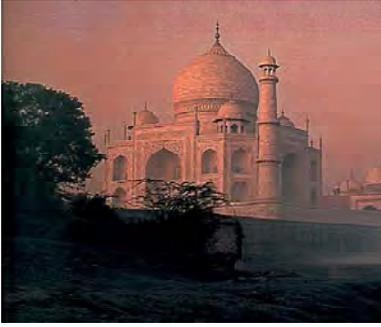


Above: Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898).

Founder of Mohammaddan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh and pioneer of such reformative journals as *Tehzibul Akhlaq*, Syed was the herald of educational, social, religious, political and literary change among the Muslims of Northern India. Iqbal was influenced by him through his mentors Mir Hasan and Thomas Arnold and even otherwise.

Syed finds mention in the poem 'Syed's Tombstone' and long Persian *mathnavi*, *Pas Cheh Bayad Kerd* (1936), which was inspired by his appearance in a dream. His vision of emancipated individuals contributing to the greater good of the community found a larger than life culmination in Iqbal's worldview.

His grandson Sir Ross Masud was Iqbal's close friend in later life.



Iqbal absorbed influences from contrasting sources, such as the remnants of the bygone Mughal civilization (represented above in the landmark monument of its glory, the famous Taj Mahal at Agra near Dehli, which was praised by Iqbal in *Persian Psalms* in 1927) and the sporadically emerging social institutions of a new society under the British Raj.

The poet Dagh, from whom Iqbal received guidance in poetry through mail during his college days, was an epitome of the decadent society of the Mughal Dehli – including all its cultural flourish. Himself associated with the household of the last Mughal emperor he was uprooted in the turmoil of 1857 and spent most of his later life as a court poet in the princely state of Hyderabad (Deccan) where he received stipend from Nizam, the ruler.

Textbook writer, translator and fiction writer Nazeer Ahmad was known in his own lifetime as the first Urdu novelist although later criticism does not accord his books the status of proper novels. He was one of the famous 'five elements' of modern Urdu writing – the other four being Sir Syed, Hali, Shibli Nomani and Muhammad Husain Azad. At one time a staunch supporter of the Aligarh Movement (and later its critic) he was nevertheless a speaking monument of Sir Syed's rational approach to religion and social reform.

A frequent visitor to the annual sessions of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore, his lectures against the *mullahs* and orthodoxy were almost certainly an influence on Iqbal during the graduation years at Government College (Lahore).



Iqbal had much to complain about by his early twenties – as the singularly most brilliant student of his batch he must have expected rewards at the end of his studies. Far lesser peers had carved out prosperous careers for themselves. One example was Gulab Din, a groundling from Sialkot who was groomed by Syed Mir Hasan to become a successful lawyer and a considerably prominent social figure in Lahore. Iqbal, however, flunked the law examinations (incidentally, he failed in jurisprudence, a subject on which he later wrote his famous "Sixth Lecture") and he was disqualified as a candidate for public service, since his right eye was dysfunctional. Hence, he was stuck with a contracted job in a second class college for the first few years of his professional life and if his father's part in him could tell him to be content with what he got, the genes of his mother must have made him impatient to strive for more ("my urge for worldly progress was due only to her presence," Iqbal wrote in a letter upon her death in 1914). His early failures fade away in the light of his later achievements, but they may serve as pointers in a biography of his mind. It seems that the major impediments in his life at that point were emotional dissatisfaction in his personal life and dissipation of creative energies.

Iqbal got married to an incompatible partner at the age of sixteen, and apart from producing two children within the next few years there was little interaction between the couple – he never brought his wife to Lahore, who thus spent most of her time at her parents' house in another city from two years after marriage.

By 1902, the difficulties in marriage were prominent enough to be mentioned in a biographical essay that couldn't have been printed without the young gentleman's willing approval. Iqbal himself would jest about his quest for female company in some of his poems – the most celebrated reference comes from 'The Inconstant Lover' (1909) and translates as: "feminine beauty is a thunderbolt to your nature; and how strange that your love is indifferent too!". However, he was far from being a Byron in such matters, and displayed some kind of pious masochism. ("Spotless like the daybreak is his youth," Iqbal proudly quoted a critic in a 1904 poem titled 'Piety and Sinfulness').

He is said to have developed a strong affection for a singing girl from the old city area in Lahore, Ameer Begum, around 1903-4. She is mentioned by name in a letter to a friend and anonymously called the '*raison d'atre*' of his grand poem 'The Pearl-laden Cloud' (1903) in another. However, a biographer looking for substantially scandalous material would be rather disappointed; the poems from this period betray a desire to discover the pleasure of longing whereby separation becomes a romantic ideal and unfulfilled desires provide nourishment to the soul. Reportedly, the girl's mother resented her daughter's attraction to the frugal professor and eventually stopped her from seeing him at all.

Whether that was true or not, he had certainly discovered a cornerstone of his later philosophy: separation is better than union.

## FAMILY



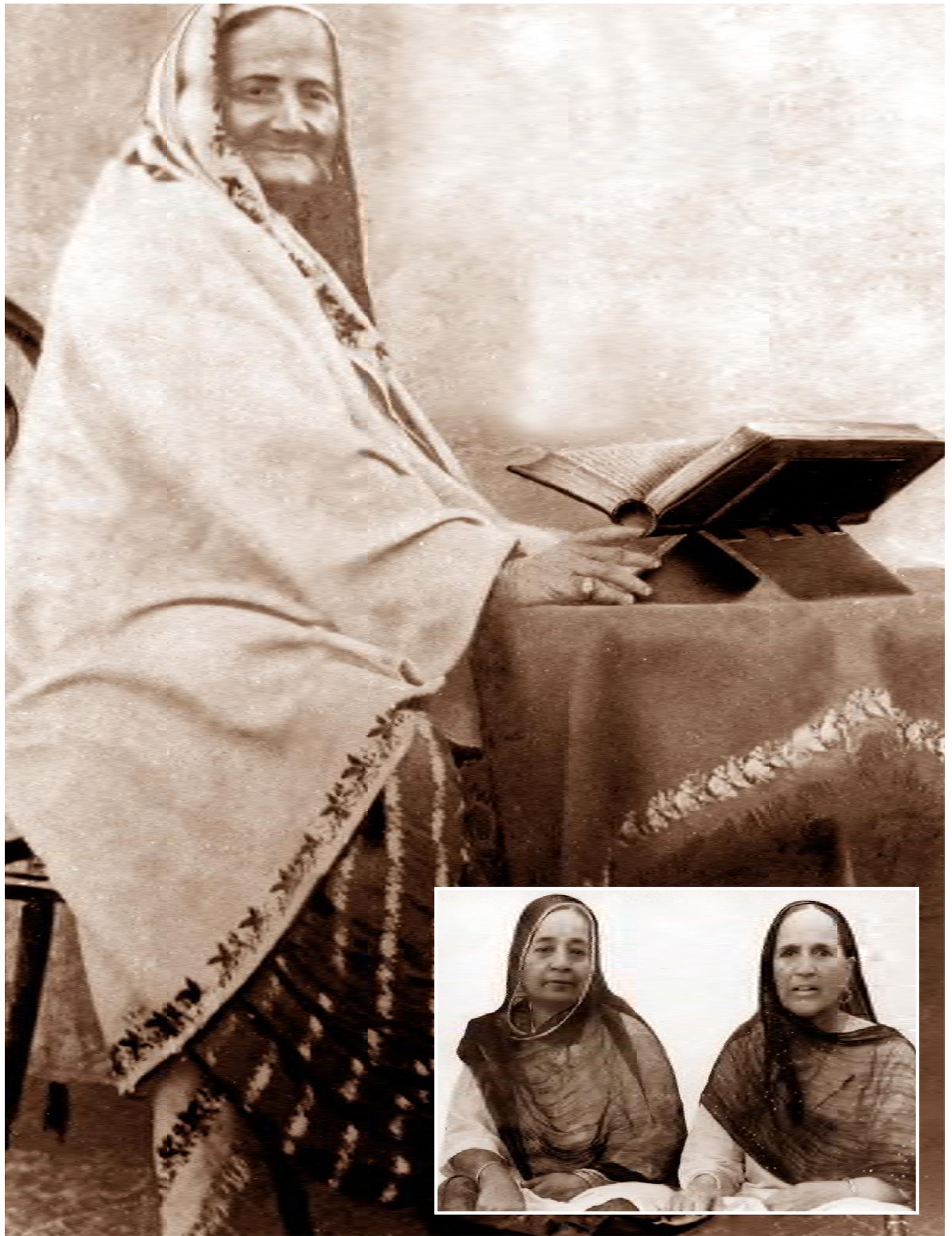
*Above: Shiekh Nur Muhammad photographed around 1900.*

*Left: A later picture of him taken in 1922 at Iqbal's residence in Anarkali (Lahore).*

Iqbal's father Shiekh Nur Muhammad (c.1837-1930), commonly known as 'Nathoo' by friends was a mild-tempered person who made his living by selling Kashmiri shawls and at one point invented a special cap to be worn by men and women alike. However, his temperament was not suited to business, which he left to a son-in-law around the 1890's. Nur Muhammad remained a major influence on Iqbal, especially in terms of mystical tendencies. Iqbal would recall incidents of spiritual nature about him from childhood, and it was he who taught him a key concept about the Quran: the Holy Book can 'reveal' itself to the readers according to their spiritual degrees.

Nur Muhammad's forgiving nature and spiritual concern for humanity left deep impact on Iqbal's mind. "The other day he was having meals when he suddenly said, 'I wonder how long the human being has been away from his Creator,' and burst into tears," Iqbal narrates about him in a letter.

Nur Muhammad was also the person who persuaded Iqbal to expunge the offensive portion about Hafiz Sherazi from later editions of *Asrar-i-Khudi*.



Iqbal's mother Imam Bibi (died 1914) was a worldly-wise woman with pious habits and supervised the cottage industry of caps and strings which were sold at her husband's shop in the front room. She was good at saving money and was later able to help orphaned girls from the neighborhood. Amazingly for her times, she was quite averse to superstitions and would often criticize her youngest daughter's leanings towards faith healing. She was also capable of putting her foot down and could take offense if her opinion was ignored. For instance, when an unfriendly neighbor was dying of plague and requested a visit from Nur Muhammad to ask forgiveness, Imam Bibi opposed the idea. Her husband had to please a wife who wouldn't speak to him in addition to combating the risk of plague when he returned home (and fortunately succeeded on both counts).

Although usually good-natured and generous, Imam Bibi could also be haughty on occasions – a poorer cousin stopped visiting her after her son was called inferior to Iqbal. On the whole Imam Bibi's temperament seems to have provided her younger son with a much-needed balance against the otherworldly tendencies inherited from the father.

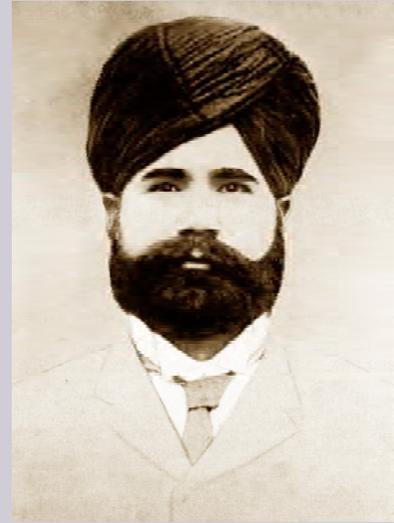
Iqbal had two elder sisters Talay Bibi (1870–1902), and Fatima Bibi; and two younger ones, Karim Bibi (died 1958) and Zaynab Bibi. Karim was next to him in order of birth and closest to him as she shared his sense of humor and easygoing attitude towards life. Zaynab was reserved and superstitiously religious (Karim would taunt her as 'Maulvi Sahib'). Fatima and Zaynab both faced stresses in marriage at some point.

*Opposite: Imam Bibi at an advanced age. Inset: Iqbal's younger sisters, Karim Bibi (right) and Zaynab Bibi (left).*

*Below left: Iqbal Manzil (ancestral house) in Sialkot as it stands now. The place was originally purchased by grandfather Shiekh Rafique and later expanded and rebuilt by Iqbal's elder brother Shiekh Ata Muhammad. Inset: Front view of a balcony.*

*Below right: Rorki Headworks, a pioneering achievement of British civil engineering in fighting famine. Iqbal's brother Shiekh Ata Muhammad was posted here for some time.*

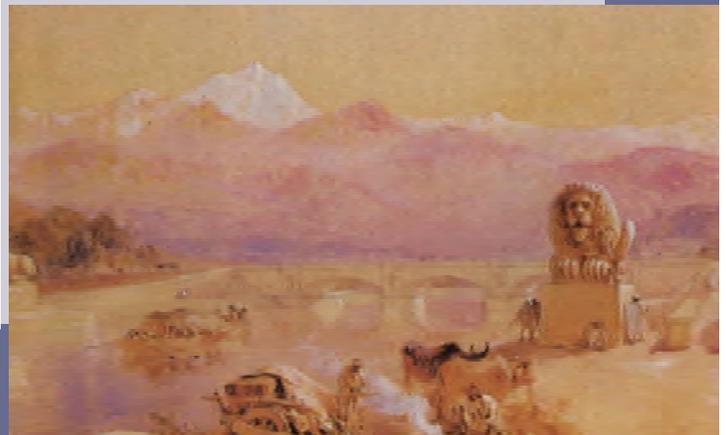
*Top right: Shiekh Ata Muhammad*



Shiekh Ata Muhammad (c.1859-1940) virtually brought up his younger brother and sponsored his education in Lahore (1895-99) and Europe (1905-8). Iqbal felt morally indebted to him and would normally put up with his dominating attitude and fiery temperament – although silently pursuing his own ways.

Ata had a large family (he divorced his first wife when Iqbal was about 8 or 9, and remarried), and retired in 1912. Concern for returning favors by looking after Ata's 3 daughters and 3 sons was among the reasons why Iqbal could not permanently shift to Europe, something he desired very much at that time.

Ata's eldest son Ijaz turned Ahmedi and, according to him, Ata also had the same faith. Other family traditions and scholarship contradict this assertion.





Left: Iqbal's first wife Karim Bibi at an advanced age.

Below: Marriage Contract between Iqbal and Karim Bibi, dated May 4, 1893 and signed by witnesses including, among others, Iqbal's mentor Syed Mir Hasan. Wager was Rs.2000, a steep amount for those times.

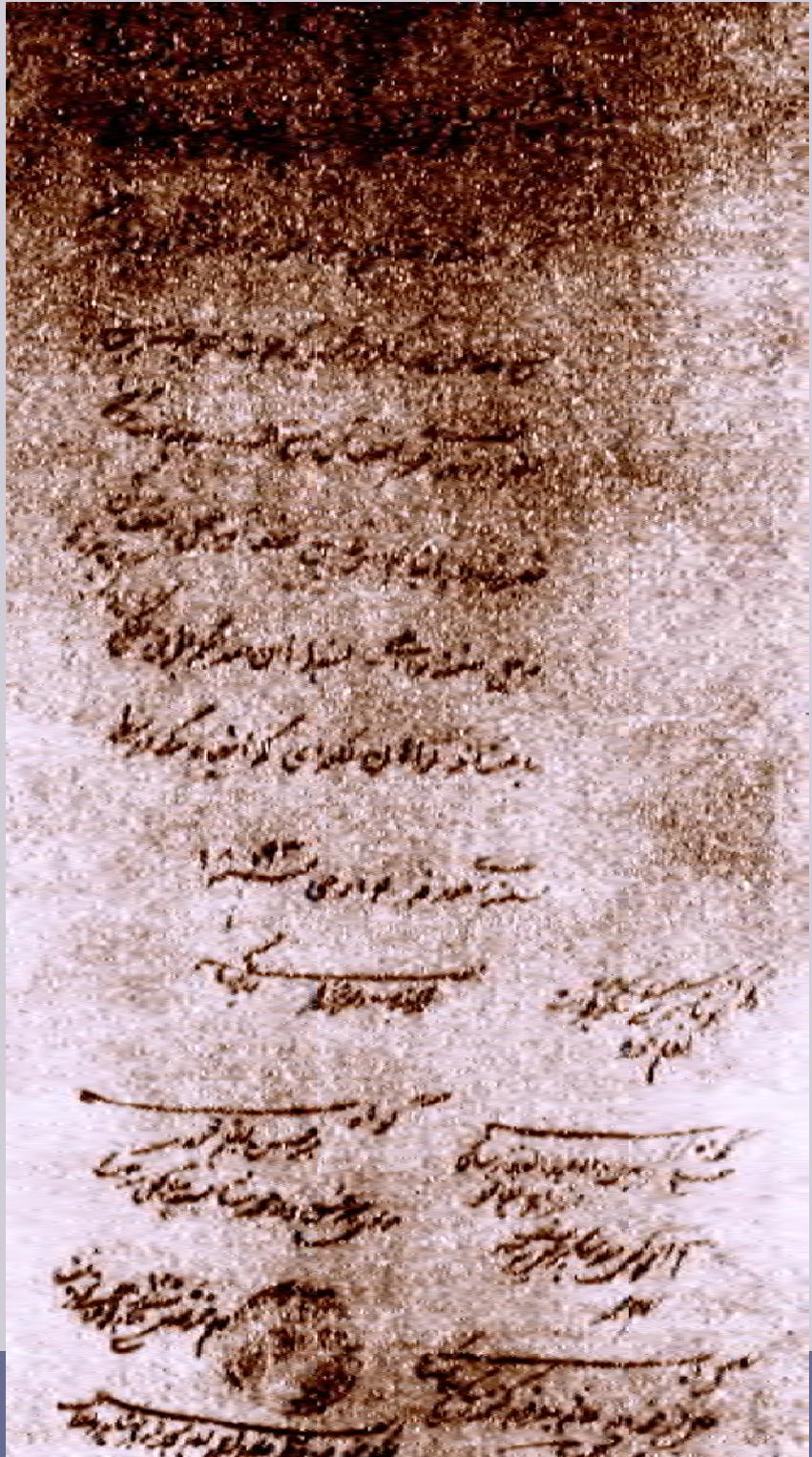
Right: Aftab Iqbal in his youth. Inset: A picture from his childhood.

Far Right: Meraj Bano.

Iqbal's first wife Karim Bibi (c.1874-1947) came from a well-to-do family in Gujarat (Punjab). Her father Shiekh Ata Muhammad (1850-1922) received the title of 'Khan Bahadur' from the British Government in 1887 for services as a physician and was an honorary surgeon to the viceroy at one time. He was also a Kashmiri with deep interest in spiritualism and these affinities are supposed to have prompted his approval of a match for her daughter that was otherwise below his social status.

Karim Bibi's marriage with Iqbal took place on May 4, 1893 (the same day when Iqbal's Entrance Examination results were announced). Iqbal was opposed to an early marriage but conceded to the whim of his elders. The marriage wasn't very successful and the couple was formally separated sometime between 1910 and 1913 (Karim Bibi requested to be spared the stigma of divorce). Iqbal continued paying her a stipend till his death. Virtually nothing is known about her personal traits without being tainted with bias either to prove her case against Iqbal or the other way round.

Karim Bibi had one elder brother and four younger sisters, one of whom mothered the famous music composer Khwaja Khurshid Anwer.





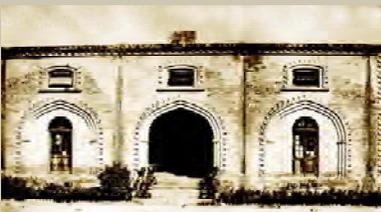
Miraj Bano (1895-1914) was the first child of Iqbal and died young. She was a favorite in the family.

Aftab Iqbal (1898-1979) received education at Sialkot, Lahore and Delhi before proceeding to London for Masters in Philosophy and Bar at Law (sponsored by his maternal grandfather). His father was estranged to him by the time Aftab returned to Lahore to practice law in 1931. According to his younger stepbrother Javid, "Aftab had come to believe that his mother was treated unfairly, and hence turned against his father." Iqbal faced much embarrassment due to his son's habit of approaching celebrities and asking for help by sharing his woes. "His poverty is much talked about among the Muslim circles [of London]," the Prime Minister of Hyderabad (Deccan) Sir Akber Hyderi informed Iqbal on one occasion while mentioning that Iqbal is criticized there for being unfair to his son.

Aftab served teaching assignments at London University and Islamia College (Lahore) before establishing himself as a barrister in Lahore, Karachi and London consecutively.

His grievance against his father subsided after the latter's death – apart from patronizing a hostile book defending his own mother. He also publicly spoke about his father's philosophy but slants against Fatima Jinnah in support of General Ayub Khan during the Elections of 1964, and an interpretation of Iqbal's verses to oppose the legitimacy of female rule came as unpleasant surprises.

## EDUCATION



Syed Mir Hasan (1844–1929) belonged to a religious family of Eastern physicians but didn't opt for that profession for reasons of aesthetics; likewise he also refused to take up a career as traditional prayer leader because he didn't want to live on charity. Much to the horror of his family he ended up teaching at a vernacular school run by Christian missionaries. At the age of nineteen he also visited Delhi to meet the famous poet Mirza Ghalib, and later became a staunch supporter of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, whom he had the opportunity to meet in person on numerous occasions.

Mir Hasan did not believe in discipline by the rod, and his answer to a principal who once asked him why his class was noisy, was, "I am teaching the kids." When faced with the task of teaching English (a language he didn't know at all), he brought a dictionary and invited his pupils to join him in learning the new tongue. He taught literature through comparison of couplets from Urdu, Persian, Arabic and Punjabi. Iqbal was known to consult him even long after leaving the school, and obtained the title of Shamsul Ulema for him when he himself was offered knighthood in the early 1920's. Asked whether his teacher wrote any books, he made the famous reply, "I am the book he wrote."

# PANJAB UNIVERSITY

## ENTRANCE EXAMINATION, 1893.

ENGLISH — PAPER B.

Mohammed Shah Din, B.A., BAR.-AT-LAW.

I. — Define: — Etymology, Pronoun, Indefinite Article, Active Mood, Irregular Verb, Accent, Hyperbole, Metonymy. 4

II. — Give the plural of: — Calf, roof, negro, grotto, monkey, lady, series, focus, stratum, governor-general, barrister-at-law; and the singular of: — kine, geese, sheep,elves, radii, beaux, nuptials, phenomena. 7

III. — Mention three nouns (a) that have no singular, (b) that have no plural number. 8

IV. — Illustrate by constructing short sentences the uses of *that*, *but*, *as* and *since*. 8

V. — Show by giving examples, the difference between (a) a simple, a complex and a compound sentence, (b) the direct and indirect form of narration. What prepositions are required after the verbs: coincide, depend, bestow, guard, impose. 10

VI. — Correct the following sentences —

(a). I am sick for three days, therefore I am absent from school, and he is angry on me.

(b). He is a too clever man, and difficult to cheat.

(c). He tells lie that "I had been sick by fever."

(d). I asked him that whether he shall attend to college to-day morning.

(e). He fell down from his horse on the ground.

(f). I, he, and you will reach Lahore and shall leave it one day after.

VII. — Parse the italicized words in the following: —

"I want an apple and a chocolate pistol, and I go with sweets in, like I had last year, and I buy sweet watches and a bird with sweets in."

Gerald  
preserve  
Christi  
seasons  
plow,  
put it

VII.—(a) Write the following subjects:—

1. Town and Country
2. How to spend a day
3. Object Lesson
4. Improvement of the Town
5. Education of the Poor

(b) Write a short story on the following: —

The reformation of the poor



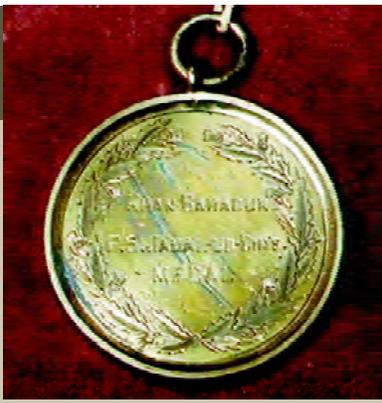
**The University of the Punjab.**  
FACULTY OF ARTS.  
SESSION 1893.

This is to certify that Muhammad Shamsuddin Syed,  
son of Muhammad Shamsuddin and a student of the  
Sc. Division, H. School, Multan has passed, in the First  
Division, the Entrance Examination of the Punjab University held in March,  
1893.

Passed also in and Optional Subject: —  
Arabic

*M. H. Khan*  
REGISTRAR,  
Punjab University.

SENATE HALL,  
LAHORE:  
The 25<sup>th</sup> May 1893



*Above: F. S. Jamaluddin Medal awarded to Iqbal in 1897 for standing first in Arabic in B.A. (he also got another medal for topping in Arabic).*



*Above right: Khan Bahadur Nawab Bakhs Medal awarded for Masters in Philosophy (he secured third division but he was the only candidate).*

*Far right: Thomas Walker Arnold.*

*Far left: Syed Mir Hasan (above) and Scotch Mission School (below).*

*Left: Question paper of English for the Entrance Examination from 1893, the year Iqbal took it. The examiner was Mian Shabdin Humayun, later a friend and admirer; he was also a justice in the Chief Court when Iqbal got to practise there as a barrister, and would often remark that Iqbal's talent was being wasted in law. Iqbal's elegy on him is included in Bang-i-Dara.*

*Below left: Iqbal's Entrance Certificate. Below : Government College in late 19th Century.*



Iqbal studied at the Government College, Lahore from 1895-99 and later taught here at various intervals. The college was affiliated with the University of Punjab (established since 1882), and it was considered a prestigious institution. The monthly fees for F.A. (High School), Bachelors and Masters were Rs.7, 8 and 10 respectively but could be deposited any time prior to the exams since attendance was not compulsory. Masters examination could be taken anytime after graduation. The college building was also home to two other educational institutions: Oriental College and Law School (where Iqbal studied law sometime between his graduation and Masters).

A students' hostel was available and Iqbal moved there after his first year.



Thomas Walker Arnold (1864-1930) studied at Magdalene College, Cambridge where his poor performance in the classics Tripos was attributed to wide reading in other areas, including Sanskrit. While teaching philosophy at Aligarh he rose to fame through his groundbreaking work, *The Preaching of Islam*, completed under the auspices of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to refute the allegation that Islam spread through sword. He was known for wearing Muslim attire occasionally and became a good friend of Shibli Nomani before leaving Aligarh in 1898 for the Government College, Lahore, where Iqbal met him as the only candidate for Masters in Philosophy that term. "A pupil such as him turns a teacher into a researcher and a researcher into a more ardent researcher," Arnold is said to have remarked about the young genius.

He was a major influence on Iqbal in the formative phase. He guided the young poet in acquiring a modern flavor (Arnold had a profound interest in Urdu poetry), inspired him to pursue higher education at Cambridge and helped him secure jobs at the Oriental College and Government College in Lahore in the meanwhile. His special recommendation of Iqbal's doctoral thesis (which was dedicated to him) at the University of Munich enabled the young scholar to secure a PhD in the little time he had at hand.



Iqbal started writing poetry at a young age and was posting it to Dagh Dehlavi for correction by the early years of college (the earliest surviving published *ghazal* comes from a late 1893 issue of a poetry magazine). A first high point was a poetry recital in Bazar-i-Hakeeman, Lahore, in 1896 where he received generous praise from Arshad Gurgani, an elderly poet of Mughal descent.

Iqbal became at least regionally well-known through his recitals to large gatherings at the annual sessions of a Muslim social organization of Lahore, Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam from 1900. The purpose of these sessions was mainly fundraising for asylums and educational institutions, and Iqbal was exceptionally successful in eliciting grand contributions from an audience spellbound by his moving verses and sweet voice (he often sang his poetry).

Iqbal owed his wider fame to the stylish monthly literary journal *Makhzan* starting from April, 1901. Publication of 'Himalaya' in this issue resulted in an overnight recognition by almost the entire Urdu readership of India and contemporaries were addressing him as friend and guide in their poems before very long. In 1904 he established himself as a passionately patriotic celebrity with 'Our Homeland' (i.e. 'Hamara Des', beginning 'Saray jaban say achha Hindustan hamara'), which is better-known to us by its revised title, 'Tarana-i-Hindi,' and remains a most popular national song even in modern India despite the poet's later change of heart.



Above: Title page of *Makhzan*, May 1901 (the second issue). Above right: Inside title of the same.

Top left: Bazar-i-Hakeeman, Old City, Lahore. Iqbal recited his early ghazals in poetry sessions held on the platforms visible in this picture and the shops inside.

# مخزن کی چند خصوصیتیں

اول۔ انگریزی مضمون نگاری کی دلچسپیاں اپنی زبان میں پیدا کرنا اگر ایسی نزاکت سے کہ پُرانا مذاق کو نگوار نہ ہو۔ اور حتیٰ الوسع اُردو انشار پر دہائی کے ضروری مضمونوں میں سے کسی سے انحراف نہ ہو انگریزی الفاظ اور محاورات اور بندشوں کے اندھا دھند اُردو میں داخل کرنے کا ناپسندیدہ مذاق جو بڑھتا جاتا ہے اُسکو روکنے کی کوشش کی جائیگی۔ اور اس بات کی احتیاط ہوگی کہ ممکن ہو تو انگریزی لفظ کی بجائے اس کا ترجمہ لے لیں۔ بشرطیکہ پورا مفہوم ادا ہو جائے۔ چنانچہ اس رسالہ کا نام انگریزی لفظ میگزین کا صحیح ترجمہ ہے اور گو میگزین بھی اُردو میں سمجھا جاتا ہے۔ مگر جب میگزین اصل میں عربی لفظ مخزن سے مشتق ہے۔ تو کیوں ہم مخزن کو ان معنوں میں استعمال کریں۔ جب لفظ مخزن زبان اُردو میں زیادہ خوبصورتی سے کھپتا ہے۔ تو وہ۔ اسکو مضامین باجموم ایسے ہو گئے۔ جو کسی ایک سبب و علت کو مذاق تک محدود نہ ہوں۔ بہتوں اور مسلمانوں کو نوکی دلچسپی کا سامان مہیا کیا جائیگا۔ اور ہر طرح اس بات کی سعی کی جائیگی کہ ہر مذہب کے ناظرین اس رسالہ کو مطالعہ و حفظ اٹھائیں۔ ہمارے ہندو ہونٹوں میں بہت سے تعلیم یافتہ اصحاب و مضامین کو ایسے ہی مشتاق ہیں جیسے مسلمان۔ اور اُردو لکھنے کا بھی بہت سے صاحبان شوق کھتے ہیں۔ اور یہ رسالہ ایسا جامع بننا چاہتا ہے کہ ہندو مسلمان مضمون نگار یکساں شوق سے اس میں مضامین لکھیں اور قارئین اُن پر ہلکا ہلکا یکساں اُطفائے گا سکیں۔ تو سوم۔ فنِ تقریر و فصاحت کو جو اس زمانہ میں مغرب میں بحیثیت فن کر سکا اور سکھایا جاتا ہے۔ ہندوستان میں رواج دینا تاکہ ہندوستان کو ایسے مقررین جنکو قدر سے قوتِ میانہ اور جوش و اثر عطا کیا ہو فصاحت کی نئی معلومات سے فائدہ اٹھائیں۔ اور اس مطلب کے حصول کی تہیہ کیلئے کبھی کبھی بعض نامور فصحاء و فرنگ کی تقریریں کو ترجمہ یا محاورہ اُردو میں لے جایں گے۔ تاکہ یہاں کو طلباء و فصحاء کیلئے نمونہ کا کام آئے۔ چہاں ہم انگریزی نظموں کے نمونے پڑھنا و نظمیں انگریزی نظموں کے با محاورہ ترجمہ۔ خلائی نظموں اور پرائز کی نظم اور نثر سے ہمیں جن کو جانیں گے۔ تاکہ منتقدین کی تقلید کریں اور لکھیں۔ مذاق سے آگاہ ہوں۔ اور انگریزی نثر ان کے لئے پرائز و خیرات سے



Sir Abdul Qadir (1874-1950) was born in Ludhiana and graduated from Forman Christian College, Lahore, in 1893 before taking up job as a sub-editor in *The Observer*, a reputed English daily. He started *Makhzan* from April 1901 soliciting contributions from the best literary minds of the age, young and old.

*Makhzan* may have been a reaction to the utilitarian literary ideals of the Aligarh Movement; it opened the floodgates of romantic imagination, tasteful innovation and stylistic experiments in Urdu by promoting such fresh writers like Iqbal (whom Abdul Qadir knew personally from Bazar-i-Hakeeman recitals), Khushi Muhammad Nazir, Sajjad Hyder Yaldrem, Shatir Banarsi and many others.

Sir Abdul Qadir obtained a bar at law from London in 1907 and practiced law at Delhi, and later Lahore, before taking up job with the State of Layallpur (situated in the present-day Faisalabad, Pakistan). He rose to the bench at Lahore High Court in 1921, presided over the Punjab Legislative Council in 1922 and held the portfolio of education in 1924; represented India in Geneva and presided over the Muslim League in 1926; and migrated to London in 1934 before returning as the Chief Justice, Bahawalpur High Court from 1942-5. He spent his last years in Lahore.

Either due to emotional impediments or out of its own drive his power of imagination became his crown and his cross at the same time. The young scholar from Bhati Gate was ambitious – way too ambitious for his own good. He had acquired six languages – Punjabi, Urdu, Persian, Arabic, English, and Sanskrit (German would be added later), with power to write world-class literature in at least three of these. Quite possibly, he had read everything in the libraries of Lahore on philosophy, literature and economics. Most certainly, he had also mastered history, classical music (Indian as well as Persian) and the theory of fine arts. He was also churning out a few good poems every month and at least one longer masterpiece every year besides participating in the activities of two (or more) social service organizations in the city. And yet, all of the above and his salaried work at the various colleges of Lahore were mere pastimes and *absolutely* unrelated to the profession he was aspiring to chose, i.e. to become a lawyer, or failing that, at least get a post in the civil service. He had yet to learn a basic lesson: the powers of your mind may be unlimited but the time at hand is always measured.

*Below: Singing girls like this one from Lucknow painted by a British artist in the late 18th Century were still in vogue in important cities in the days of Iqbal. Before gramophones (which made their first appearance in India with coarse recordings at the beginning of the 20th Century), these women were the major source for musical entertainment and were often well-versed in classical Persian and Urdu poetry.*



Unlike the young barrister from Bombay, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (about whom Iqbal was going to hear in a few years), he could not dedicate himself to career building first and politics later while shutting out all other venues of interest. If he had tried harder he might have succeeded in giving up some of his other pursuits, but not poetry. To him, poetry was not a matter of choice; he was a poet by nature. Not having any time at hand (for instance, being busy checking answer sheets) could not prevent him from dictating over two hundred couplets of outstanding value in a single sitting (that is exactly how ‘The Pearl-laden Cloud’ came into being). Born a hundred years ago, or a hundred years later, he could have taken pride in this remarkable capability but here was the irony: he lived in an age that looked down upon poets as unnecessary evil. In the days of the Mughals they had lived on stipends from princes and nobles by pleasing them with high-flown eulogies. The formidable Sir Syed denounced such practices as beggary and his disciple Hali, himself the greatest poet of his generation, painted a repulsive picture of them in his immortal *Musaddas*: the world would become unbearable if the sweepers went on strike but would become so much cleaner if all poets were to vanish; the culmination of their lifetime achievement is that their songs are sung by prostitutes. Iqbal wanted to be known as anything but a poet. “I am not a poet,” he was going to insist until his last breath, “and I haven’t even studied the craft properly” (which was a self-flattering understatement since his command over classical devices of Urdu and Persian poetry was comparable with the past masters of the Mughal Court). Then how did he explain his verse-making activity if he wasn’t a poet? He was, of course, a learned thinker expressing his ideas in verse rather than prose, he would explain (strange logic to come from a teacher of philosophy?).

However, a learned thinker he was, even in those early years. ‘The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim Al-Jili,’ Iqbal’s first known thesis (completed in March 1900 and printed in a research journal six months later) was something Nietzsche should have paid attention to (incidentally, the German iconoclast was alive until a few days before its publication but Iqbal had not heard of him).



Before we look further into the Al-Jili thesis we should set some ground rules for the study of Iqbal's thought.

The first thing is to differentiate between the three vehicles of expression he used for his thought: (a) prose; (b) short poem (including the longer ones among them, such as 'The Mosque of Codoba'); and (c) *mathnavi*. While prose could be the most dependable medium for rational thought, the *mathnavi* too was to be trusted for articulate expression – there was at least a thousand-year old tradition of Persian literature in which great masters, including Sana'i, Attar and Rumi, had perfected this genre as a medium for coherent discourse of any desired length. The *mathnavi* was even preferable to prose where the thrust was a mix of logic and emotion.

The case of the short poem was different. Both the *ghazal* and the modern poem adapted from the Western literature were focused on brevity rather than logic and while it was possible to be thoughtful in *ghazal* (like Urfi and Ghalib) or in poem (like Donne and Browning) the thoughtfulness itself had to adopt the garb of artistry first – even our understanding of the 'metaphysical' meaning of Donne's poetry is directly proportional to our enjoyment of his craft.

An interesting example is the bunch of poems on nationalist themes in the first part of *Bang-i-Dara* (and which will be revisited later in this chapter). These were written in 1904-5, around the same time when Iqbal also wrote a detailed essay 'National Life.' The issues regarded crucial in that essay and discussed in much detail there are not even touched upon in the poems. Why? Because the theme of the poem 'A New Temple' was just a new temple; 'National Song of Indian Children' was just a song; *Saray jaban say achha* was just about feeling good for belonging to your country. It is true that the poet must have wanted to say the things he said in each of these poems, but what else did he have to say, and how much? Were there 'ifs' and 'buts' in his mind? The poems don't tell us. They would have been bad poems if they did.

The same cannot be said about the *mathnavis*. If we compare *Asrar-i-Khudi* with the numerous essays Iqbal wrote on the subject around the same time we find that nearly every important aspect of the argument presented in prose is also substantially covered in the *mathnavi*. Likewise, *Javidnama* contains nearly everything he had to say about the world, and it says it in detail almost to the extent of quoting references. This would not have been possible in some other genre.

While it is often discussed why Iqbal switched over to writing poetry in Persian in later life it is completely overlooked that he did not just shift to Persian, but essentially to Persian *mathnavi*, and that too only when he wished to present a complete exegesis of his philosophy. Shorter poems in Persian were either incidental or a by-product of his *mathnavis* and were merely a handful as compared to the huge bulk of such poems in his Urdu *Kulliyat*. (On a few occasions he attempted sustained philosophical argument in Urdu poems too – such as 'In the Memory of My Late Mother' (1914), 'The Khizr of the Way' (1921), 'Saqinama' (1935) and some other poems, but even these were capsule summaries as compared to his *mathnavis*).



Above: The Oriental College in the 19th Century. Iqbal was teaching here when he wrote his first research paper, an exposition of the work of the medieval Muslim thinker Al-Jili.

'The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al-Jili' in the *Indian Antiquary*, Bombay, September 1900, summarized the Islamic Meta-physical Mysticism as represented in *Al Insan al Kamil* by Al-Jili (767 AH-811 AH) and drew comparisons with modern thinkers, mostly German (but excluding Nietzsche, with whom Iqbal was not yet familiar).

Al-Jili's work comprises of two volumes: expose and glossary. According to him, the existing essence is of two kinds: (1) Absolute; and (2) creation-nature (existence joined with non-existence).

The Absolute Being (which is beyond naming, understanding or any other relationship) leaving its Absoluteness undergoes three stages: Oneness (represented in His proper name); He-ness (represented in His Attributes); and I-ness (represented in creation or nature).

The human being ascending towards the divine must take the reverse three steps and move upwards from the I-ness. Such a Perfect Man becomes a god-man during union with the divine (in which neither time nor distance can intervene, since they are both creations), but comes back, for "a great moral force would have been lost and society overturned" otherwise.

Unlike the Hindus (whose philosophical acumen is admittedly superior), Al-Jili doesn't consider this world to be *maya* or illusion – nature is crystalized idea, mainly of God, and is the light through which God sees Himself (this last idea reappears in the climax of *Javidnama*, where God sees Himself through the poet's eyes just as the poet is seeing Him).



Iqbal's portrayal of Satan was starkly different from the common Western perceptions (such as this one).

Satan is an important character in Iqbal's later poems but he was acquainted with literary treatment of this character through Milton's *Paradise Lost* and classics of Sufism in his student days (in addition to Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Marlow's *Faust*, and quite possibly Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*) although he may not have read Goethe's *Faust* until his stay in Germany (1907). "I hope I shall not be offending the reader when I say that I have a certain amount of admiration for the devil," Iqbal wrote in his paper 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal' (1909) and stated that the devil showed a high sense of self-respect by refusing to prostrate before Adam "whom he honestly believed to be his inferior," and was not punished for this act but for denying absolute obedience to the Divine will.

In *Javidnama* (1932) he is introduced as 'the Leader of the Separated Ones,' a thoughtful elderly gentleman with penetrating eyesight ('he could see the soul in the body at a single glance') wandering around the firmament of Jupiter. Other portrayals include 'Gabriel and Iblees' in *Bal-i-Gibreel* (1935) and 'The Satan's Parliament (1936)' in *Armaghan-i-Hijaz* (1938).



It might be said that if a poem is like a painting, then a *mathnavi* is like a feature film. The difference in scope and purpose is obvious but failing to recognize this has led the scholars of Iqbal to either distrust poetry as expression of his thought or to approach the short poems in the same manner as the *mathnavis*. It would be safer to treat his prose and *mathnavis* both as major exponents of thought while using his short poems with necessary literary preparation.

The two over-arching subjects in his prose and poetry are the human being and the society (with the devil as a runner-up for the third major subject). None of these subjects can be separated from their position towards God.

Al-Jili might have caught Iqbal's attention as a commentator of Ibn 'Arabi (although an unreliable one, as we now know) and it is remarkable that while the medieval mystic named his book *Al-Insan al-Kamil* ('The Perfect Man'), Iqbal referred to the Divine rather than the human in naming his paper. Apparently this led him to a more comprehensive study of 'the development of metaphysical thought in Persia,' which he carried out in Cambridge a few years later.

The Absolute Reality cannot even be named, let alone be understood, for it is the absence of all attributes and name is an attribute while understanding is a relation – even 'One-ness' is a step away from that which is being described as 'One,' Iqbal presented Al-Jili's argument. Yet, Essence and attributes are identical, or else one could not have represented the other and the veil is removed when we understand this: "The perfect man is the pivot around which revolves all the 'heavens' of existence, and the sum of the realities of material existence corresponds to his unity," the young scholar went on to state that the Throne of God, the Footstool, the Lote Tree, the Pen, and the Preserved Tablet correspond respectively to the heart, the I-ness, the spiritual station, the intellect, and the mind of the perfect human being. Likewise, the elements of nature, matter, air, Heaven and the skies correspond to the temperament, faculty of perception, the occupied space, the imagination and the intelligence of this ideal human – the list goes on. Here, in seminal form, was the essence of nearly half of Iqbal's later poetry, whose metaphysical

background would come from Al-Jili's description of 'reality': God is the essence of reality and cannot be comprehended by the human mind; comprehension is a bonding and God, or the Absolute Reality, is beyond it. Yet, the human being can approach the Divine Presence, if not through knowing then through becoming.

Two myths overshadow our understanding of the development of Iqbal's ideas. The first is a presumed change of heart whereby, it is supposed, he gave up all his early beliefs

Left: Young John Milton visiting the old iconolcaust Galileo in Florence. Iqbal was not only inspired by *Paradise Lost* but in his college days he also wanted to use the story of Husain's martyrdom at Karbala for writing a rejoinder to *Paradise Regained*.

while coming up with a new idea during his stay in Europe, which he presented a few years later as the secrets of the self. This myth also feeds on Iqbal's later statements against mysticism, which are often taken in isolation from the rest of his writings. For instance, in an article published in 1917 he admitted that he no longer believed in Al-Jili's theory about the Absolute Reality stepping down from its podium in order to become creation or nature. However, the draft of an aborted history of Sufism written in Urdu at the same time reads, "There would have been no harm if these various grades of existence were seen as manifestations of the Divine omnipotence, but alas they were presented in a pantheistic light." This unpublished statement gives us a better insight into the working of Iqbal's mind: he retained most of his earlier knowledge but shifted the emphasis. Evolution of thought is not a mechanical process and an organic paradigm would bring us closer to the truth: the seed was sown and it sprouted. While fresh flowers kept appearing all the time the plant remained the same.

Taking this approach most writers on Iqbal have failed to trace the proper origins of his ideas. "In the garb of mysticism [Al-Jili] has dropped remarks which might be developed so as to result in a philosophical system," Iqbal stated at the end of his thesis, "but it is a matter for regret that this sort of Idealistic Speculation did not find much favor with later Islamic thinkers." This is precisely the task Iqbal took upon himself: to develop the idea.

The second trap is to overrate the influence of Western philosophers. In an age of comparative studies and intellectual dominance of the West he had to compare the ideas of his favorite Muslim thinkers (as well as his own) with well-known thinkers of the West if he wanted to be understood by his European audience or even the educated youth in his own country. However, an apologetic approach has its inherent perils and what happened to Iqbal is an example: beginning with his translator Nicholson and coming down to our own age is an endless line of scholars who failed to see the difference between comparison and adaptation. If, for instance, Iqbal said that Bergsonian ideas were also found in the poetry of Bedil (who preceded Bergson), then this should be a reason to trace similar ideas in Iqbal's own poetry to Bedil more than Bergson. Iqbal tried to make it very clear in a letter to Nicholson in 1921: "I claim that the philosophy of the *Asrar-i-Khudi* is a direct development out of the experience and speculation of Old Muslim Sufis and thinkers. Even Bergson's idea of time is not quite foreign to the Sufis." He explained that the Quranic views on the human life and destiny rest on metaphysical propositions and he was not putting 'new wine' (i.e. Western ideas) in 'old bottles' but rather his work was "only a restatement of the old in the light of the new."



Above: Queen Victoria with an Indian attendant.

Queen Victoria became the direct sovereign of India when it came under the British Parliament in 1858. Her famous proclamation guaranteed amnesty and, most notably, freedom of worship to the peoples of India. In 1877 she assumed the title "the Empress of India," (translated as *Kaisara-i-Hind* for her South Asian subjects).

Victoria's Golden Jubilee was enthusiastically celebrated in India in 1897. Iqbal's mentor Mir Hasan was also among those who addressed his countrymen in a local meeting held at Sialkot. He offered justifications for the British rule from the Quran and *hadith*, as was common those days.

Iqbal wrote an elegy on her death – quite a graceful masterpiece for a young poet, although it never found its way to his anthology. It was also translated into English – most probably by Iqbal himself – and printed as a booklet (he was a government servant under the Department of Education at that time).



"To see is to see not," Iqbal wrote in one of his *ghazals* (incidentally, from his days of affection for Ameer Begum). Iqbal's experience of God in this phase tends to be guided by *wahdat al wujud* – he was born into a great mystic



Above: The tomb of Ibn 'Arabi near Damascus.

The Sufi Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240) is called Muhyi ad-Din (the animator of religion) and ash-Shaykh al-Akbar (the greatest master) in the esoteric circles of Islam.

He belonged to the Arabic tribe of Hatim at-Ta'i. He was born at Murcia in Andalusia (Muslim Spain) and died in Damascus after traveling widely and leaving behind numerous books and treatises, most of which seem to be definitely lost. His surviving doctrinal work imposes itself by its synthesis as well as by its reference to the most elevated aspects of Sufism through the incisive form of certain formulations. The most well-known of his writings include *Futuh al-Makkiyah* or 'The Revelations of Makkah,' constituting a sort of sum of esoteric sciences; and *Fusus al-Hikam* or 'The Wisdom of the Prophets' (also translated as 'The Bezzels of Wisdom'), which was drafted in 1220 in Damascus and is often considered as the spiritual testament of the master.

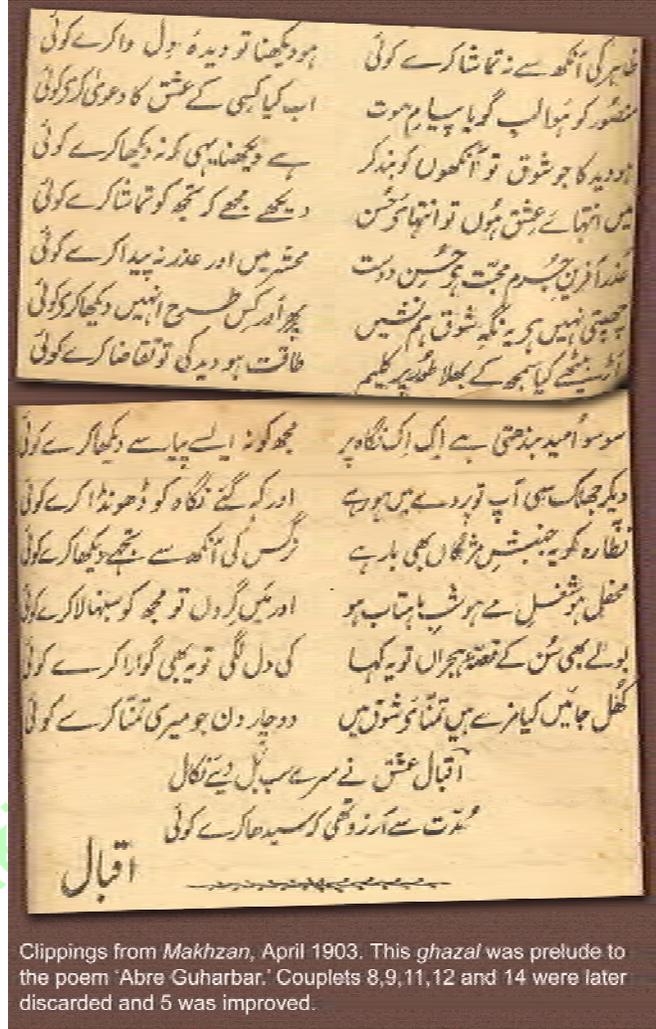
Iqbal's attitude towards Ibn 'Arabi has posed a problem but it seems that his reverence towards the Great Shiekh never died despite an effort to combat certain altruistic offshoots of his ideas (and a transitional and temporary outburst against the Shiekh himself around 1915-18). Ibn 'Arabi receives deference in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1930) and a remarkably subtle parable by him illustrating the freedom of will is translated in *Zarb-i-Kaleem* (1936).

tradition and even claimed to be a formal initiate into the Qadriya Order through his father.

His early poetry (especially the uncollected poems) reveal a strong inclination towards the doctrines of the classical Spanish mystic Ibn 'Arabi, passages from whose *Bezels of Wisdom* used to be taught to gatherings at Shiekh Nur Muhammad's home while Iqbal was growing up. Among the recurring themes in these poems are the interrelated natures of ordinary love and love for God (clearly an influence of Ibn 'Arabi), similarity of all human religions, reverence of the Prophet as a prism for the Divine Light (and sometimes an exalted status for the Caliph Ali).

A thought that encompasses his spiritual life at this stage is that God is the separated beloved whom the human being has to find in everything beautiful, including one's own heart. The thousands of forms in this world are like thousand veils across the face of a single Reality. True seekers learn to ignore the appearance (*majaz*) of whatever they see, and concentrate instead on the unseen, the Reality (*haqiqat*). In other words, God exists everywhere and those who can see beyond appearance see Him manifest in things as little as a glow-worm and as huge as the Himalaya.

'The Pearl-laden Cloud' (1903) is a remarkable poem for the manner in which it exalts at once the amorous yearning (*majaz*), the devotion to the Prophet and the love of God. Seemingly diverse loves are alloyed into a typically mystical unity as the mystic is ever ready to perceive God as Beauty. A grand vision of the human soul in the divine context seems to underline Iqbal's evolution towards preferring separation to union (mentioned above). The individual was discovering its own importance in the crowd – your ego corresponds to the Footstool of God, and how can you betray Him?



Clippings from *Makhzan*, April 1903. This *ghazal* was prelude to the poem 'Abre Guharbar.' Couplets 8,9,11,12 and 14 were later discarded and 5 was improved.



His interest in economics was derived partly from the fact that he was supposed to teach this subject and partly from his desire to balance his daydreaming with something practical (or at least something practical 'in theory!'). The outcome was his first Urdu publication, a handbook for students titled *Ilmul Iqtisad* (1904). For good reasons he called it outdated some two and a half decades later. Unfortunately, many Iqbal scholars have turned that comment into an excuse for not reading the book carefully or sometimes not at all. A willingness to do otherwise is rewarded with a portrait of the poet as a young thinker since the book is generously punctuated with comments of moral, political and philosophical import. The essence of these observations may be presented as follows.

- The balance between individual freedom and common good of the community is an important concern.
- Humans aspire for wealth and prosperity and would probably achieve it if wrong ideals don't rob them of aspiration itself. Nihilistic religious philosophies are chief among such robbers.
- Economic revolution in India is desirable (this idea permeates the entire book).
- Economics should not be seen as a normative science; right and wrong must be decided on a moral basis. However, what is useful for a community at one point in time may become harmful at some other time and therefore customs need to be reevaluated and reformed. (Against what criteria? He doesn't raise that question here, but the answer he provided later was: the divine revelation and a pragmatic test of your own understanding of that revelation).
- 'Freedom,' in its political economic sense is also emphasized. "You know that the labor of slaves cannot match the labor of independent workers. Why is that so? Why is the labor of slaves devoid of the virtue of performance?" The answer provided here is: "the whip cannot provide the motivation that comes only from a desire of wealth and the tension of self-respect." (Obviously, this is a forerunner of such later discourses as 'The Book of Slaves' in *Zuboor-i-Ajam*).

The remarkable optimism of the preface provides us the best key to Iqbal's entire worldview: "A question has arisen in this age, *میں*, is poverty an unavoidable element in the scheme of things?" He pretends to hide the fact that he already has an answer in his hat, "Can it not happen that the heartrending sobs of a humanity suffering in the back alleys of our streets be gone forever and the horrendous picture of devastating poverty wiped out from the face of this earth? Economics alone cannot answer, because the answer lies to a great extent in the moral capabilities of the human nature..." *Javidnama*, his *magnum opus* written some twenty-eight years later, was evidently his personal answer to the question, and the entire body of his work from now on, a lifelong effort to expand those 'moral capabilities of the human nature.'

Iqbal wrote three essays in Urdu for *Makhzan* in 1902. They were 'Training and Education of Children' (January), a general write-up on child psychology; 'Urdu Language' (September), translation of a paper on the development of Urdu; and 'Urdu language in Punjab' (October), a rejoinder to hostile criticism from Hasrat Mohani (who used the pseudonym 'Hamdard,' or well-wisher). Mohani had maintained that it would be better if Urdu was not spoken in Punjab at all than being spoken incorrectly.

"What is the standard of correct and incorrect?" Iqbal asked in view of the fact that Urdu, according to him, was still a language in the making.

He also defended most of his criticized verses by quoting precedents from classical Urdu poets but accepted one mistake with a frank apology.

## SYNOPSIS

### *Ilmul Iqtisad* (1904)

*Ilmul Iqtisad* (*Political Economy*) was Iqbal's first published book. Written in simple Urdu prose it was mainly a compilation of current ideas on the subject and as such became obsolete during the author's own lifetime. Today, however, it has a historical significance as many of his later ideas can be seen in their seminal form between the lines here.

*Preface* describes poverty as a peril that ought to be eradicated, and while political economy doesn't tell us whether that can be done (since the possibility depends rather on the moral capabilities of human nature), the study of income and expenditure does enlighten us about events and consequences related with the ideal of universal prosperity.

*Part One* defines political economy and reviews the scope of this subject. Iqbal doesn't see the subject as a normative discipline but refutes the argument that the study of this subject leads to greed or materialism.

*Part Two* concerns with the production of wealth and discusses land, labor, capital and national capability as its sources. Iqbal favors a balance between individual freedom and the collective good of the community but doesn't favor syndicalism or industrial democracy: managing a business is a specialized skill and cannot be left up to the labor.

*Part Three* takes up various factors related to exchange of wealth: the question of evaluation, international commerce, composition and evaluation of currency, the right to coinage, paper currency, and credit and its composition. The value of a good is determined by utility and scarcity, and not by the amount of labor spent on its production.

*Part Four* regards partners in the production of wealth; tax, interest, profit, wages, imperfect competition and excise are discussed here. Communist attack against the right to private ownership is mentioned

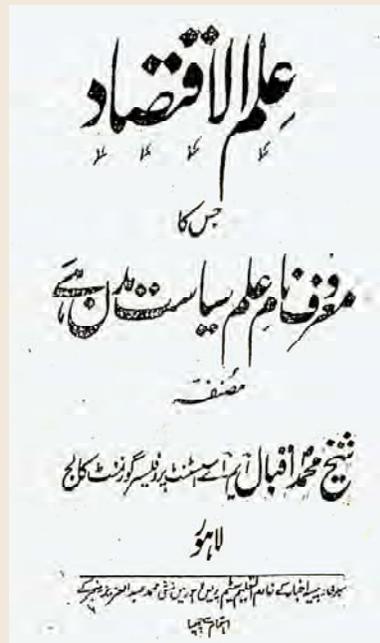


not discussed while private ownership is described as a necessary factor in the current state of civilization, and "the product of labor, or wealth, is distributed according to this very factor."

*Part Five* discusses population, demand and usage. Iqbal favors control in the increase of population. "You can well imagine what is required of us in view of the current state of things in India," he writes while concluding the chapter about demand, "sources of livelihood are scarce in our country



and the population is increasing by the day. Nature cures it with famine and epidemic but we must also free ourselves from childhood marriages and polygamy; spend our capital more wisely; increase wages in our country by paying more attention to industry; and use more foresight in thinking about the end, so that our country is saved from the dreadful consequences of poverty and attains those higher ranks in civilization on which our real prosperity depends."



Top Left: Cover of a brochure issued by the British Government in 1906 to depict its prosperity;

Top Right: Bazaar scene of Lahore from a contemporary postcard.

Left: *Ilmul Iqtisad* was published in November 1904 (and not in 1903, as sometimes assumed); Munshi Abdul Aziz supervised printing at Khadimu Taleem Press of Paisa Daily. Shibli Nomani revised the language – probably on request from his friend and Iqbal's teacher, Thomas Arnold (whose interest is evident from his acquisition of the Manuscript for his personal collection from Attiya Fyze, to whom it was presented by the author in 1907).



Apparently a by-product of *Ilmul Iqtisad* was his essay 'National Life' (1904-5). If in his Al-Jili thesis he had expounded a description of the human being in relation to God, then 'National Life' defined the relationship of the human being with his or her surroundings.

The opening passage stated the same things that were later summed up more tersely at the opening of the 'New Year Broadcast' in the last year of his life. It can be quoted from there without risking anachronism: "The modern age prides itself on its progress in knowledge and its matchless scientific developments. No doubt, the pride is justified. Today space and time are being annihilated and man is achieving amazing successes in unveiling the secrets of nature and harnessing its forces to his own service." It is obvious although he did not say it in 'National Life' that any positive achievement to him was a manifestation of that Divine element in the human being which he had detailed in the previous thesis.

However, a human being doesn't live in isolation. People live in groups and this leads us to the next cornerstone in Iqbal's worldview: his concept of society. Society as a voluntary association of people in the political sense does not appear in this essay. Instead, what we have here is the concept of the society as an organism – a living organism that almost springs out from the earth like plants, animals and humans. A society might be organized according to territory, as in the case of nation states like Italy (whose reformer Mazzinni was Iqbal's hero those days); or it might be organized around a race principle, as in the case of the Jews; or it could be a community of people with the same religion, as in the case of the Muslims (and a few years later he would describe Islam as a society whose membership is open to any like-minded individual). However, no matter how a society defines itself it had to face a constant struggle for existence in the nature and only those societies survived who were capable of adjusting to change – just as the giant organisms of the ice age became extinct because they could not keep pace with the changing climate, so do societies become extinct if they fail to grow with the pulse of time – "Greece, Egypt, Rome, all vanished from the face of the earth but we, the Indians still have our name and glory; there must be something about us that has sustained us against centuries of hostile changes," he said in his famous *Saray jahan say achha Hindustan hamara*, printed in the same issue of *Makhzan*. This vision of life might sound starkly indebted to Darwin, yet Iqbal's worldview was not essentially Darwinian since it was based on the recognition of the Divine in every human being, even in those who lagged behind in the struggle for existence (he later criticized Darwin as one of the reasons why Nietzsche remained totally blind to his own vision).

The individuals might be called upon to make sacrifices for their community, Iqbal suggests in his essay. The justification provided here is much simpler than the one he would present in 'The Muslim Community – a Sociological Study' six years later. He just says

The essay 'National Life' (Urdu) appeared in two parts in *Makhzan*, October 1904 and early 1905. At least the first part was based on a lecture Iqbal delivered while visiting his elder brother Ata Muhammad in Abbotabad in the summer of 1904 (contrasts between the opening of the first part and the closing of the second seem to indicate some shift of thought between the writing of the two).

Declaring that life has changed drastically with the human supremacy over nature through science, Iqbal applied the Darwinian theory of 'struggle for existence' to the lives of the nations; nations can survive only if they cope with changes and therefore must think futuristically while individuals should act for the greater good of the community. Religion, taking its strength from the "spiritual observations acquired by the extraordinary faculties of a prophet," is the inspiration for such sacrifice (and also teaches liberty, which is most important for national character); our rational mind equips us for survival by adapting to change.

Only Chinese, Hindus, Israelites and Parsis among the ancient nations have survived to the modern age while Japanese and Italians have succeeded in national resurrection. The secret of the survival of the Israelites and Parsis lies in their acumen for commerce, and the same is the case with Japan, thanks to its educational reforms (hence this is the country Iqbal presents as a model for the Indian Muslims to follow, whose backwardness is mainly due to "a meaningless trust in God," which prevents them from being practical).

Areas where reformation is needed most urgently include: (1) religious law; (2) women's rights— especially relating to polygamy (which Iqbal finds obsolete and dangerous), *purdah* and basic education; (3) wasteful customs and traditions; (4) universal education; and, most important of all, (5) promotion of commerce and industry, since agriculture cannot lead to economic independence.

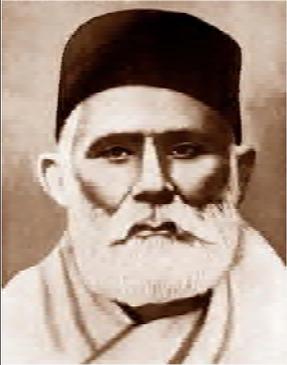
*Below: A 19th Century engraving from a photograph of Abbotabad.*



## NOSTALGIA

Altaf

Husain Hali (1837–1914), above, was a disciple of Ghalib and later associated with Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (of both these giants Hali wrote the most important biographies). Sir Syed also inspired Hali's *Musaddas* (1879), a long overview of the rise and



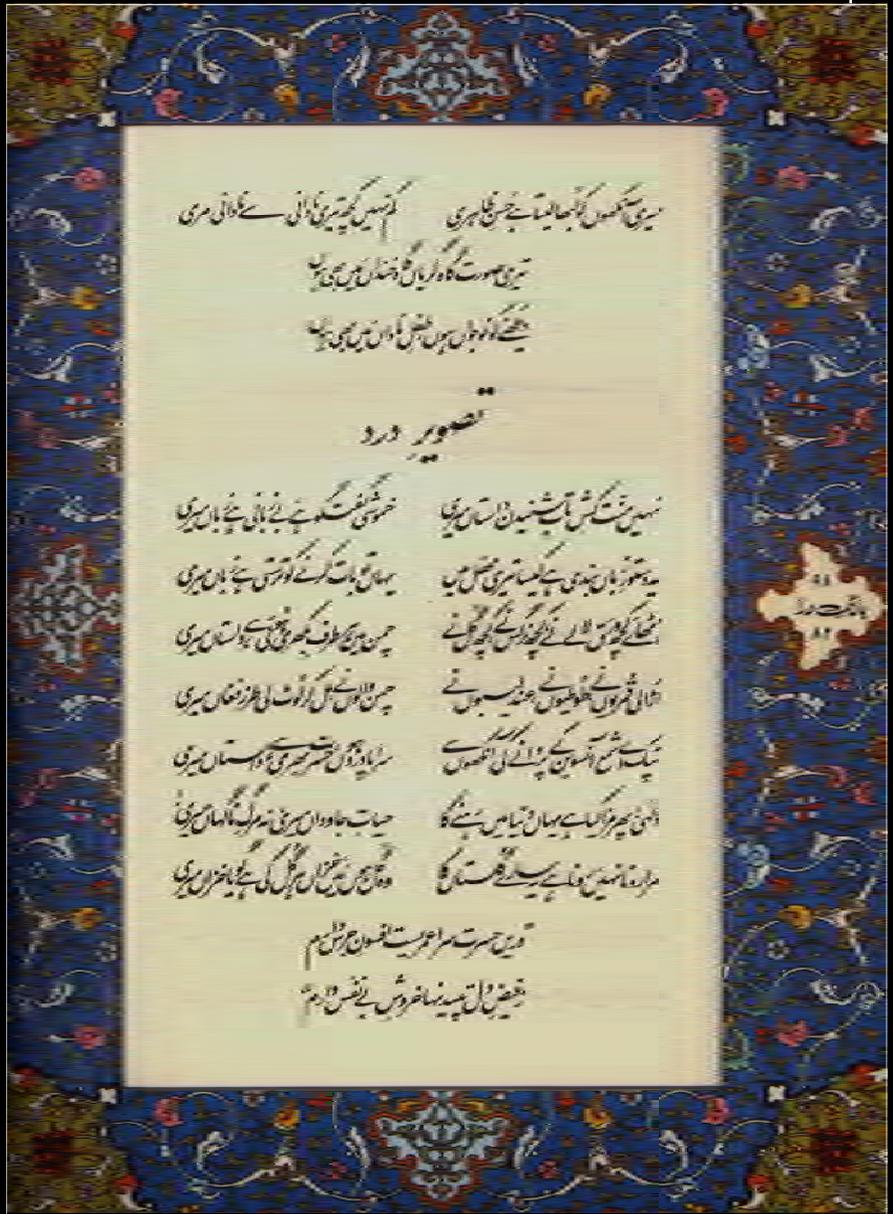
fall of the Muslim civilization, which remained a lifelong favorite with Iqbal. During a brief stay in Lahore in the 1870's, Hali helped Dr. Leitner, the British educationist who was trying to persuade Urdu poets to write modern poetry. The poems written by Hali are generally regarded as the pioneering masterpieces of modern Urdu poetry.

Hali was awarded the prestigious title of 'Shamsul Ulema' in 1904. The same year he attended the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam in Lahore where his poem was re-read by Iqbal, since the voice of the elder poet was too weak to reach the audience (Iqbal also read out his own 'Picture of Grief' in that session).

*Top Left: Altaf Husain Hali*

*Top Right: A group photo from the 1904 session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam; Hali is seated at front while Iqbal is standing 4th from right in 1st row*

*Right: Opening page of 'Picture of Grief' from collected works published by Iqbal Academy, Pakistan.*

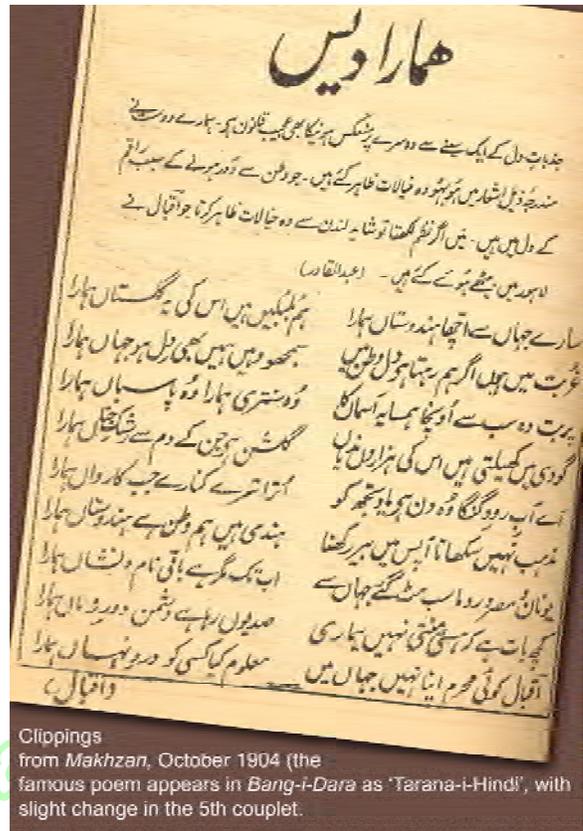


that religion comes to the aid of the society by way of establishing sacrifice as a spiritual principle (in the later lecture he would expand this whole theory to a formidable cosmological scale as we shall see in the next chapter).

Interestingly enough, Iqbal used the word *qawm* (nation) interchangeably with society in this essay and, more significantly, the title did not refer to a homogenous Indian nation but only to the Muslim community living in it. As far as we can see, it seems highly unlikely that he subscribed to the idea of Indian nationalism as propounded by Congress – and that should not surprise us given the influence of the Aligarh Movement on Iqbal in his early days. The common perception that Iqbal was once a staunch nationalist and later turned in the other direction (like his contemporary Jinnah), seems to have originated from an isolated reading of his Urdu poems from this period. Keeping them in a proper perspective with his prose writings it seems more plausible that despite his Aligarh bias he kept a fairly independent mind. Only five years later he said in a lecture that he was approaching the religious system of Islam strictly as a critical student (and by the religious system he could have also meant the Muslim Community in its conceptual form), and explained, “The attitude of the mind which characterises a critical student is fundamentally different from that of the teacher and the expounder. He approaches the subject of his inquiry free from all presuppositions, and tries to understand the organic structure of a religious system, just as a biologist would study a form of life or a geologist a piece of mineral. His object is to apply methods of scientific research to religion, with a view to discover how the various elements in a given structure fit in with one another, how each factor functions individually, and how their relation with one another determines the functional value of the whole.” He went on to list history, geography and ethics as some of the perspectives through which a system should be studied.

This gives us a fair picture of Iqbal’s attitude towards things in a phase of life that lasted till 1913 when he eventually felt that he had enough substance to formulate a worldview of his own and to use it as a pivot for future thought.

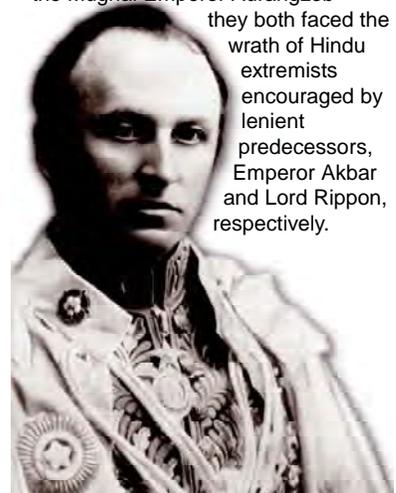
His so-called nationalist poetry coincided with aggressive protests from the Indian National Congress to the Viceroy’s announcement of the impending partition of Bengal in 1904 (the partition was planned to take place the next year). A careful examination of these poems shows that they weren’t addressed to the British government but rather represented his Muslim nation to the Hindu compatriots. We, the Muslims, too are patriotic, he seemed to be suggesting, and we belong to India just as much as any other people living here; Islam is as much a part of the religious and cultural heritage of India as the indigenous religions are. “O Brahmin, you estranged yourself from your kin in the name of idols; likewise, God taught war and mayhem to the preacher of Islam,” he says in his poem ‘A New Temple’ (1905), and goes on to construct a new deity made of gold and receiving adoration from



Clippings from *Makhzan*, October 1904 (the famous poem appears in *Bang-i-Dara* as ‘Tarana-i-Hind’, with slight change in the 5th couplet).

Lord Nathaniel Curzon (below), the Viceroy (1899-1905), announced the partition of Bengal in 1904, enacting it the next year. The emergence of a Muslim majority province, East Bengal, offended the nationalist politicians and activists whose protest prompted mainstream Muslim leaders to form an All India Muslim League in 1906 to support the government against demands for revocation (it turned anti-Raj and joined hands with the Hindu radicals when the partition was annulled in 1912). Iqbal compared Curzon with the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb –

they both faced the wrath of Hindu extremists encouraged by lenient predecessors, Emperor Akbar and Lord Rippon, respectively.





Shiekh Abdul Qadir wrote in his preface to *Bang-i-Dara* that if he believed in reincarnation he would see Iqbal as a rebirth of Ghalib (above). There were similarities in temperament, and the diction of Iqbal's Urdu poetry owed as much to Ghalib as his Persian style owed to Hafiz and Urfi.

Mirza Asadullah Ghalib (1797-1869) was among the earliest Indian Muslims to grasp the real significance of the modern Western civilization and he passed on his observations to the future reformer Sir Syed. In the world of Indian literature he stands as one of the greatest figures who chiselled the Urdu language into a splendid vehicle for conveying complex ideas (Urdu was sometimes regarded as a less prestigious language before his times despite some very good poets, and in any case Ghalib was the first celebrity to use this language for private correspondence, which used to be carried out only in Persian until then).

Ghalib is the subject of a beautiful poem in *Bang-i-Dara* and also appears in *Javidnama* as a free soul wandering around the firmament of Jupiter after having refused the Paradise just like the mystic Hallaj and the Persian martyr Tahira.

all religions (this somewhat bizarre imagery was expunged in a later revision of the poem before inclusion in *Bang-i-Dara*). "Let's label the god 'India,' and to him we should pray for fulfillment of all our deep desires," he says.

The question ignored by his commentators is this: what are these 'deep desires,' which must be addressed to the new idol of India and which cannot be fulfilled without its blessing? We can safely assume that Iqbal is referring to an economic revolution in the country – the idea that permeated through the entire *Ilmul Iqtisad* a while ago. Even in his 1910 lecture on the Muslim community he proposed that, despite a distinct national identity of this community it had to approach the economic question "in a broad impartial non-sectarian spirit." The economic forces in a region affect all communities alike, he believed.



It would be interesting to draw a mind map of the poet in his young age from the poems surviving from 1893 to 1905. Six distinct subjects appear: (a) nature; (b) personalities; (c) parables and dialogue; (d) autobiographical anecdotes; (e) monologues; and (f) *ghazals*.

The strands of his thought (already discussed in this chapter) cut across all these subjects. Objects in nature are seldom described without emotional underpinning in the very description itself (unlike his predecessor Hali, who didn't have the advantage of reading Wordsworth). The imagery is dynamic and invariably philosophical, often metaphysical. "O Himalaya! The Nature's hand has but created you as a playground for the elements," Iqbal says to the great mountain, "Pray tell us a tale from those early days when the first humans found a dwelling in your outskirts; tell us about that simple life unstained by the rouge of civilized pretenses." Everything in nature represents mystical secrets to him; flowers, streams, rivers and meadows may be mute to other listeners but not so to the poet. He explores their mystery, connects to the vibrations of the Divine rhythm emanating from them, and develops a wavelength with birds, bees and animals. This is an Ibn 'Arabi utilizing the mind of Wordsworth for writing verses in Urdu. Of course, the influence of the Vedantic poetry is also quite visible (and we must remember that Iqbal had some familiarity with Sanskrit and he never stopped quoting the great poets of that language in his own poetry).

However, it is also Iqbal, and very distinctly so: "You don't know how the thorn of unresolved problem pricks the heart," he says to 'The Colorful Flower'. Neither Ibn 'Arabi nor Wordsworth would have remembered to bring up the issues of the mind during a blissful union with nature. Iqbal's flower is also ripe with sensuous undertones: "O colorful flower! Perhaps you don't carry a heart in your bosom," is a line that could be addressed to an unmerciful dame as well.

Just like the objects of nature, the personalities in his poems also serve as mouthpieces to various thoughts and opinions. The poet's mission is to see and tell ('Ghalib'), learning is a labor of love under a worthy mentor ('The Lament of Separation,' written on Arnold's departure from India), blessed

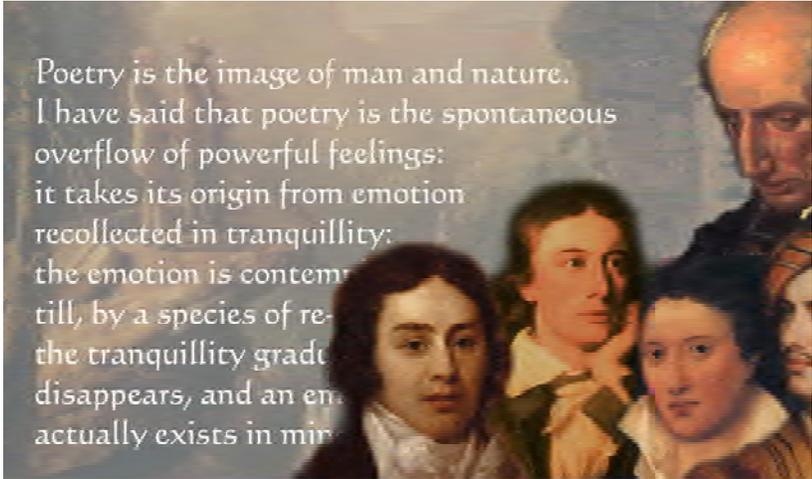
are those who suffer for the sake of love, ('Bilal'), and so on. The elegy on Dagh commences Iqbal's lifelong struggle to prove life's supremacy over death. The symphony of immortality, reaching its choral peak in the epic *Javidnama* twenty-seven years later, begins with a soft whimper in this first of Iqbal's approved elegies: "The colors of autumn too are a reason to stay in the garden," he writes at the end of this poem (and the verse can also be translated to mean that the colors of autumn too are "part of what created the garden," or even "a source of permanence for the garden"). "The same universal law governs all: carrying the odor of the sweet flower beyond the garden gates, and the flower-gatherer beyond this world." This brand of optimism seems to be a theorizing activity by a clever mind under crushing pressures of perceived or real grief.

His *qasidas*, or eulogies might also be counted among the poems centered on personalities but he included none of those in his anthology later on. Here, he followed the arrogant but loveable Persian poet Urfi, who was notorious for showing conceit even while praising superiors.

Parables and dialogue, beginning with the famous adaptation of 'The Spider and the Fly' was predominantly limited to more inspirations from English poetry but it was a genre that would eventually come to a grand finale in 'The Satan's Parliament' two years before Iqbal's death.

Autobiographical anecdotes appear in great proportion and they are refreshingly free from egotism in a poet who would otherwise become the prophet of the ego. In real life as well as in poetry he thoroughly enjoyed a good joke about himself and none of his critics ever came up with better satire on him than he himself provided in such poems like 'Piety and Sinfulness.' The poem was inspired from a puritan neighbor's criticism of contradictions in Iqbal's personality: "I hear that Iqbal is so much influenced by philosophy that he doesn't count a Hindu among non-believers anymore," the neighbor is quoted in this poem. "Nor is he averse to women of the ignoble profession, but oh that ought to be expected of our poets; I, however, fail to understand the wisdom of listening to a singing girl in the night before reciting the Holy Quran in the morning..." The pious critic goes on to fear that this crazy young philosopher might end up inventing a new religion. Iqbal's reply, appearing at the end of the poem, has now become famous: *Iqbal bhi Iqbal say agah nahin hai...* ("Iqbal too is not aware about Iqbal; and this is not a jest, by God it is not!"). In other autobiographical anecdotes, such as the one about his little nephew who used to gaze endlessly at the candle, the poet penetrates beneath the surface of common observation. "Why are you so amazed, O moth-like child?" Thus begins the poem 'A Child and the Candle' and goes on to state that the child's fascination with light stems out of some ancient acquaintance; the candle is naked flame while the human being is light contained in the chandelier of opaque dust.

Iqbal's monologues and dramatic monologues cover a wide range and this manner of poetry (apparently inspired from Robert Browning) and his numerous prayers may also be included in this category (even 'The Complaint'



Poetry is the image of man and nature.  
I have said that poetry is the spontaneous  
overflow of powerful feelings:  
it takes its origin from emotion  
recollected in tranquillity:  
the emotion is contemplated  
till, by a species of re-  
the tranquillity gradually  
disappears, and an emotion  
actually exists in mind.

According to an entry in Iqbal's private notebook, Wordsworth saved him from atheism in the student days. The editorial note to 'The Himalaya' in the first issue of *Makhzan* also introduced Iqbal as 'the Indian Wordsworth.'

While his attitude towards the philosophers of the West remained condescending when not outright critical he certainly had more soft corners for their poets and might be seen as a distant heir to the Romantic Movement launched by the five giants pictured above (from right to left): William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Lord Byron (1788-1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), who might have inspired that temptation from which Wordsworth is supposed to have rescued Iqbal, John Keats (1795-1821) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834).

written later would be, ironically, a ‘prayer’; but that will be discussed in the next chapter). The dramatic monologues include one by an imaginary tombstone of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan; the opening is starkly proud and optimistic: “O the living! Look at the rehabilitation of this once deserted city! This indeed is the society I used to be so concerned about, so look at the fruits of my patience and perseverance. My tombstone has become fond of speech, so read its inscription with your inward eye.” The commandments invisibly inscribed on the tombstone enjoin that thou shalt not turn thy back on the world, nor use thy pen and speech for creating dissensions, and so on.

*Ghazal* used to be the dominant genre in Urdu poetry before Hali— in other words, until the days of Iqbal’s adolescence. It was still popular but Iqbal was not a *ghazal*-writer by temperament although not averse to the genre either. He wrote fewer *ghazals* than *nazm* (‘poems’) and they follow Ghalib’s manner of sustaining an idea through the various couplets although the genre allows the poet to be disjointed since each couplet is supposed to be a standalone unit.



Iqbal on the eve of his departure for studies abroad was far from being the naïve, bewildered student portrayed in some biographies. By all means he was an accomplished young intellectual, aware of what he wanted to do and which direction he would like to take. From that he never swerved although he was ever quick to accept his humility before any new manifestation of truth.

CHAPTER  
2  
TWO



**THE DARK NIGHT OF  
THE SOUL**

1905  
to 1913



*Iqbal stayed in Europe from 1905-8. This picture was taken sometime during that period.*

Picture used on p. 41 was painted by Master Iqbal (Faisalabad) from this photograph.

*Iqbal joined the 'Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn' (below) on November 6, 1905, and was called to bar on July 1, 1908.*



“It is my belief that a people who value their own freedom cannot be envious of others’ liberty and I find much evidence of this in what I see of the British society here,” Iqbal wrote to the editor of a nationalist newspaper of Lucknow a few months after his arrival in England. He was commenting on the *Sandeshi* movement (the movement for economic self-reliance started by the anti-British protestors in India). “However, we must develop competence [to govern ourselves], and that can come mainly from the focusing of economic norms, to which our people have fortunately started paying attention now.” Iqbal’s belief in the fairness of the Europeans was about to be shaken very soon but his fundamental approach of seeing everything in its larger picture would remain forever.

What did Europe mean to Iqbal at age 28, when he first set foot on its soil? It was a treasure trove of knowledge, the seat of universal law and the house of the empire builders. Iqbal, the genius who thought he was a know all, was adamant at discovering Europe in all these dimensions. The vast collections of ancient and modern writings, including rare manuscripts of classical Muslim thought, would be unearthed by him from the libraries and museums of England in order to reconstruct a coherent history of metaphysical thought in Persia – a subject nobody had written about. Secondly, he was going to study the source of the European power, its universally applicable law, and celebrate his mastery of it with a Bar at Law from the prestigious Lincoln’s Inn (hopefully, as he must have assumed at that time, the certificate would pave the path of material prosperity). However, all law is useless unless there is a competent authority to execute it, and the execution of the British law over an empire where the sun never set – and the political supremacy of the European civilization over all others at that time – pointed at the deeper secrets of successful politics; the secret of empire-building, which was once known to the Muslims but could now only be learnt from the West. Little did he know that he would soon discard all three – knowledge, existing law and current politics – and unwittingly become part of that critical mass of thinkers and activists who changed the values of the human race in that first half of the Twentieth Century.

The crucial turning point was a year and a half after his arrival. ‘March 1907’ is a date he didn’t want to be overlooked by any future biographer of his mind; he wrote the date at the top of a *ghazal* that didn’t need any heading, and he counted back his intellectual reincarnation to this year in numerous letters, speeches and statements. Curiously enough (but very typically) he doesn’t tell us anything else about it. What happened, exactly, in that month? He didn’t tell us, but obviously he wanted us to find out. Let’s not assume, please, that it was some beautiful woman he met – he hadn’t seen Attiya Fyzee till a month later, and Emma Wegenast didn’t occur to him till the summer. Call him a chauvinist if you will, but he was just not the type whom a woman could cause to change the course of life (much less the direction of mind, which was evidently more precious to him than life). A careful study of his life and works makes it plausible that the big thing about March 1907 was his discovery of an answer to the question he had raised a few years ago; in his *Ilmul Iqtisad*, he had wondered whether poverty and needfulness could be made extinct; he had also suggested that the answer lied in the moral capabilities of the human race. Now he discovered a formula for enhancing those moral capabilities: understanding Islam not as an irrational insistence

on preserving the past but as a means for a giant leap into the future. How he arrived at this awareness is an interesting odyssey of the mind.

“We admit the superiority of the Hindu in point of philosophical acumen,” he had written in the introduction to his thesis on al-Jilani seven years ago, “The post-Islamic history of the Arabs is a long series of glorious military exploits, which compelled them to adopt a mode of life leaving but little time for gentler conquests in the great field of science and philosophy. They did not, and could not, produce men like Kapila and Sankaracharya, but they zealously rebuilt the smoldering edifice of Science, and even attempted to add fresh stories to it.” This inferiority complex does not resurface anywhere in his thesis *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (completed in February 1907 and submitted to the Trinity College on March 7). Eighteen months of first-hand interaction with the works of great Muslim philosophers and scientists made him aware that the Muslims, too, had been great thinkers! Since then the contribution of the Muslim scientists to the modern science has not only been acknowledged but in the Muslim world it is sometimes even overrated in ways that have rubbed out the freshness of those great geniuses of the past, and therefore it is difficult for us to understand Iqbal’s sense of discovery when he first found proof of what Justice Ameer Ali in the second volume of his *Spirit of Islam*, and Shibli Nomani in some of his papers had merely suggested. Neither of these two great historians had held formal higher education in Western philosophy and therefore it was left for Iqbal to grasp the full significance of the classical Muslim thought. Iqbal had now discovered that the Muslim thinkers had not rebuilt an already existing body of science and philosophy; they had constructed a new, grand and magnificent edifice of thought. The ancient Greek ideas, devoid of empirical spirit as they were, could not have provided a basis for the modern European civilization without input from the great Muslim mind. Islam is inherently opposed to a duality between matter and spirit – or at least that is how Iqbal understood it – and therefore the Muslim thinkers had been able to unleash the hitherto unknown capabilities of human thought. This proposition about the magnitude of human thought contains, as we can see, its own antithesis within it. If the human mind can only realize its true potential by engaging with the divine revelation then thought must also be transcended in order to collect the fruits of thought. The mystic in Iqbal told him that this was indeed the case.

Iqbal’s renewed confidence in the intellectual gifts of the Islamic revelation must have also led him to believe that a system of law better than the modern one was possible – indeed that reconstruction became his central focus towards the later part of his life. His study of the British law even in those days must have been moderated by a strong bias towards the superiority of an Islamic law – not the law that existed in the antiquated books of jurisprudence tampered by whimsical monarchs of the medieval times, but the undiscovered law whose seeds were contained in the Quran (“the true potential of Islam has not yet unfolded,” he would later state on more than one occasion). This undiscovered law of Islam was one of the many alternate worlds that the Holy Book could offer and the idea was outright thrilling (the concept of an alternate world – *any* alternate world – could stir deepest emotions in Iqbal at any given moment in his life).



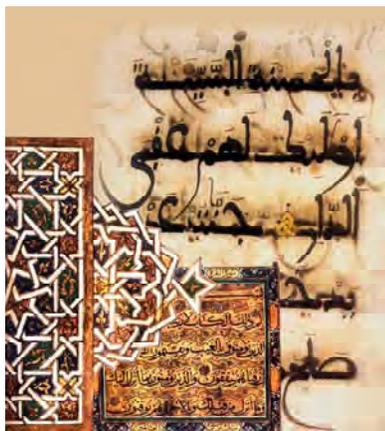
Above: Syed Ameer Ali

In the saga of the Muslims in the early modern period, Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928) stands as a signpost of the road not taken. His reputation rests on *The Spirit of Islam* (1891/1922), arguably the most objective analysis of the life of the Prophet and the subsequent cultures of the Muslim World written from an apologetic milieu. His other work of fame, *A Short History of the Saracens* (1899/1927) was refreshingly original and hardly apologetic.

Ameer Ali also founded the London Muslim League on May 6, 1908 and Iqbal instantly became a member – although the influence of Ameer Ali on Iqbal during the latter’s stay in London is not well-documented apart from this collaboration. A staunch supporter of the Muslim participation in politics even since those days when the older Sir Syed was opposed to such ideas, Ameer Ali advocated an essentially parliamentary approach. He also presided in absentia over the annual session of the Muslim League in 1910.

His rationalism in historiography as well as politics was subsequently washed away by Shibli’s sentimentalism in both fields. He could not concede to the agitational politics of Muhammad Ali (Jauhar) and Wazir Hasan, which was sweeping the scene following Shibli’s political lead after 1911. They eventually forced Ameer Ali to resign on October 27, 1913 and the London Muslim League liquidated soon afterwards.

Ameer Ali came from an elitist family in Bengal and at various times served as member of the Legislative Council and the Viceroy’s Council, justice of Bengal High Court and – after his permanent settlement in London where he had married the British Isabella – as the first Indian member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.



The Holy Quran remained a source of inspiration throughout Iqbal's life. His personal response to the divine book was emotional as well as intellectual. Although it was the word of God in every sense (Iqbal believed that it was revealed to the Prophet verbatim), it was also a living expression of the prophetic glory of the greatest human being, and for whom Iqbal's devotion knew no bounds. The ideals of the Quran were only partially revealed in the known history since the book was inexhaustible and Iqbal was excited at the thought of discovering new worlds, even new destinies from the powerful and flawless lines of the last covenant between God and humanity.

Iqbal owed his mystical bonding with the Holy Quran to the influence of his father while his independent approach to the understanding of the text might have stemmed from Sir Syed's famous dictum that the Quran would stand any test of science or reason since it was the word of God while the world of nature was the act of God and there could be no contradiction between the two. However, it was through Syed's adverse contemporary Jamaluddin Afghani that Iqbal included a detailed exegesis on the relevance of the Quran to the modern times in *Javidnama*.

Top: Illustration by Tabassum Khalid for Secrets & Mysteries in the Junior Edition Series published by Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

Last, but not least, was the challenge of the Western political superiority. That was comparatively easy to handle, since even in his al-Jili days, he had been proud of the military and imperialistic achievements of the medieval Muslims. Now, however, he recognized the fragility inherent in the strength of the Western civilization itself: it had disregarded the spiritual in its eagerness to overcome the material aspects of existence. "O dwellers of the West! The city of God is not a marketplace," he poured out his feelings in the *ghazal* titled 'March 1907'. "What you have been holding as currency will now turn out to be counterfeit." In the same vein he goes on to say that the lion that once emerged from the desert and devoured the great Roman Empire, is, according to what the poet has just heard from the angels, about to reawaken.

This critique of the Western civilization and protest against exploitation of the weaker nations was an about turn – until a year ago he had held such firm belief in the natural fairness of the British rulers that he risked defending them against hostile left wing activists of India. Giving up such a strong conviction often coincides with release of immense emotional energies and an ecstatic experience of feeling free. For someone born in Sialkot in the heyday of foreign imperialism, it also meant a recovery of political pride in ways that would have been incomprehensible even to the great Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (who was now dead for nine years). It was Iqbal's discovery of himself, and not an encounter with some other person, that marked the significance of March 1907 and started the process of his psychological reconstruction.



Iqbal's academic pursuits in Europe and the influence of Western philosophers on him are generally seen as interlinked, but they need not be. Iqbal's field of research at Cambridge didn't include Western philosophy, except by way of comparison. His Ph.D. from Germany (awarded on the same dissertation), wasn't even issued in the area of philosophy (although he applied for that), and technically, it was a Ph.D. in Arabic. Iqbal's acquaintance with the Western philosophers – apart from what he learnt about them during early studies in Lahore, or later teaching responsibilities there – was mostly extra-curricular, and we cannot date his readings very accurately. His supervisor, Dr. McTeggart, however was an expert on Kant and Hegel, and Iqbal attended his lectures on these two philosophers – afterwards discarding them both as way off the point. It would be erroneous to state that the boundaries of Iqbal's metaphysics were predetermined by Kant; to put it rather frankly, some Iqbal scholars have made too much of such similarities in order to showcase their own familiarity with hardcore philosophy. Kant's argument against the logical proofs of the existence of God were useful (and Iqbal made good use of them), but he also maintained an almost patronizing attitude towards the critic of pure reason who failed to recognize that thought itself was part of the reality it tried to understand and contain; the fundamental difference between Kant and Iqbal was that according to Kant, the existence of God could not be proved but we should act as if He existed; to Iqbal, a 'philosophical test of religious experience' was possible.

About the champion of antithesis, Iqbal later wrote that “Hegel’s indifference to personal immortality has more or less affected all those who received inspiration from him,” and certainly Iqbal doesn’t seem to be among them – his long-winded comparison of Hegelianism with Akbar Allahabadi should not be interpreted as a deference to the German philosopher; Iqbal’s love for variety could burst out in magnanimous appreciation of ideas diametrically opposite to his own beliefs, and his frequent appraisals of the Ahmedi movement until the 1930’s is one case in point. Despite some initial praise for Hegel he eventually criticized him without mercy in *Payam-i-Mashriq* and elsewhere, even to the extent of saying that his system of philosophy was a mere illusion and like an empty oyster.

There was, however, one major conviction he upheld in the later years that sounded rather like a Muslim’s compromise with the Hegelian ‘indifference to personal immortality.’ Iqbal asserted (at least as early as in 1910), that personal immortality could not be taken for granted; the human being is merely a candidate for it. In other words, the human soul may or may not be resurrected after death, depending on the strength or weakness of its ego. Again, it might be observed that Shiekh Ahmad Sirhindi (Mujaddid Alf Sani) had also spoken about the possibility of the annihilation of some souls, although in a very different context.

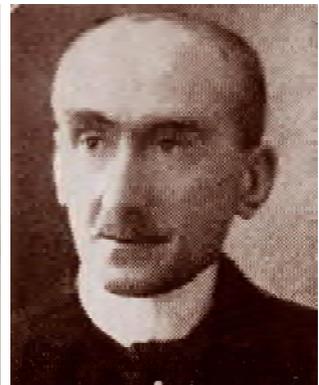
This was fundamentally different from the views of McTeggart himself. Iqbal’s atheist supervisor believed in the absolute immortality of the individual ego, held the time and space as unreal and was rather confused between the predominance of action and love. Iqbal’s emotional attachment to him could be gauged from the fact that he tore up the manuscript of a thesis on the reality of time when McTeggart criticized it bitterly. According to Iqbal, pure time was different from serial time; our appreciative self exists in pure time although our efficient self exists in serial time. Of course, McTeggart apologized profusely when a little later the same ideas received acclaim in England through the French contemporary Bergson.

Iqbal’s advances towards the Western philosophy were much like the metamorphosis of a lover who is at first stricken by the majesty of a beautiful face but quickly moves on after getting fed up with the woman behind it (exactly the kind of sexual chemistry he confesses in his ‘The Inconstant Lover.’) The fountainhead of his creative thought was neither in the East, nor in the West, but lied in the inexhaustible riches of his own ego.

The contribution of Western philosophy to the thought of Iqbal has been exaggerated and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Henri Bergson (1859-1941) – seen below from left to right – are often quoted as influences. This misunderstanding started with the translation of Iqbal’s *Asrar-i-Khudi* by R. Nicholson in 1920 and its reviews in the Western press, including a flawed write-up by the novelist E. M. Forster. Iqbal was quick to refute the suggestion in a letter to Nicholson.

His attitude towards Western philosophers was often condescending. He suggested that Kant was inferior to Ghazali; Hegel’s spellbinding thought was ‘an oyster without pearl, a mere illusion’; and Nietzsche should have learnt metaphysics from Iqbal. Bergson received more courtesy, may be because he was still alive, but it was comederie and not deference that Iqbal meted out to the French philosopher whom he eventually met in Paris in 1932 (and discussed, among other things, the Islamic view of time).

When not addressing the Western audience Iqbal would explain his ideas “in the light of the Quran and the Muslim Sufis and thinkers, e.g., [Ibn ‘Arabi] and Iraqi (pantheism), Al-Jili (the idea of the Perfect Man) and Mujaddid Sarhindi (the human person in relation to the Divine Person),” he stated in his letter to Nicholson, and added that “even Bergson’s idea of time is not quite foreign to Sufis.”



## SYNOPSIS

### **Development of Metaphysics in Persia (1908)**

*Development of Metaphysics in Persia* was Iqbal's graduation thesis (which later earned him a doctorate as well).

*Dedication to Professor T. W. Arnold.*

#### *Introduction*

"The most remarkable feature of the character of the Persian people is their love of Metaphysical speculation," but the Persian thinkers refrain from presenting any comprehensive system of thought, apparently because the Persian mind is rather impatient of detail. The Persian also sees the inner unity of things like the Brahmin but rather than exploring it in all aspects of human experience, it "appears to be satisfied with a bare universality."

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*Top right: The winged disc of Ahuramazda with sphinx from an ancient Persian specimen.*

*Below: Avicenna (Bu Ali Sina), the renowned Muslim scientist, philosopher, poet and musician of the 11th Century whose deep influence on Iqbal has been usually overlooked.*

### *Part I: Pre-Islamic Persian Philosophy*

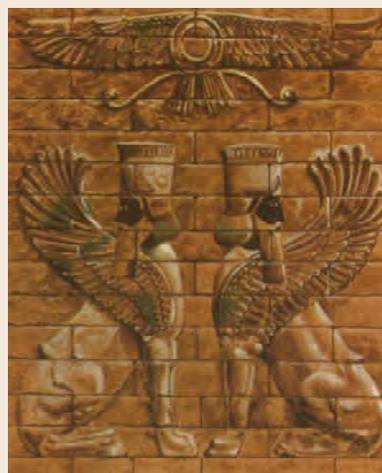
#### *Chapter I: Persian Dualism.*

Zoroaster condensed the principles of law and conflict in the dual realities of Ahuramazda, or the good spirit, and Durj-Ahriman, or the evil spirit. Mani (3<sup>rd</sup> Century) and Mazdak (6<sup>th</sup> Century) developed a cosmology where good and evil were essentially separate entities and the universe was supposed to have been born from a regrettable mixing of the two. "The net result of this period of Persian speculation is nothing more than a materialistic dualism."

#### *Chapter II: Neo-Platonic Aristotelians of Persia.*

Ibn Maskawiah and Avicenna (Bu Ali Sina) were among "illustrious students of Greek philosophy." Issues addressed by Ibn Maskawiah include the existence of the ultimate principle, the knowledge of the ultimate, how the one creates the many, and the soul.

Avicenna defined love as the appreciation of beauty, while beauty is perfection; things not at the highest level of perfection strive to reach there and this is "love's movement towards beauty."



#### *Chapter III: Islamic Rationalism.*

Upheld by the Mu'tazila thinkers, this was an insurrection of the ancient Persian tendency for subjectivity, rejecting "external standards of truth." The chapter covers materialism as the metaphysics of rationalism, contemporary thought (skepticism, Sufism, and the revival of authority, or Ismailianism), and the Ash'arite reaction ("the transfer of dialectic method to the defense of the authority of the Divine Revelation").

#### *Chapter IV: Controversy between Realism and Idealism*

"The Ash'arite denial of Aristotle's Prima Materia and their views concerning the nature of space, time and causation," awakened an irrepressible spirit of controversy. Principle points on which the Realists differed from the Ash'arites as well as other idealist thinkers were the nature of the essence, the nature of knowledge and the nature of non-existence.

#### *Chapter V: Sufism.*

The origin and Quranic justification of Sufism are covered in the light of pre-existing intellectual, political and social conditions, which alone make the existence of any "phenomenon in the intellectual evolution of a people possible." Stages in the soul's journey towards union or identity with the ultimate source of all





Above: Fakhruddin Razi.

things, according to Sufi fraternities, are: (1) belief in the Unseen, (2) search after it, (3) its knowledge, and (4) the realization. Aspects of Sufi thought are (1) Reality as self-conscious Will (expounded by Shaiq Balkhi, Ibrahim Adham, Rabia Basri, etc); (2) Reality as Beauty (expounded by Maruf Karkhi, Al-Qushairi, Mir Sayyid Sharif, Husain Mansur Hallaj, Nasafi and Rumi; certain implications were opposed by Umar Khayyam, Ibn Taimiyya, Wahid Mahmud, and possibly, Hafiz of Shiraz); and (3) Reality as Light (expounded by Al-Ishraqi, whose ontology, cosmology and psychology are discussed here) or Thought (expounded by Al-Jili, whose 'Perfect Man' is a joining link between nature and God, in whom all divine attributes reappear).

Chapter VI: Later Persian Thought

"Under the rude Tartar invaders of Persia, who could have no sympathy with independent thought, there could be no progress of ideas." The philosophers of the later period include, among others, Mullah Sadra and the Bahai reformers.

Far right: T.W. Arnold (left) in Eastern attire. The Development of Metaphysics in Persia was dedicated to him.



Cambridge University was established in 1284. Famous students include Milton, Wordsworth, Byron and Tennyson among poets; Newton and Rutherford Maxwell among scientists; Wittgenstein and Russell among philosophers; William Pitt and Jawaharlal Nehru among politicians (Nehru joined in 1907, just when Iqbal left). Until 1920 the University didn't have regulations to award PhD and only used to award full doctorate (D.Sc. and D.Litt.). Candidates of doctorate would usually apply to German universities.

Henry VIII established Trinity College in 1546; Christopher Wren constructed the library in 1676-90. Iqbal was admitted on October 1, 1905 (the register he signed into was opened in the 1820's and closed in 1913). He was pensioner (self-financed student) under tutelage of Professor Adam Sedgewick (1854-1913). Scholars associated with the University at that time included George Moore, A. N. Whitehead, Sorley (1855-1935) and R. A. Nicholson (1868-1945).

Iqbal prepared his thesis under the supervision of McTaggart and submitted it to the Faculty on March 7, 1907. He was awarded a Bachelor's degree for it on June 13 the same year but did not apply for the Masters, which could have been obtained for a fee after a few years without further examination. Perhaps he didn't need it after he acquired a Ph.D. from Munich (Germany) on the revised version of the thesis in early November the same year.

The Development of Metaphysics in Persia, first published by Luzac & Company (London) in July 1908. The thesis (a revised version of Iqbal's submission for B.A. Degree at Trinity College, Cambridge), had earned him a doctorate in Arabic from the Munich University in November last year.





Atiya Fyzee (1881-1967) came from a liberal aristocratic family in Bombay. Her sister Nazli Begum was married to the Nawab of the neighboring Janjirah.

Atiya had an interest in Indian music and Persian poetry, for which she earned much admiration from Shibli Nomani who was a family friend. However, Shibli's references to her as a muse for his romantic Persian poetry evoked her resentment when brought to her notice through the publication of his private correspondence with other friends.

Atiya visited Europe in 1907 and 1908 (around the same time when Shibli's interest developed in her) and met Iqbal in London, Cambridge and Hiedelberg. They kept in touch through letters, especially until 1911 and occasionally even after that. Iqbal visited her at her Bombay residence on his way to and from London for the Round Table Conferences in 1931 and 1932-3.

She married a Parsi painter Fyzee Rahamin in 1912. She later moved to Pakistan where she established an Academy of Islam.

She was an author of several books on Indian music including *Indian Music* (in 2 volumes) and *Sangeet of India*, but today her renown as a writer rests on her candid recollections of Iqbal from the days of their youth. The book, titled *Iqbal* and published in 1947, included private letters of the poet addressed to her.

*Below right: Atiya Fyzee and Iqbal in 1907. The inset is a remastered copy of the faded original.*



The encounter that has long captivated the imagination of some biographers (and misled quite a few) did take place— on April 1, 1907 in London. Atiya Fyzee's account of her first meeting with Iqbal offers some traces of harmless social flirtation that faded away very quickly and gave way to a long lasting sober friendship.

“Miss Beck [hostess of the party where this meeting took place] had impressed on me the fact before he arrived that he had particularly wanted to see me and being straightforward and outspoken, I asked him the reason why,” Ms. Fyzee writes in her book *Iqbal*, first published nine years after the poet's death. “His deep-set eyes did not reveal if he meant to be sarcastic or complimentary when he said, ‘You have become very famous in India and London through your travel diary, and for this reason I was anxious to meet you.’ I told, ‘I am not prepared to believe that you took the trouble to come all the way from Cambridge just to pay me this compliment, but apart from this jest, what is the real idea behind this object?’ He was a bit taken by surprise at my sudden bluntness, and said, ‘I have come to invite you to Cambridge on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. Syed Ali Bilgrami as their guest, and my mission is to bring your acceptances without fail. If you refuse you will bring the stigma of failure on me, which I have never accepted, and if you accept the invitation, you will be honoring the hosts.’”

Iqbal's request was granted, and Ms. Fyzee accompanied him to Cambridge a dinner and a tea party later – the dinner was the one where Atiya's appreciation of the thoughtful and delicate arrangement was met with the statement that has now become well-known about Iqbal, “I am two personalities in one, the outer is practical and business-like and the inner is the dreamer, philosopher, and mystic.”

The dinner was not, however, a very private one, since some other guests had also been invited, whom Iqbal introduced to Ms. Fyzee as ‘German scholars.’ For all we know, they could have been white men with bad pronunciations, since Iqbal was always known to pull pranks and in all likelihood he played at least some practical jokes on Atiya too: her account of Iqbal's academic activities as well as her autobiographical ramblings are wrought with such inaccuracies that require deliberately wrong statements on his part or a remarkably bad memory on hers.



NOSTALGIA



Relics from a memorable picnic in Cambridge, April 1909.

Above: a photograph (Iqbal is seated in the centre with Atiya Fyzee on his right; Abdul Qadir is second from right in the picture).

Right: The letter Iqbal sent to Atiya Fyzee two days later and (below) the enclosed ghazals.

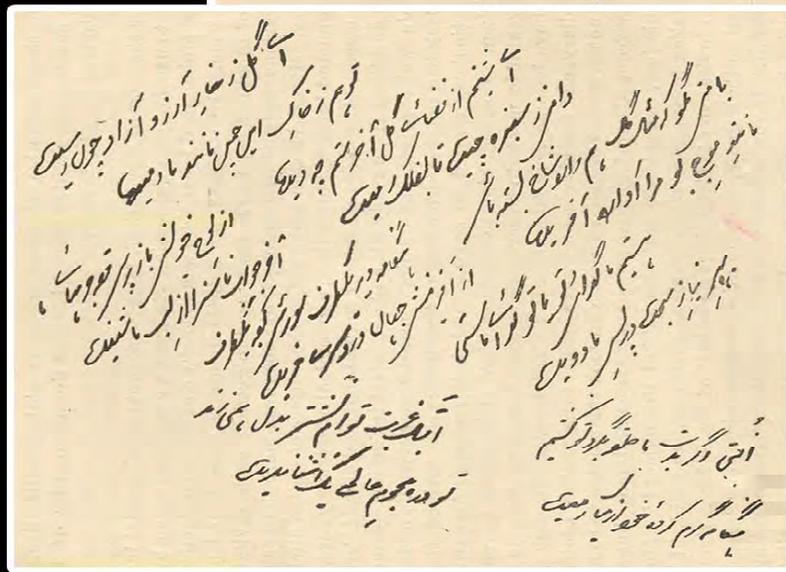
Trinity College  
Cambridge  
24<sup>th</sup> April 07.

My dear Miss Fyzee,  
I enclose herewith one of the poems I promised to send you, and shall feel obliged if you could read it carefully and let me know of your criticism.  
I was thinking of sending you a copy of my Political Economy in Urdu, but I am sorry I have not got one here though it would not be difficult to get it from India. I shall write for it this mail.  
Hoping you are getting on well  
Yours very sincerely  
I. Iqbal

“My dear Miss Fyzee, I enclose herewith one of the poems I promised to send you, and shall feel obliged if you considered it carefully and let me know of your criticism...” Iqbal wrote to Atiya Fyzee on April 24, 1907 – two days after a picnic in Cambridge where she was a special guest on his request.

It is very likely to have been the occasion about which Shiekh Abdul Qadir (later Sir) euphemistically wrote in his preface to *Bang-i-Dara* (1924). While mentioning that Iqbal’s inclination towards writing poems in Persian might have resulted from the wide readings he had to carry out as part of his research in Cambridge, he also writes about a party that apparently started it. He was asked whether he had written in Persian and had to confess that he had written merely a few verses in that language so far. “It was such a moment and the request inspired him in such a manner that perhaps he kept composing verses in Persian while lying in his bed after returning from there and recited two fresh *ghazals* when we met, first thing in the morning.”

Iqbal himself later said about his Persian poetry that “it comes to me in Persian.” On another occasion he said that he turned to Persian because he didn’t want his thought to reach too many people in India.



Emma Wegenast (August 16, 1879-October 16, 1964) was the fourth child of a small business owner from Heilbronn (Germany) and met Iqbal in Heidelberg where she was probably a language coach for foreign students. She received a passing reference in Atiya Faizi's *Iqbal* (1947) but the letters of Iqbal to Emma (brought to public notice by a Pakistani researcher Saeed Akhtar Durrani in the 1980's) suggest a strong emotional involvement corroborated by the oral traditions current in the Wegenast family to this day.

Emma was good looking, elegant and tall (about 5 feet 7 inches). She had black hair, blue eyes and chiseled features. She did not receive university education or taught at any university, since these privileges were not available to women until the First World War. Together with her eldest brother Karl, she was considered to be the "brains" of the family and a major breadwinner. It seems that she wished to move to India around 1907 or 1908 but was dissuaded by him.

Emma served as a Red Cross nurse during the First World War and as a technical assistant at the University Pharmacy from 1920 to 1958. She never married.

Her sister Sophie recollected in a German newspaper in 1966 that "Emma used to meet Professor Iqbal every day in Heidelberg and found joy in uplifting discourses on Goethe, who was Iqbal's favorite poet."

Two gold brooches of Indian make that formed part of her heirloom could have possibly been presented by Iqbal.

In all likelihood Atiya might have been the friend anonymously mentioned by Sheikh Abdul Qadir in the preface of *Bang-i-Dara* as asking Iqbal to write something in Persian. He did send a few *ghazals* to Atiya the very next day after her trip to Cambridge, but she or any other friend from Cambridge could not have been the reason why he turned to Persian for later masterpieces – he had written in Persian before, and for all we know he didn't write anything in Persian for four years after the poems sent to Atiya on this occasion.

Of one thing we can be sure. If dissatisfaction with his first marriage had sent Iqbal looking around for a second wife, or if Atiya was contemplating settling down at that point in life, then they were far from being the perfect match for each other and they both knew it. Iqbal, despite his brilliant sense of humor, was also capable of giving jitters to Atiya by his mere presence. "He was much fond of himself as a man primarily – and a great scholar after. There was no getting out of it," Atiya wrote in an article published only after her death in 1967. "My first impression of 'Iqbal' was that he was a 'complex,' – a mixture of good and evil, extremely self-contained and fond of his own opinion – a bad sign, I said to myself!" Elsewhere, she assessed him as a male chauvinist who regarded women as some sort of necessary evil. To him, on the other hand, the emancipated woman from Bombay must have appeared as rather too bold. If Iqbal's first marriage had floundered because of the high spirits of his wife and her superior social status then any likelihood of marrying this other woman of much higher spirits and properly aristocratic background should have irked him just as much as his fondness for 'his own opinion' was putting her off. In due time they became good friends who understood each other very well.



Emma Wegenast was a different case. "German women are incomparably fonder of domestic bonding than their English counterparts," Iqbal later rambled in his evening gatherings, and Emma was indeed a German woman.

Iqbal met her during his brief stay at Heidelberg in the summer of 1907. She was some kind of a language coach (and not a university teacher as naively believed by Atiya Fyze, who visited Heidelberg in that period). She had little importance to the biographers of Iqbal till the late 1980's when the poet's letters to her emerged through a Pakistani research tourist who subsequently gathered information about her family too (Emma herself handed over the original letters to the Pak-German Forum sometime before her death in the early 1960's, but that set was never heard of again). Emma's replies to Iqbal may have been lost to us along with some other private papers reportedly destroyed by him near the end of his life.

From what we can gather now from the surviving one-side of the correspondence, he did have some sort of emotional attachment to her. An oral tradition runs in her family about her wanting to leave for India sometime around 1907 and being stopped by her brother. "I've forgotten my German," Iqbal wrote to her sometime after his return to India, "Excepting a single word: Emma!"



*Above: Emma Wegenast  
(August 16, 1879 - October 16, 1964)*

## NOSTALGIA

Lahore (India)  
11 January 1909

My Dear Miss Emma,

Thank you very much for your kind letter. It is very kind of you to have written to me although I am so far away from Germany. I did not receive any letter of yours from Hiedelberg. Your letter was perhaps lost and I am sad to learn that mine was also lost on the way.

The people of my country gave me great honors when I returned to India. I can hardly describe it in words. Around forty poems were sent to me from all over the country as a welcome from friends and other people. On my arrival in Lahore I was given a garland of gold and it was put around my head. Thousands of people had gathered on every railway station from Bombay to Lahore and Sialkot, where I saw many boys and grown ups singing my poems on the platforms.

I was happy to find my parents in good health when I came home. My sisters and my mother are much glad that I am with them now.

I am now in Lahore and working as an advocate. It is not possible for me to forget your beautiful country ever – where I learnt so much. And... please keep writing to me for ever. We might meet each other again in Germany of India. In some time after collecting enough money I will make a home in Europe. This is my ideal, and I hope to fulfil it.

I was grieved to hear about the death of Herr Chaubal. Perhaps you would remember that I mentioned his health to him so many times.

Please do not forget the friend of yours who always keeps you in his heart and who can never forget you. I remember my stay in Hiedelberg like a beautiful dream, a dream I wish to repeat. Is that possible? You would know better.

With hearty good wishes,

Yours,

S.M. Iqbal,

Bar-at-Law,

Lahore (India)

*Translated from German (see facsimile on the right).*

*Right:*  
“Pension Sherrer” (or The Sherrer Hostel) in Hiedelberg. Iqbal was here in 1907.

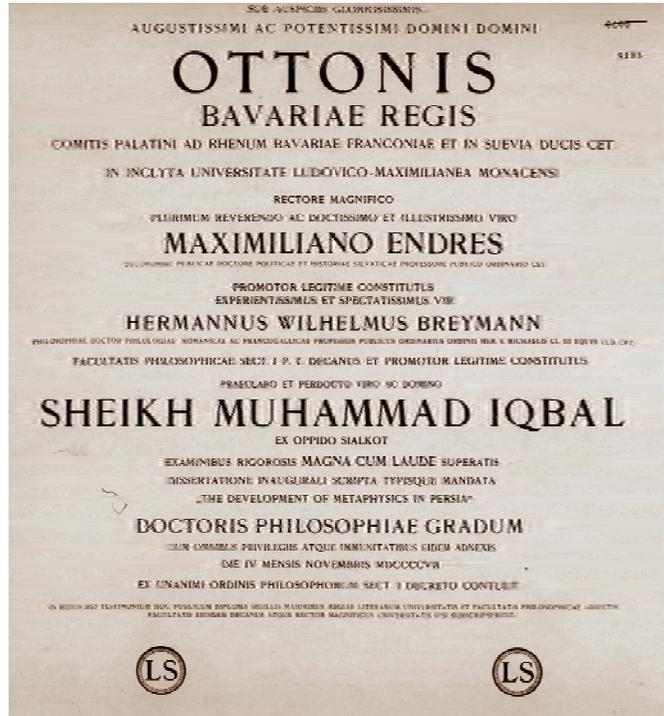
*Below:* First page of a letter Iqbal wrote to Emma Wegenast in German after his return. (See translation on the left).



Lahore  
(India)  
11. <sup>4</sup> Jan. 09.

Mein liebes Fräulein Emma,  
Für Ihren freundlichen Brief danke ich Ihnen vielmal. Ist es so gut von Ihnen zu schreiben und sich von mir zu erinnern kann ich so weit bin von Deutschland. Now Heidelberg habe ich keine Briefe von Ihnen erhalten. Vielleicht Ihren Brief ist verloren, und ich fühlte mich sehr traurig zu hören dass mein Brief verloren gegangen ist. Meine Landleute haben mir eine große Ehre als ich ins Indien kam. Es ist nicht möglich für mich in vorher

Some business in Paris, about which we don't know anything, prevented him from making a return trip to Germany on his way back to India and despite two more journeys to Europe in the 1930's, he was never able to revisit Germany or meet Emma after those few blissful days in Heidelberg. She is quite likely to have been the muse for those movingly romantic poems from Iqbal's stay in Europe that were once wrongly surmised as dedications to Atiya Fyzee. However, the influence of German romantics of a century ago should not be overlooked as a significant source of inspiration too: Iqbal made acquaintance with their thought during his stay in Germany. "Our soul discovers itself when we come into contact with a great mind," Iqbal was to jot down three years later. "It is not until I had realized the infinitude of Goethe's [sic. Goethe's] imagination that I discovered the narrow breadth of my own."



Iqbal received his PhD (left) from Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, in November 1908. The University did not have competence to judge Persian metaphysics but an unusual provision was made, apparently due to Iqbal's own merit as well as a strong recommendation from Thomas Arnold (whose opinion of Iqbal's thesis conveyed in a letter to the main examiner played a decisive role). The principal subject was Arabic Philology in which Iqbal secured 1<sup>st</sup> Grade while the subsidiary subjects were English Philology and Philosophy in which he secured 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades respectively (making 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade in aggregate) but the degree was awarded "Magnum Cum Laude," or With Great Praise.

The thesis was an improved version of *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, which had earlier acquired a degree of B.A. from Cambridge (the Cambridge University did not start awarding PhD's until 1920). It was submitted to the German university in English but Iqbal mastered the German language for the viva voce (although more by way of convenience rather than a formal requirement).

He submitted his application, and perhaps also the thesis, in July and then retired to Heidelberg where he stayed at "Pension Sherrer" (or The Sherrer Hostel), which now carries a memorial plaque while the nearby road is named after him.

*Below: Iqbal and a group of students at Sherrer hostel with the landlady.*



The general contempt for the poet by a society who loved poetry cannot be better illustrated by the fact that at one point its greatest poet of the age decided to quit his craft for good and even curb his frequent, irresistible spontaneous overflow of emotion recollected in tranquility. Fortunately, this shift took place away from the society whose views would have condoned it and the matter was brought to the attention of Thomas Arnold, who in London had resumed his mantle of being Iqbal's mentor. Mustering the willing suspension of disbelief that was required to accept any likelihood of Iqbal's quitting poetry, he went on to convince the reluctant artist that his competence was a boon to his nation, and his verses could do wonders.

The seriousness given to this incident by its narrator, Sir Abdul Qadir, requires that we take it as another landmark in Iqbal's mental odyssey. He became more conscious of his role as a thinker and the obligation to use his verse mainly for telling others of what he saw as the solution to their problems. For nearly two and a half years after his return from Europe he was still not prepared to be seen as a poet of any kind although he couldn't help composing a good poem every other month – usually expressing some Islamic idea in

*Right: Activists patrolling the streets in Turkey after compelling the Caliph to grant democratic reforms in 1908.*



The paper 'Political Thought in Islam' was published in *The Sociological Review*, London, in 1908. It summarizes the

political theories about caliphate after establishing two basic principles: (1) the Muslim Commonwealth is based on psychological 'like-mindedness' or the unity of religious and political ideals (hence all Muslims are equals); and (2) there is no distinction between the Church and the State (hence there is no priesthood).

The early theories about caliphate developed from the pre-Islamic customs of political succession in Arabia and true to those customs the Prophet left no instruction about his succession while the statements of the second caliph Umar implied that political sovereignty resided in the people.

Three distinct views on the issue of caliphate among the later constitutional lawyers were: (1) the Sunni view of elective monarchy (relationship between the caliph and the people, and the roles of ministers and other officials is discussed here); in theory all Muslims possess the right to vote but women and slaves never exercised it); (2) the Shi'a view of divinely appointed hereditary caliphate (the absence of the 12th *imam* while his authority was still binding through the priests was a clever separation of the church and the state); and (3) the various theories of the Khawarij republicanism.

The fundamental principle laid down in the Quran was the principle of election but it could not be realized due to the anti-democratic temperament of the Persians and the Mongols and the imperialistic ambitions of the Arabs ("political expansion... serves as an unconscious handmaid of despotism," Iqbal warns his European readers too).

his unique powerful manner. However, his major focus was his legal practice – which remains the most ill-researched area of his life. It does seem, however, that even in this unsuitable profession he gained some success, thanks to a penchant for hardwork that only a Victorian could have possessed (and Iqbal was very Victorian in some regards) and contrary to the negative impression spread by his rivals and epitomized in Justice Shadilal's disqualifying comment on his candidature

for the bench of the Lahore High Court in the 1920's, "We know him as a poet, but not as a lawyer"). Meanwhile, the overreacher in him turned to prose.



The period from 1908 to 1913 is seen as a dark phase in his life by all biographers on his own authority. Tracing the roots of agony to his decision to separate his first wife, his family's initial resistance to the idea or the temporary misunderstandings after the marriage to Sirdar Begum, is only a partial discovery of the truth. Other pieces must be added to the picture.

Humanism could mean the elimination of the divine from the human life, in which sense Iqbal deplored it. In another way the term could mean a shift of focus to the human interests and in that sense he welcomed the birth, or as he called it, 'the re-birth' of humanism in the Muslim World. "Personality being the dearest possession of man must be looked upon as the ultimate good," he wrote in the private notebook *Stray Reflections*, which he kept for some time in 1910. "It must work as a standard to judge the worth of our actions. That is good which has a tendency to give us a sense of personality, that is bad which has a tendency to suppress and ultimately dissolve personality."

There was the rub. Every journey begins by taking into account, not only the importance of the destination but also its distance from the starting point. Those who set out to discover God by looking inside their own souls sometime have to first understand how the human being is *different* from God in order to save themselves from mistaking a shadow of their own mind as the Ultimate Reality. The result is a temporary cynicism. "My friends ask me, 'Do you believe in the existence of God?'" Iqbal wrote in the same notebook. "I think I am entitled to know the meaning of the terms used in this question before I answer it. My friends ought to explain to me what they mean by 'believe,' 'existence' and 'God,' especially the last two, if they want an answer to their question. I confess I do not understand these terms; and whenever I cross-examine them I find that they do not understand them either."

In the three prose pieces from this period of his thought he speaks about Islam, the Prophet, the Divine law, the Muslim community and the need for a great personality but nowhere does he tell us what role, if any, does the Almighty play in this order of things. That must not surprise us, because the

traditional role of God was transferred to the Community in the worldview Iqbal came to present in these writings. The mistake was corrected three years later when he sat down to write *Asrar-i-Khudi* (which will be discussed in the next chapter).

In the paper 'The Muslim Community – a Sociological Study,' the society is given many attributes that were reserved for the Divine existence in traditional Muslim mysticism. For instance, the society is described here as the real organism and the individuals almost like those micro-organisms that reside inside a body but cannot exist on their own. He mentioned some "recent biological research" that had proven that even the life-spans of the individuals are determined by the needs of the group-organism. He did not quote the source of his information, if there was any, but over a year later the thought resurfaced in the famous lines in 'The Candle and the Poet' where he said: "The individual is sustained by the nation and is nothing on its own; the wave is whatever it is in the ocean and nothing outside it." (*Fard qayim rabt i millat sai bai, etc*). No Muslim mystic of the past had ascribed such omnipotence to the society and all of them *had* ascribed it to God.

In the same paper he proclaimed that the "Society has, or tends to have a consciousness, a will and an intellect of its own," and that the individual mind was nothing but a channel through which flows "the stream of mentality" of the society, and therefore "the individual mind is never completely aware of its own states of consciousness." Again, this was almost the equation that previously existed between the limited human consciousness and the absolute knowledge of God (of course, Iqbal made one slight difference by saying that certain thoughts passing on through individual minds were conceded to remain below the threshold of social sensibility).

That same unidentified "recent biological research" is supposed to have revealed that "in the successful group-life it is the future that must always control the present; to the species taken as a whole, its unborn members are perhaps more real than its existing members whose immediate interests are subordinated and even sacrificed to the future interests of that unborn infinity which slowly discloses itself from generation to generation." Perhaps this was in his mind when he said in his famous 'Prayer' (1911): "Grant us to see

The lecture 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal' was delivered at the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam in 1909 and published in *The Observer*, Lahore, and *The Hindustan Review*, Deccan, in April and December that year respectively.

The eternal proposition regulating the structure of Islam is that there is fear in nature and the human being must be liberated from fear and thus become conscious of himself or herself as a source of power; there is no mediator, since God is the "birthright" of every human being.

"A strong will in a strong body" is the ethical ideal of Islam, completely missing in the Indian Muslim; a great personality is needed for ethical revival of a people. An educational system reflecting its national ideals is the next best option.

Democracy is the most important political value in Islam while two fundamental principles regulating its political structure are that (1) the law of God is supreme, since the authority of a human being except as an interpreter of law is "inimical to the unfoldment of human individuality;" and (2) all humans are equal.

Historically, the democracy of the Muslims lasted only thirty years and disappeared with their political expansion; the task of liberating Asia from despotism was therefore left to the British Empire – which is "the greatest Mohammadan Empire in the world" not because so many Muslims live in it but also by way of its own spirit.

Unfortunately the Muslims in India have "out-Hindued the Hindu" in adhering to castes and sub-castes. Religious and social sectarianism must be condemned if the Muslim Community is to fulfill its mission of freeing the humanity of superstition.

*Left: A group photograph from Iqbal's life. Not dated.*



*'The Muslim Community— a Sociological Study' was a lecture delivered by Iqbal in the Strachy Hall (right) at Aligarh College in March 1911.*

The community is an existence in its own right and the only real concern is to ensure "a continuous national life." Hence, the lives of the individual as well as the activities and values of the community must all be subjected to this futuristic need.

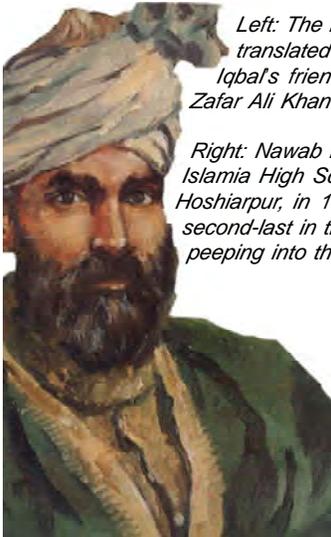
The preliminary points in the study of the Muslim community are: (1) its general structure transcends regional boundaries and rallies around "a purely subjective agreement on a certain view of the world"; (2) members of the Muslim community must also assimilate the uniform culture of Islam (although historically it is a mix of the Semitic and the Aryan ideas), in order to produce a uniform mental outlook; (3) a self-controlled character dominated by a serious view of life (foreshadowed by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb) is essential for the life of the Muslim community in India, and has found an expression in the Qadiyani sect (this last comment is often quoted in controversies raging over Iqbal's later change of position towards the Ahmedis).

The work done in (1) education and (2) the uplift of the masses in the last 50 years presents a bleak situation.

The proposed Muslim University should combine diverse energies of Nadva, the Aligarh and the theological seminary of Deoband.

Higher education of women is undesirable as their primary function is motherhood.

The economic issue affects all communities alike and therefore demands "broad, impartial, non-sectarian" spirit.



*Left: The lecture was translated into Urdu by Iqbal's friend and journalist Zafar Ali Khan (left).*

*Right: Nawab Mohsinul Mulk at Islamia High School, Hoshiarpur, in 1908. Iqbal is second-last in the right row and peeping into the camera.*

the signs of the impending doom; grant us to think of tomorrow amid the confusion of today."

"Society is much more than its existing individuals," he wrote. "It is in its nature infinite." Was it not how mystics had described God in the light of *wahdat al wujud*?

They had maintained that the individual ego must be renounced in a union with the divine and it should not surprise us that Iqbal's thought eventually led him to *Rumuz-i-Bekbudi* (1917) where it was declared that the individual ego must be renounced, not in the Absolute Ego, but in the ego of the community.

"The forces of Nature appear to respect neither individuals nor nations," he also wrote. "Her inexorable laws continue to work as if she has a far-off purpose of her own, in no sense related to what may be the immediate interest or the ultimate destiny of man." Indeed, this was a bleak picture of the universe. True, it is illuminated by a eulogistic description of the human capabilities ("Man is a peculiar creature. Amidst the most discouraging circumstances, his imagination, working under the control of his understanding, gives him more perfect vision of himself and impels him to discover the means which would transform his brilliant dream of an idealized self into a living actuality"). However, this description of the human being lacks an explicit statement of its Divine origins that was found in the Al-Jili thesis and was later restored in *Asrar-i-Khudi*.

It is not surprising that in this temporary phase his perception of the Muslim culture is more earth-rooted than elsewhere. The Muslim culture – and not only the faith of Islam – must be adopted although he confesses that this culture was substantially influenced by the pre-Islamic heritage of Persia. Yet, "to the Royal family of Persia, the loss of Persia's political independence would mean only a territorial loss; to the Muslim culture such an event would be a blow much more serious than the Tartar invasion of 10<sup>th</sup> (sic. 13<sup>th</sup>) Century."

Difference of opinion was intolerable in this worldview since non-conformity would dilute the "organic unity" of the group-organism, something so vital for its survival (and individuals could not exist independent of their communities). "Islam is one and indivisible; it brooks no distinctions in it," Iqbal had called upon his listeners in the 1909 session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam and condemned religious and social sectarianism in the name of God, humanity, Moses, Jesus Christ and the



Last Prophet: "Fight not for the interpretation of the truth, when the truth itself is in danger."

Can truth ever be in danger? Two years from now Iqbal was going to refute his fears by saying that Islam could not perish by the fall of Persia. However, the universe presented a more depressing picture from where he was standing at the moment and if this had not been the case, his personal problems would have also appeared more tolerable to him. "As a human being I have a right to happiness," he wrote to Atiya Fyzee in 1909 while rambling over his desire to get rid of his first wife. "If society, or nature, deny that to me I defy both. The only cure is that I should leave this wretched country forever, or take refuge in liquor which makes suicide easier. These dead barren leaves of books cannot yield happiness; I have sufficient fire in my soul to burn them up and all social conventions as well. A good God created all this, you'll say. Maybe, but facts of this life, however, tend to a different conclusion. It is intellectually easier to believe in an eternal omnipotent Devil than a good God."

In a Persian *ghazal* written around the same time (but published much later in *Payam-i-Mashriq*) he addressed his Creator, "A hundred worlds bloomed from the fields of my imagination, like flowers; You created only one, and that too with the blood of our longing."

Unlike Kant, Iqbal could not find it sufficient to believe in God because it was expedient to do so. Like an offended lover he asked His Creator to answer some questions, and indeed those were some difficult questions he penned down in that season of his discontents, the winter of 1910-1911.



Left: *The Victorian poet Robert Browning (1812-89)*

In 1909-10, Iqbal temporarily resumed teaching at Government Colleg, Lahore, at the behest of the educational authorities. His farewell lecture in December 1910 was about the poetry of Robert Browning. The content of the lecture is not recorded.

Browning was seen as a prophetic poet in those days and it was supposed that he had a message of hope for the ailing humanity. His influence might explain Iqbal's preference for dramatic monologue.

He also finds a very favorable reference in *Payam-i-Mashriq* (1923), where he is shown in the company of Byron, Ghalib and Rumi. "I found the liquor of life losing its quality, so I took some water of life from Khizr and poured it into the cup," Browning is given to claim in that poem (Khizr being a legendary character from Eastern folklore who found the water of life).

Browning's influence on Iqbal must have been moderated by the Victorian poet's disregard for the common aesthetics of language. Ruggedness of expression, a hallmark of Browning, is entirely absent in Iqbal who preferred to chisel his lines to a classical perfection.

Left: *Iqbal with some pupils, circa 1910. He is seated in the middle, leaning on his walking stick, which was still very much in fashion.*

Below: *The Chief Court (later the High Court), Lahore, where Iqbal practiced as a barrister from 1908.*



Right: A detail from Turkish miniature marks the victory of Sulieman the Magnificent over the Hungarians. "Our call for prayer could be heard in the valleys of the West," Iqbal wrote in The National Anthem (Tarana-i-Milli). "No one could stop the flood that we were."



Two types of imagery dominate Iqbal's poetry. The first type is related to political power while the second evokes contemplation and introspection.

'The Complaint,' 'The National Anthem,' and other such poems written soon after 1910 are more abundant in the imagery of power while the imagery of contemplation, signified by a vast range of Sufi vocabulary, such as *jazb*, *zauq*, and *qalanderi*, appear throughout his poetry.



Despair, anger and hope were catalyzed by the political disappointments in the world of Islam (especially Iran and Turkey) and distilled under such pressure in his otherwise optimistic mind that they found catharsis through his greatest poem so far (and the most famous one ever), 'The Complaint' (*Shikwah*). "Your world presented a strange sight when we arrived on the scene," Iqbal ventured to remind his Creator, and went on with a succinct description of pagan religions and how the armies of Islam crushed them. Today, however, the bounties of God were bestowed exclusively upon the non-believers while the Muslims were destitute and humbled. "Shifting your affections between us and our rivals every now and then?" Iqbal treaded close to disrespect, "I dare not say it, but indeed you, too, are such an inconstant lover!"

What prevents the poem from becoming disrespectful is the deep emotional bonding between the human soul and its Creator, and a remarkable absence of personal arrogance. Strictly speaking, 'The Complaint' is a prayer: "Allow the song of this solitary nightingale to pierce the hearts of the listeners," Iqbal eventually comes to the point after his long detour of slants and sarcasm. "Let this caravan bell wake up the hearts from deep slumber to be refreshed with a new covenant, thirsting after the same old wine; Oh, what if my glass is of Persian origin, the wine I have to offer is none but Arabic; Oh, what if the song I am singing is Indian, the tune I render to it is none but Arabic."

The poetic landscape of 'The Complaint' is deceptive if studied in isolation from the prose works. The onward march of sword-swashing Arab warriors might serve as an effective poetic imagery but it stands in variance with Iqbal's own contention that territorial expansion serves as handmaid to tyranny and that the Arab imperialism was a disservice to Islam – something he was asserting forcefully in his lectures delivered around the same time and emphasized it again in his famous Presidential Address in 1930 where one of the very reasons why he proposed a modern Muslim state in India was that the Muslim politics might stand a chance of developing on lines different from the ones adopted in the past. However, a complete argument could not have appeared in 'The Complaint' without disrupting the unity of thought so essential to a poem. Yet, the answer he wrote to his own poem within a year by the title of 'The Candle and the Poet' suggests that the causes of political decline among the Muslims were not that they had become unwilling to fight but rather that they had stopped looking within. Another sequel by the title 'The Answer' (*Jawab-i-Shikwah*), which came a little later, balanced the imagery of 'The Complaint' with the imagery of rationalism and contemplation: the Muslim World is in a bad shape because there are no more Ghazalis in it.

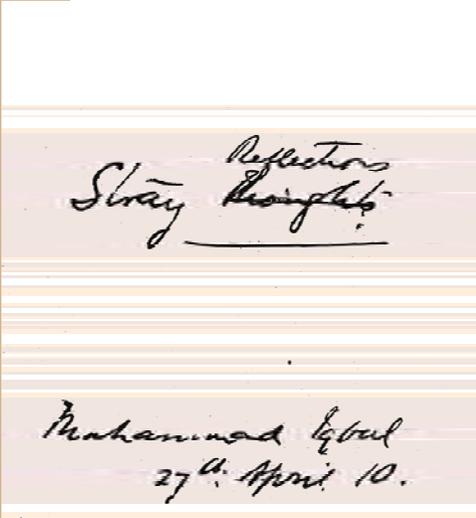
All said and done, 'The Complaint' takes a steep departure from conventional devotion by opening a discourse on God from the human point of view; the duality between our attitude to the world and our attitude to God withers away as we approach the Divine altar without taking off the cloak of human sentiments and basic instincts.

Below: Sufis in ecstasy. Detail from a 17th Century miniature.



**Stray Reflections**

In 1910 Iqbal started noting his private thoughts in a notebook called Stray Reflections (edited and published by Javid Iqbal in 1962).



He discontinued the practice after a few months but the notes might have served him for a long time. Some of the entries were revised and printed in 1917 while many ideas jotted down here found reflection in his prose and poetry later.

The following is a complete transcript of the notebook. Typos have been corrected (most notably 'Goethe,' which was Iqbal's persistent misspelling of Goethe).

  
Art is a sacred lie.

  
Our Soul discovers itself when we come into contact with a great mind. It is not until I had realised the infinitude of Goethe's imagination that I discovered the narrow breadth of my own.

  
Human Intellect is nature's attempt at self-criticism.

  
The charitable man really helps the non-charitable, not the indigent. For what is given to the poor is virtually given away to those who do not give anything to the poor. The non-charitable, therefore, are kept in their state of non-benevolence, and the benevolent man pays for them. This is the economics of charity.

  
My friends often ask me, "Do you believe in the existence of God"? I think I am entitled to know the meaning of the terms used in this question before I answer it. My friends ought to explain to me what they mean by "believe," "existence" and "God", especially by the last two, if they want an answer to their question. I confess I do not understand these terms; and whenever I cross-examine them I find that they do not understand them either.

  
Heart: "It is absolutely certain that God does exist." Head: "But, my dear boy! Existence is one of my categories, and you have no right to use it." Heart: "So much the better, my Aristotle!"

  
The satisfaction of vanity has an economic value with us. Call me Sub-Assistant Surgeon instead of Hospital Assistant and I am quite contented even if you do not increase my salary.

  
Excuse me a bit of cruel psychology. You fail in your enterprise, and now you wish to leave your home and try your luck in other climes. It is not because your ambition has received a fresh spur from your failure; but chiefly because you wish to hide

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③  
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your face from those who have witnessed your failure.

  
Belief is a great power. When I see that a proposition of mine is believed by another mind, my own conviction of its truth is thereby immensely increased.

  
Christianity describes God as love; Islam as power. How shall we decide between the two conceptions? I think the history of mankind and of the universe as a whole must tell us as to which of the two conceptions is truer. I find that God reveals Himself in history more as power than love. I do not deny the love of God; I mean that, on the basis of our historical experience, God is better described as power.

  
Hegel's system of philosophy is an epic poem in prose.

  
"Let fools fight for the forms of government," says Alexander Pope. I cannot agree with this political philosophy. To my mind, government, what-



15th May, 1910:  
Yesterday morning at about 4, I saw that glorious visitor of our hemisphere known as Halley's comet. Once in

seventy-five years this superb swimmer of infinite space appears on our skies. It is only with the eyes of my grandsons that I shall see it again. The state of my mind was quite unique. I felt as if some thing indescribably vast had been closed up within the narrow limits of my clay: Yet the thought that I could not see this wanderer again brought home to me the painful fact of my littleness. For the moment all ambition was killed in me.

ever its form, is one of the determining forces of a people's character. Loss of political power is equally ruinous to nations' character. Ever since their political fall the Musalmans of India have undergone a rapid ethical deterioration. Of all the Muslim communities of the world they are probably the meanest in point of character. I do not mean to deplore our former greatness in this country, for, I confess, I am almost a fatalist in regard to the various forces that ultimately decide the destinies of nations. As a political force we are perhaps no longer required; but we are, I believe, still indispensable to the world as the only testimony to the absolute Unity of God. Our value among nations, then, is purely evidential.



It is idle to seek logical truth in poetry. The ideal of imagination is beauty, not truth. Do not then try to show a poet's greatness by quoting passages from his works which, in your opinion, embody scientific truth.



Personal immortality is not a state; it is a process. I think the distinction of spirit and body has done a lot of harm. Several religious systems have been based on this erroneous distinc-

tion. Man is essentially an energy, a force, or rather a combination of forces which admit of various arrangements. One definite arrangement of these forces is personality – whether it is a purely chance arrangement does not concern me here. I accept it as a fact among other facts of nature, and try to find out whether this arrangement of forces – so dear to us – can continue as it is. Is it then possible that these forces should continue to work in the same direction as they are working in a living, healthy personality? I think it is. Let human personality be represented by a circle – which is only another way of saying that these forces result in describing a definite circle which may be obliterated by an upsettal of the arrangement of forces constituting it. How then can we manage to secure the continuance of this circle? Evidently by energising in a way calculated to assist the constitutive forces in their regular routine of work. You must give up all those modes of activity which have a tendency to dissolve personality, e.g. humility, contentment, slavish obedience, modes of human action which have been erroneously dignified by the name of virtue. On the other hand, high ambition, generosity, charity and a just pride in our traditions and power fortify the sense of personality.

Personality being the dearest possession of man must be looked upon

*15th May 1910*  
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as the ultimate good. It must work as a standard to test the worth of our actions. That is good which has a tendency to give us the sense of personality, that is bad which has a tendency to suppress and ultimately dissolve personality. By adopting a mode of life calculated to strengthen personality we are really fighting against death – a shock which may dissolve the arrangement of forces we call personality. Personal immortality then lies in our own hands. It requires an effort to secure the immortality of the person. The idea I have dropped here has far-reaching consequences. I wish I could have time to discuss the comparative value of Islam, Buddhism and Christianity from the standpoint of this idea; but unfortunately I am too busy to work out the details.



History is a sort of applied ethics. If ethics is to be an experimental science like other sciences, it must be based on the revelations of human experience. A public declaration of this view will surely shock the susceptibilities even of those who claim to be orthodox in morality but whose public conduct is determined by the teachings of history.



I confess I am a bit tired of metaphysics. But whenever I happen to argue with people I find that their arguments are always based on certain propositions which they assume without criticism. I am, therefore, driven to examine the value of these propositions. The practical in all its shapes drives me back to the speculative. It seems to me to be impossible to get rid of metaphysics altogether.



All nations accuse us of fanaticism. I admit the charge – I go further and say that we are justified in our fanaticism. Translated in the language of biology fanaticism is nothing but the principle of individualisation working in the case of group. In this sense all forms of life are more or less fanatical and ought to be so if they care for their collective life. And as a matter of fact all nations are fanatical. Criticise an English-man's religion, he is immovable; but criticise his civilisation, his country or the behaviour of his nation in any sphere of activity and you will bring out his innate fanaticism. The reason is that his nationality does not depend on religion;

All nations accuse us of fanaticism. I admit the charge – I go further and say that we are justified in our fanaticism. Translated in the language of biology fanaticism is nothing but the principle of individualisation working in the case of a group. In this sense all forms of life are more or less fanatical and ought to be so if they care for their collective life. And as a matter of fact all nations are fanatical. Criticise an Englishman's religion, he is immovable; but criticise his civilisation, his country or the behaviour of his nation in any sphere of activity and you will bring out his innate fanaticism. The

it has a geographical basis – his country. His fanaticism then is justly roused when you criticise his country. Our position, however, is fundamentally different. With us nationality is a pure idea; it has no material basis. Our only rallying point is a sort of mental agreement in a certain view of the world. If then our fanaticism is roused when our religion is criticised, I think we are as much justified in our fanaticism as an Englishman is when his civilisation is denounced. The feeling in both cases is the same though associated with different objects. Fanaticism is patriotism for religion; patriotism, fanaticism for country.



Islam appeared as a protest against idolatry. And what is patriotism but a subtle form of idolatry; a deification of a material object. The patriotic songs of various nations will bear me out in my calling patriotism a deification of a material object. Islam could not tolerate idolatry in all its forms. What was to be demolished by Islam could not be made the very principle of its structure as a political community. The fact that the Prophet prospered and died in a place not his birthplace is perhaps a mystic hint to the same effect.



Justice is an inestimable treasure; but we must guard it against the thief of mercy.



From what I have said above on Islam and patriotism it follows that our solidarity as a community rests on our hold on the religious principle, the moment this hold as loosened we are nowhere. Probably the fate of the Jews will befall us. And what can we do in order to tighten the hold? Who is the principal depositary of religion in a community? It is the woman, the Musalman woman ought to receive

Philosophy is the logic of Right. History is the logic of Might. The conditions of the latter life appear to be more sound than those of her noble life.

The survival of the fittest and the struggle for existence are the two principles which govern the life of the individual and the life of the nation.

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sound religious education, for she is virtually the maker of the community, I do not believe in an absolute system of education. Education, like other things, is determined by the needs of a community. For our purposes religious education is quite sufficient for the Muslim girl. All subjects which have a tendency to de-womanise and to de-Muslimise her must be carefully excluded from her education. But our educationists are still groping in the dark; they have not yet been able to prescribe a course of study for our girls. They are, perhaps, too much dazzled by the glamour of western ideals to realise the difference between Islamism which constructs nationality out of a purely abstract idea, i.e. religion, and “westernism” the very life-blood of whose concept of nationality is a concrete thing, i.e. country.



In the economy of nature each nation has a function allotted to it. The function of the German nation is the organisation of human knowledge. But they have recently started on a commercial enterprise which may give them an empire, but they will have to suffer the displacement of a higher ideal by the all-absorbing spirit of trade.



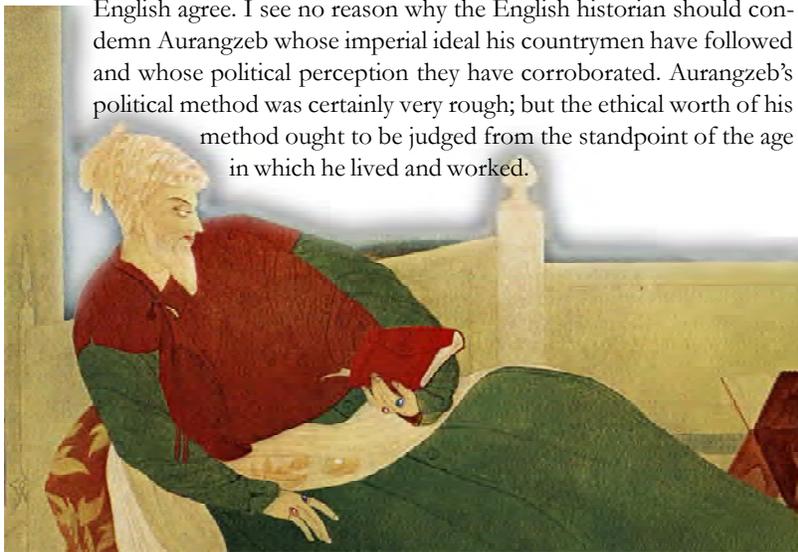
It is extremely interesting to watch the birth and growth of a new ideal among a people. Of the enthusiasm it inspires and the force with which it attracts all the energies of a people to

one common centre! The modern Hindu is quite a phenomenon. To me his behaviour is more of a psychological than a political study. It seems that the ideal of political freedom which is an absolutely new experience to him has seized his entire soul, turn-

ing the various streams of his energy from their wonted channels and bringing them to pour forth their whole force into this new channel of activity. When he has passed through this experience he will realise his loss. He will be transformed into an absolutely new people – new in the sense that he will no longer find himself dominated by the ethical ideals of his ancestors whose sublime fancies have been a source of perpetual consolation to many a distressed mind. Nations are mothers of ideals; but ideals, in course of time, become pregnant and give birth to new nations.

The political genius of Aurangzeb was extremely comprehensive. His one aim of life was, as it were, to subsume the various communities of this country under the notion of one universal empire. But in securing this imperial unity he erroneously listened to the dictates of his indomitable courage which had no sufficient background of political experience behind it. Ignoring the factor of time in the political evolution of his contemplated empire he started an endless struggle in the hope that he would be able to unify the discordant political units of India in his own lifetime. He failed to Islamise (not in the religious sense) India just as Alexander had failed to Hellenise Asia. The Englishman, however, came fully equipped with the political experiences of the nations of antiquity – and his patience and tortoise-like perseverance succeeded where the hasty genius of Aurangzeb had failed. Conquest does not necessarily mean unity. Moreover, the history of the preceding Muslim dynasties had taught Aurangzeb that the strength of Islam in India did not depend, as his great ancestor Akbar had thought, so much on the goodwill of the people of this land as on the strength of the ruling race. With all his keen political perception, however, he could not undo the doings of his forefathers. Sevajee was not a product of Aurangzeb's reign; the Maharatta owed his existence to social and political forces called into being by the policy of Akbar. Aurangzeb's political perception, though true, was too late. Yet considering the significance of this perception he must be looked upon as the founder of Musalman nationality in India. I am sure posterity will one day recognise the truth of what I say. Among the English administrators of India, it was Lord Curzon who first perceived the truth about the power of England in India. Hindu nationalism is wrongly attributed to his policy. Time will, I believe, show that it owes its existence to the policy of Lord Ripon. It is, therefore, clear that in their political purpose and perception both the Mughals and the English agree. I see no reason why the

English agree. I see no reason why the English historian should condemn Aurangzeb whose imperial ideal his countrymen have followed and whose political perception they have corroborated. Aurangzeb's political method was certainly very rough; but the ethical worth of his method ought to be judged from the standpoint of the age in which he lived and worked.



Above: Emperor Aurangzeb – detail of painting by A.R.Chughtai



Philosophy is the logic of right, history the logic of might. The canons of this later logic appear to be more sound than those of her sister logic.



The verdict of history is that buffer states have never been able to form themselves into great political units. So was the case with Syria—a buffer state between the Empire of Rome and that of the Persians. It seems difficult to forecast the future of Afghanistan.



Matthew Arnold defines poetry as criticism of life. That life is criticism of poetry is equally true.



In the sphere of human thought Muhammad, Buddha, and Kant were probably the greatest revolutionaries. In the sphere of action Napoleon stands unrivalled. I do not include Christ among the world's revolutionaries, since the movement initiated by him was soon absorbed by pre-Christian paganism. European Christianity seems to me to be nothing more than a feeble translation of ancient paganism in the language of Semitic theology.



The Jewish race has produced only two great men— Christ and Spinoza. The former was God incarnated in the Son, the latter in the universe. Spinoza was only a completion of the greatest teacher of his race.



I have the greatest respect for Aristotle, not only because I (living in the twentieth century) know him much better than the older generations of my community, but also because of his vast influence on the thought of my people. The tinge, however, of ingratitude revealed in his criticism of Plato's doctrine of ideas withholds me from giving him my fullest admiration. I do not deny the truth contained in his criticism of his master's views; but I detest the spirit in which he chooses to approach them.



There are strange inconsistencies in the nature of man. If I marry a prostitute I indicate thereby that I do not object to such nasty alliances. But if you make my conduct the subject of a story I take it ill— I condemn in theory what I permit in practice. The phi-



losophy of Nietzsche—at least in the domain of ethics—is an attempt rationally to justify the conduct of Europe, yet this great prophet of aristocracy is universally condemned in Europe. Only a few have realised the meaning of his madness.



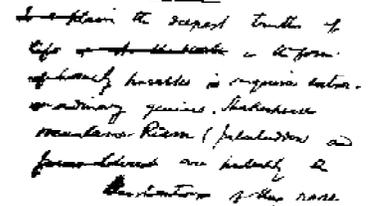
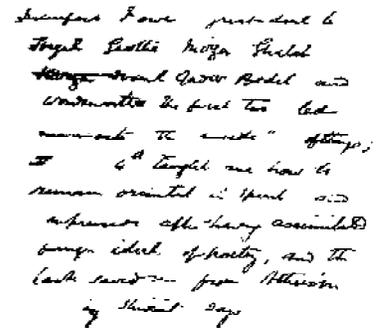
If you ask me what is the most important event in the history of Islam, I shall say without any hesitation: The Conquest of Persia. The battle of Nehawand gave the Arabs not only a beautiful country, but also an ancient civilization; or, more properly, but also an ancient civilization; or, more properly, a people who could make a new civilisation with the Semitic and Aryan material. Our Muslim civilisation is a product of the cross-fertilisation of the Semitic and the Aryan ideas. It is a child who inherits the softness and refinement of his Aryan mother, and the sterling character of his Semitic father. But for the conquest of Persia, the civilisation of Islam would have been one-sided. The conquest of Persia gave us what the conquest of Greece gave to the Romans.



As far as I can see Mirza Ghalib – the Persian poet – is probably the only permanent contribution that we – Indian Muslims – have made to the general Muslim literature. Indeed he is one of those poets whose imagination and intellect place them above the narrow limitations of creed and nationality. His recognition is yet to come.



A disinterested foreign rule is an impossibility. Yet the tutelage of nations is a necessity. The fee paid for this tuition is sometimes a nation's daily bread. The Mexicans had to undergo a severe training under the Spaniards before they could undertake a manage their own affairs.



The popularity of a poem does not depend on the amount of logical truth revealed in it. Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" is extremely popular; yet the poem is full of scientific inaccuracies and bad economic reasoning.



I confess I owe a great deal to Hegel, Goethe, Mirza Ghalib, Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil and Wordsworth. The first two led me into the "inside" of things; the third and fourth taught me how to remain oriental in spirit and expression after having assimilated foreign ideals of poetry, and the last saved me from atheism in my student days.



To explain the deepest truths of life in the form of homely parables requires extraordinary genius. Shakespeare, Maulana Rum (Jalaluddin) and Jesus Christ are probably the only illustrations of this rare type of genius.



In the development of universal civilisation the Jewish factor cannot be regarded as a negligible quantity. The Jews were probably the first framers

*The spendthrift is nature's own child. She does not like the accumulation of large masses of wealth in the hands of a few individuals. When the maker of a family succeeds in amassing a fortune, it often happens that in the third or even in the second generation a spendthrift appears and scatters the whole wealth. But for this agent of nature the circulation of wealth would be clogged. What is true of individuals is also true of nations. When a nation, by industry or otherwise, amasses and hoards up wealth – thus clogging the wheel of the world's industry, the working of which depends on the continual circulation of money – robber nations appear on the scene and set the imprisoned wealth at liberty. Warren Hastings, Clive and Mahmud are the representative types of such nations which are unconscious agents of nature in the advancement of world's industry. The robbery of Warren Hastings finds its true explanation in the history of the European currencies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.*

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of the principles of business morality summed up in the idea of righteousness.



The true sphere of Mazzini was literature, not politics. The gain of Italy is not much compared to the loss which the world has suffered by his devotion to politics.



Modern science ought not to mock at metaphysics, for it was a metaphysician – Leibnitz – who first gave science her working idea of matter. The “substance,” said he, is essentially “force” “resistance.” Borrowing this notion from metaphysics, science devotes herself to the study of the behavior of this force. And it is clear that she could not have discovered it for herself.



Ideas act and react on each other. The growing spirit of individualism in politics is not without its influence on contemporary scientific thought. Modern thought regards the universe a democracy of living atoms.



The progress of thought cannot be divorced from other phases of human activity. Our histories of philosophy tell us what various peoples have thought, but they give us no information as to the various causes – social and political – which have determined the character of human thought. To write a complete history of philosophy would certainly be a tremendous task. A mere theologian cannot fully reveal to his readers the rich content of Luther's Reform. We are apt to isolate great ideas from the general stream of man's intellectual activity.



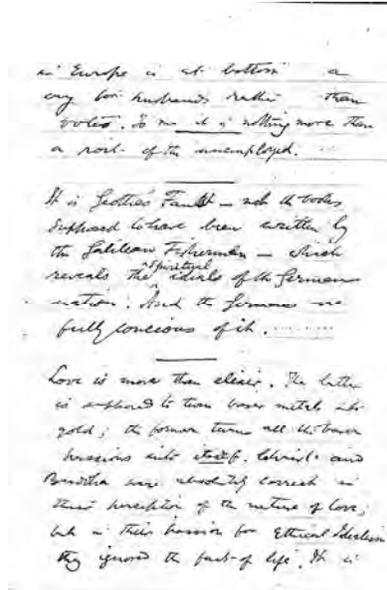
The institution of polygamy was never meant to be a universal institution. It was permitted to exist in order to meet certain difficulties which are not peculiar to Muslim society alone. The worst of permitted things, according to Islam, is “divorce”. It was partly to avoid “divorce” becoming a common social phenomenon that polygamy was tolerated. Of the two social evils – divorce and polygamy – (evils if universalised), the later is certainly the lesser. But the avoidance of divorce is perhaps not the only justification for this institution; it is partly a concession to the nature of the male who, according to this institution, is allowed to indulge in his inclination for variety – without escaping scot-free from the responsibility arising out of this indulgence. In England the individual, does in some cases, indulge in such inclinations, but the law leaves him absolutely free from the respon-

The spendthrift is nature's own child. She does not like the accumulation of large masses of wealth in the hands of a few individuals. When the maker of a family succeeds in amassing a fortune, it often happens that in the third or even in the second generation a spendthrift appears and scatters the whole wealth. But for this agent of nature the circulation of wealth would be clogged. What is true of individuals is also true of nations. When a nation, by industry or otherwise, amasses and hoards up wealth – thus clogging the wheel of the world's industry, the working of which depends on the continual circulation of money – robber nations appear on the scene and set the imprisoned wealth at liberty. Warren Hastings, Clive and Mahmud are the representative types of such nations which are unconscious agents of nature in the advancement of world's industry. The robbery of Warren Hastings finds its true explanation in the history of the European currencies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Right: Warren Hastings with wife and Indian maid; detail from 18th Century British painting.



sibilities which may arise from his sexual freedom. He is not responsible for the education of the children he produces. Nor can such children inherit their father. The consequences, in some cases, are awful. France has been compelled to recognise prostitution as a social institution which it is the ugly duty of the State to keep healthy. But perhaps the greatest criticism on monogamy is the existence of the superfluous women in several European countries where various forces of a social and political nature are tending to enhance the number of women who cannot secure husbands. They cannot become mothers, and consequently they are driven to seek interests, other than the bringing up of children. They are compelled to “conceive” ideas instead of children. Recently they have conceived the inspiring idea of “votes for women.” This is really an attempt on the part of the superfluous woman, or, if you like an attempt on her behalf, to create “interests” for her in the sphere of politics. If a society cannot allow their women to produce and bring up children they must give them something else to be occupied with. The Suffragette movement in Europe is at bottom a cry for husbands rather than



votes. To me it is nothing more than a riot of the unemployed.



It is Goethe's *Faust* – not the books supposed to have been written by the Galilean Fishermen – which reveals the spiritual ideals of the German nation. And the Germans are fully conscious of it.



Love is more than elixir. The latter is supposed to turn baser metals into gold; the former turns all the baser passions into itself. Christ and Buddha were absolutely correct in their perception of the nature of love; but in their passion for ethical idealism they ignored the facts of life. It is too much to expect to man to love his enemies. Some extraordinary individuals may have realised this maxim in their life; but as a principle of national morality the maxim clearly falls down. The results of the Russo-Japanese war would have been different if the Japanese had acted on the principles of morality associated with their religion.



Individuals and nations die; but their children. i.e. ideas, never die.



An English gentleman once told me that he hated the Jews, because they believed themselves to be the Chosen People of God – a belief which implies and perhaps justifies contempt of other nations. He did not remember that the phrase White Man's Burden concealed the same Jewish belief in a different garb.



Goethe picked up an ordinary legend and filled it with the whole experience of the nineteenth century – nay, the entire experience of the human race, this transformation of an ordi-

that the Jews

way often rejected



nary legend into a systematic expression of man's ultimate ideal is nothing short of Divine workmanship. It is as good as the creation of a beautiful universe out of the chaos of formless matter.

The Puritan theology of Milton cannot appeal to the imagination of our age. Very few people read him. Voltaire is quite true in saying that Milton's popularity will go on increasing because nobody reads him. There is, however, one thing in Milton. No poet has been more serious about his task than he. His style – a gigantic architecture consecrated to false deities – will always stand untouched by the palsied hand of time.



The soul of Oscar Wilde is more Persian than English.



The memory of man is generally bad except for the offences he receives from his fellow men.

God creates things man creates  
 the worth of things the wisdom of a people depends  
 on the measure of their  
 intellectual creation of a new  
 thing, which is the stamp  
 of divine manufacture; but  
 their meaning is through and  
 through human

What is the law of things  
 continual struggle. What mind  
 has in the end of education  
 evident preparation for the struggle  
 of people with intellectual  
 superiority reveal thereby the  
 nobleness  
 Power is more divine than  
 the God knows. He is  
 the like your father who is  
 a teacher



There are no amusements in Muslim countries – no theatres, no music halls, no concerts, and better so. The desire for amusement once satisfied soon becomes insatiable. The experience of European countries clearly proves this deplorable fact. The absence of amusement in Muslim countries indicates neither poverty nor austerity nor bluntness of the sense for enjoyment; it reveals that the people of these countries find ample amusement and enjoyment in the quiet circles of their homes. The European critic ought not to be so hasty in his denunciation of the Muslim home. I admit that indifference to outdoor amusement is not a necessary consequence of domestic happiness; nor does love of amusement necessarily mean domestic unhappiness.



The fate of the world has been principally decided by minorities. The history of Europe bears ample testimony to the truth of this proposition. It seems to me that there is a psychological reason why minorities should have been a powerful factor in the history of mankind. Charac-

ter is the invisible force which determines the destinies of nations, and an intense character is not possible in a majority. It is a force; the more it is distributed, the weaker it becomes.



There are some people who are sceptical and yet of a religious turn of mind. The French Orientalist Renan reveals the essential religious character of his mind in spite of his scepticism. We must be careful in forming our opinion about the character of men from their habits of thought.



“There is my uncle’s son walking along the edge of a precipice. Shall I go and, from behind, push him down the rocky valley to die without a dawn? Considering his treatment I am perfectly justified in doing so; but it is mean and unmanly to do such a thing.”

So says the Arab poet in the Hamasa. This passage may be taken as a typical specimen of Arab poetry. No poetry is so direct, so straightforward and so manly in spirit. The Arab is intensely attached to reality; brilliancy of colour does not attract him. The poet Mutanabbi, however, may be regarded as an exception; but he is an Arab poet by language only; in spirit he is thoroughly Persian.



Wonder, says Plato, is the mother of all science. Bedil (Mirza Abdul Qadir) looks at the emotion of wonder from a different standpoint. Says he:

نزاکت با است در آغوش بیانا خانه حیرت  
 مژه بریم مزین تا نقش کنی رنگب تماشا را

To Plato wonder is valuable because it leads to our questioning of nature; to Bedil it has a value of its own, irrespective of its intellectual consequences. It is impossible to express the idea more beautifully than Bedil.



In so far as the evolution of religious ideas is concerned there are principally three stages in the development of a community:

- 1) The Attitude of scepticism towards traditional religion – are volt against dogma.
- 2) But the need of religion as a social force of great value is at last felt and then begins the second stage – an attempt to reconcile religion with reason.
- 3) This attempt leads necessarily to difference of opinion which may have awful consequences for the very existence of a community. Difference of opinion, if not honest (and unfortunately it is generally not honest), must lead to utter disintegration.

The Mussalmans of India are now in the third stage; or, perhaps partly in the second, partly in the third. The period in the life of our community appears to me to be extremely critical; but I am glad that there are forces of a different nature at work which have a tendency to preserve the solidarity of the community – though their influence, I fear, will be only temporary.

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 her, Kantarable no have any  
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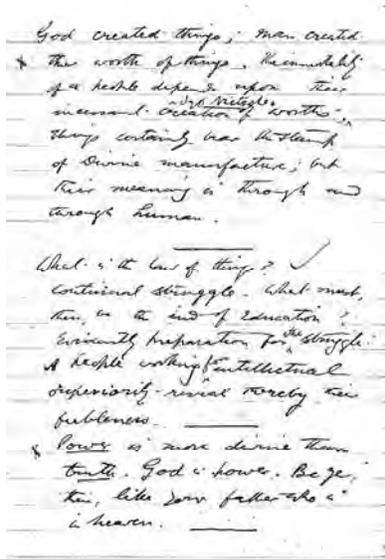
History is only an interpretation of human motives; and, since we are liable to misinterpret the motives of our contemporaries and even of our intimate friends and associates in daily life, it must be far more difficult rightly to interpret the motives of those lived centuries before us. The record of history, therefore, should be accepted with great caution.



The working power of an idea depends on the force of the personality in which it embodies itself. Muhammad, Buddha and Jesus Christ are the great embodiments of the ideas of equality—yet Islam is the only force in the world which is still working in the direction of equality.



God created things; man created the worth of things. The immortality of a people depends upon their incessant creation of “worths,” said Nietzsche. Things certainly bear the stamp of Divine manufacture; but their meaning is through and through human.



What is the law of things? Continual struggle. What must, then, be the end of education? Evidently, preparation for the struggle. A people working for intellectual superiority reveal thereby their feebleness.



Power is more divine than truth. God is power. Be ye, then, like your father who is in heaven.



The powerful man creates environment; the feeble have to adjust themselves to it.



Power toucheth falsehood & lo! it is transformed into truth.



Civilization is a thought of the powerful man.



Give up waiting for the Mehdi – the personification of power. Go and create him.



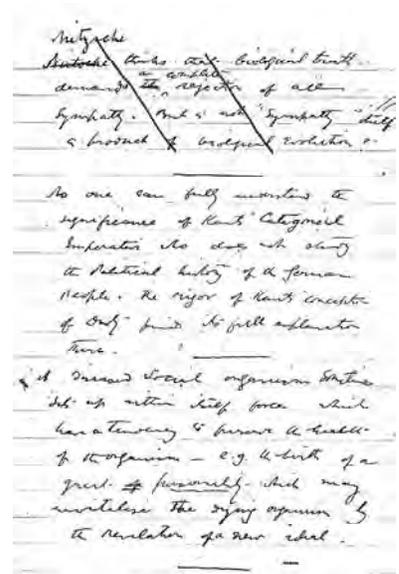
The idea of nationality is certainly a healthy factor in the growth of communities. But it is apt to be exaggerated, and when exaggerated it has a tendency to kill the broad human elements in art and literature.



No one can fully understand the significance of Kant’s categorical imperative who does not study the political history of the German people. The rigour of Kant’s conception of duty finds its full explanation there.



A diseased social organism sometimes sets up within itself forces which



have a tendency to preserve the health of the organism – e.g. the birth of a great personality which may revitalise the dying organism by the revelation of a new ideal.



Self-Control in individuals builds families; in communities, it builds empires.



Both Islam and Christianity had to deal with the same adversary, i.e. idolatry. The difference, however, is this – that Christianity made a compromise with her adversary; Islam destroyed it altogether.



The more you reflect on the history of the Muslim community, the more wonderful does it appear. From the day of its foundation up to the beginning of the sixteenth century – about a thousand years, this energetic race (I say race since Islam has functioned as a race-making force) was continually busy in the all-absorbing occupation of political expansion. Yet in this storm of continuous activity this wonderful people found sufficient time to unearth and preserve the treasures of ancient sciences, to make material additions to them, to build a

*Math. God and the Devil give  
 the mathematician only having  
 him to make use of them  
 - the way he thinks fit*

*"Think of the Devil he is sure  
 to appear. He is equal to  
 of God.  
 Theological science ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~the~~  
 heathen deities into the sleep of the  
 human mind."*

*God! I thank thee for my work  
 in this world of rocky dawns  
 flames and harvest and thick  
 forests where in the gloom of  
 nature beyond night rests  
 in eternal sleep*

literature of a unique character, and above all to develop a complete system of law – the most valuable legacy that Muslim lawyers have left us.

Given character and healthy imagination, it is possible to reconstruct this world of sin and misery into a veritable paradise.

Suffering is a gift from the gods in order to make men see the whole of life.

A mathematician cannot but a poet can enclose infinity in a line.

The world-spirit conceals the various phases of her inner life in symbols. The universe is nothing but a great symbol. But she never takes the trouble to interpret these symbols for us. It is the duty of the poet to interpret these symbols for us. It is the duty of the poet to interpret them and to reveal their meaning to humanity. It would, therefore, appear that the poet and the world-spirit are opposed to each other; since the former reveals what the latter conceals.



Matthew Arnold is a very precise poet. I like, however, an element of obscurity and vagueness in poetry; since the vague and the obscure appear profound to the emotions.



History is a sort of huge gramophone in which the voices of nations are preserved.



At least in one respect sin is better than piety. There is an imaginative element in the former which is lacking in the latter.



Sin has an educative value of its own. Virtuous people are very often stupid.



Life, like the arts of poetry and painting, is wholly expression. Contemplation without action is death.



It is determination, not brains, that succeeds in life.



If you wish to become a public leader you ought to know how to flirt with the Dame Public. Entertain her with platitudes and, if necessary, with lies. Recognise your limitations, estimate your capacities, and your success in life is assured.



There is something of the plant in the lazy mind; it cannot dance.



No religious system can ignore the moral value of suffering. The error of the builders of Christianity was that they based their religion on the fact of suffering alone, and ignored the

moral value of other factors. Yet such a religious system was a necessity to the European mind in order to supplement the beautiful but one-sided Hellenic ideal. The Greek dream of life was certainly the best, as Goethe says: but it was wanting in the colour-element of suffering which was supplied by Christianity.



If you have got a big library and know all the books therein, it only shows that you are a rich man, not necessarily that you are a thinker. Your big library only means that your purse is heavy enough to hire many people to think for you.



The question is not whether miracles did or did not happen. This is only a question of evidence which maybe interpreted in various ways. The real question is whether belief in miracles is useful to a community. I say it is; since such a belief intensifies the sense of the supernatural which holds together primitive societies as well as those societies (e.g Islam) whose nationality is ideal and not territorial. Looked at from the standpoint of social evolution, then, belief in miracles appears to be almost a necessity.



Democracy has a tendency to foster the spirit of legality. This is not in itself bad; but unfortunately it tends to displace the purely moral standpoint, and to make the illegal and the wrong identical in meaning.



The imperial ambitions of the various nations of Europe indicate that the westerners are tired of democracy. The reaction against democracy in England and France is a very significant phenomenon. But in order to grasp the meaning of this phenomenon the student of political sciences should not content himself merely with the

investigation and discovery of the purely historical causes which have brought it about; he must go deeper and search psychological causes of this reaction.



The ancients produced personalities; we produce moral readers.



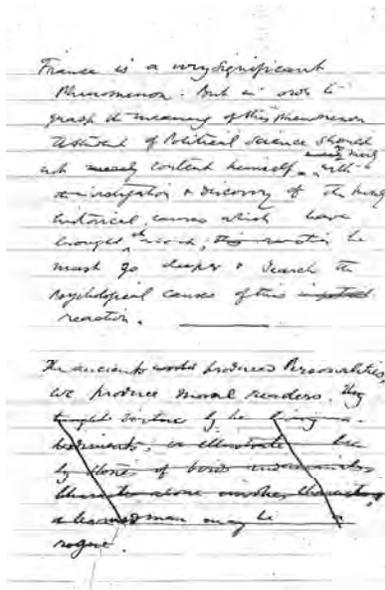
Our young prophets of social reform think that a few doses of education on western lines will revitalise the dead Musalman woman and make her tear her ancient shrouds. This is perhaps true. But I fear, finding herself naked, she will have once more to hide her body from the eyes of these young prophets.



Nations are born in the hearts of poets; they prosper and die in the hands of politicians.



A prophet is only a practical poet.



God! I thank Thee for my birth in this world of rosy dawns, flame-clad sunsets and thick forests, wherein the gloom of nature's bygone nights rests in eternal sleep!



The beauties of nature can be realised only through the eyes of a lover. Hence the importance of a true marriage.



Both God and the Devil give man opportunities only, leaving him to make use of them in the way he thinks fit.



Think of the Devil and he is sure to appear." This is equally true of God.



The psychologist swims, the poet dives.



In a certain class of Indian families – mostly creatures of the British rule – the tendency to collect and print testimonials from various officials has grown into a sort of instinct, which reveals itself sometimes very early in the offspring. I look upon it as a kind of moral infirmity developed by an unhealthy environment.



If you wish to study the anatomy of the human mind, you may go to Wind, Ward, James or Stout. But a real insight into human nature you can get from Goethe alone.



As a plant growing on the bank of a stream heareth not the sweet, silver mu-



Philosophy is a set of abstractions shivering in the cold night of human reason. The poet comes and warms them up into objectivity.



Nature was not quite decided what to make of Plato – poet or philosopher. The same indecision she appears to have felt in the case of Goethe.



A woman of superb beauty with a complete absence of self-consciousness is to me the most charming thing on God's earth.



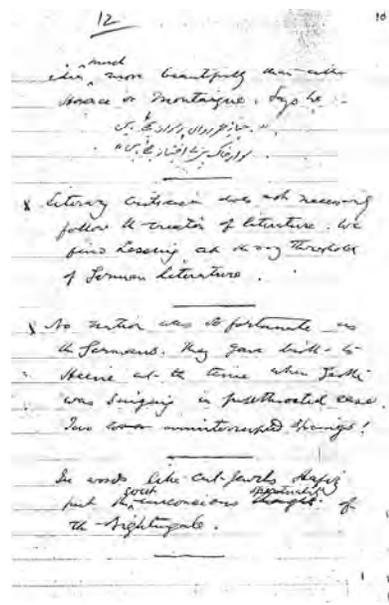
The attitude of toleration and even conformity – without belief in dogma – is probably the most incomprehensible thing to the vulgar mind. If such is your attitude, keep quiet and never try to defend your position.



All the wonderful booklore in your library is not worth one glorious sunset on the banks of the Ravi.



True political life begins not with the claiming of rights, but with the doing of duties.



sic which sustains it from beneath, so man growing on the brink of infinity listeneth not to the Divine undertone that make the life and harmony of his soul.

Come, dear friend! Thou hast known me only as an abstract thinker and dreamer of high ideals. See me in my home playing with the children and giving them rides turn by turn, as if I were a wooden horse! Ah! see me in the family circle lying at the feet of my grey-haired mother, the touch of whose rejuvenating hand bids the tide of time flow backward, and gives me once more the school-boy feeling in spite of all the Kants and Hegels in my head! Here Thou will know me as a human being.

Philosophy ages; poetry rejuvenates.

Both Shakespeare and Goethe re-think the Divine thought of creation. There is, however, one important difference between them. The realist Englishmen re-thinks the individual-the idealist German, the universal. His Faust is a seeming indi-

vidual only. In reality, he is humanity individualised.

I judge the worth of my days, months and years from the experiences which they bring to me; and sometimes I am surprised to find that a single moment is more valuable in an a whole year.

Every experience evokes something from the soul of man. Even the experience of sin will reveal some aspect of your soul of which you were not cognizant before. Experience, then is a double source of knowledge; it gives you an insight into what is without you, as well as an insight into what is within you.

Nothing is more commonplace than facts; yet mankind were blind to them until Bacon opened their eyes.

“So are we drawn, as wood is showed. By others sinews each may moved.” Montaigne remarks on the above lines of Horace: “We go not, but we are carried, as things that float, now gliding gently, now hulling violently, according as the water is either stormy or calm.” While reading this passage in Montaigne I was put in mind of a verse by our late and lamented poet “Azad” who has given an expression to this idea much more beautifully than either Horace or Montaigne. Says he:

بہانہ عمر رواں پر سوار بیٹھے ہیں  
سوار خاک ہیں بے اختیار بیٹھے ہیں

Literary criticism does not necessarily follow the creation of literature. We find Lessing at the very threshold of German literature.

No nation was so fortunate as the Germans. They gave birth to Heine at the time when Goethe was singing in full-throated ease. Two uninterrupted springs!

In words like cut jewels Hafiz put the sweet unconscious spirituality of the nightingale.

Love is a playful child. She makes our individuality and then quietly whispers in our ears – “Renounce it.”

I have often played hide and seek with wisdom; she conceals herself always behind the rock of determination.

If you wish to be heard in the noise of this world, let your soul be dominated by a single idea. It is the man with a single idea who creates political and social revolutions, establishes empires and gives law to the world.

Science, philosophy, religion all have limits. Art alone is boundless.

The result of all philosophical thought is that absolute knowledge is an impossibility. The poet Browning turns this impossibility to ethical use by a very ingenious argument. The uncertainty of human knowledge, teaches the poet, is the necessary condition of moral growth; since complete knowledge will destroys the liberty of human choice.

Flattery is only exaggerated good manners.

## NOSTALGIA



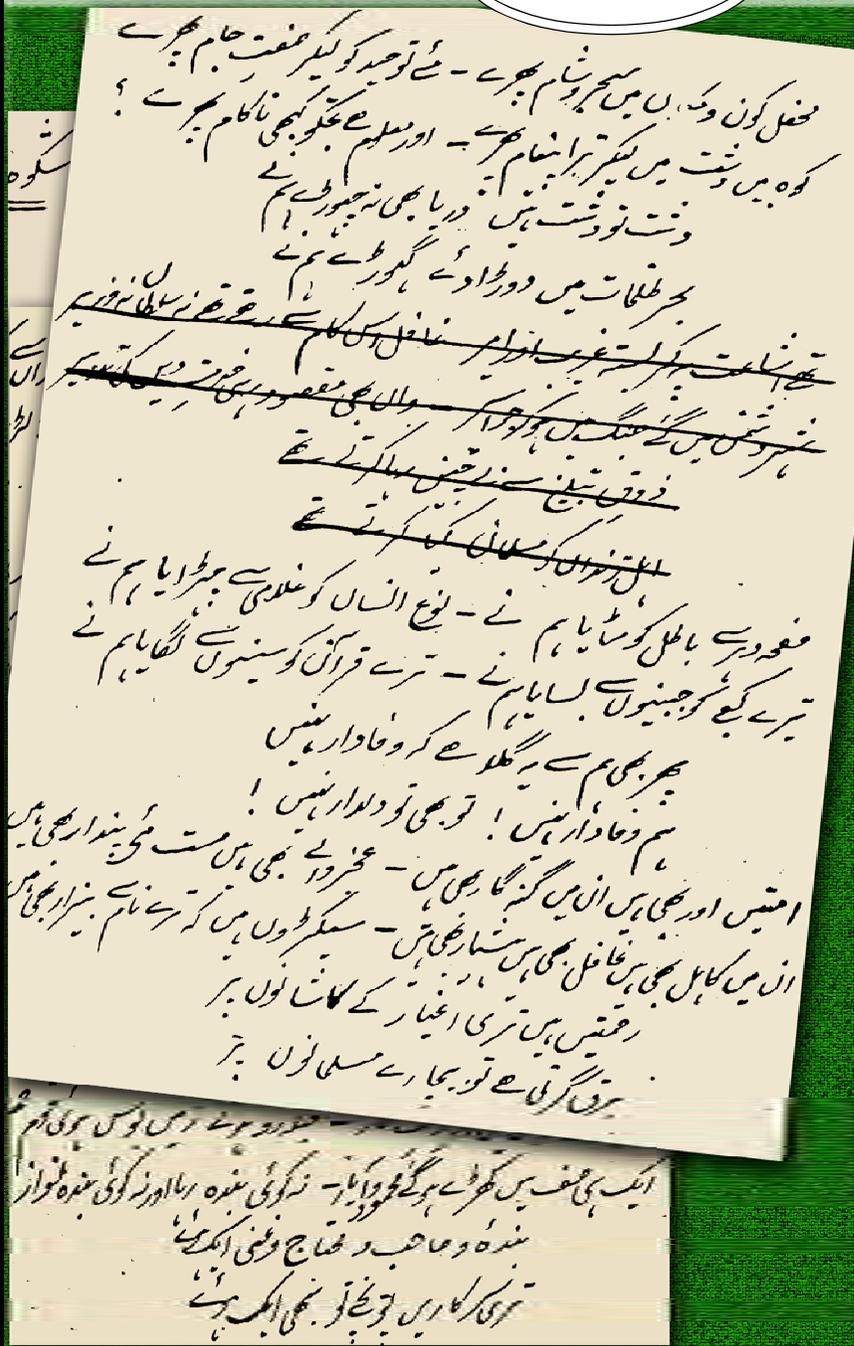
'The Complaint' was recited in April 1911 to the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam in the hostels of Islamia College, Lahore. This was Iqbal's first poetry recital since 1904 and contrary to his former practice he did not bring printed copies of the poem to be sold for fundraising, nor did he sing the poem.

The poem consisted of 31 stanzas of 6 lines each and was included in *Bang-i-Dara* with only minor revisions at four places. However, an initial draft shows some more revisions before the first recital.

The argument of the poem is an address to God, complaining of the political downfall of His most faithful servants, the Muslim Community. The past glory of Islam is mentioned in this context. The long discourse culminates in a prayer that the poem may wake up the people and set them on for attaining with the Grace of God what they had lost.

The poem has remained immensely popular ever since its first recital. It was published in several magazines at that time, and has always been in print as a separate booklet (unofficially printed) along with its second part 'The Answer' (which came more than a year later).

The accusations that the poem was disrespectful were only minor and negligible – Iqbal did not earn a *fatwa* of renunciation due to this poem (as is sometimes believed) although he faced such perils fourteen years later due to other verses.



Above: Pages from an early draft of the poem in Iqbal's own hand (his poems up to 1923 were collected in three separate notebooks, and this facsimile comes from the second one, which contains the poems belonging roughly from 1911 to 1915).

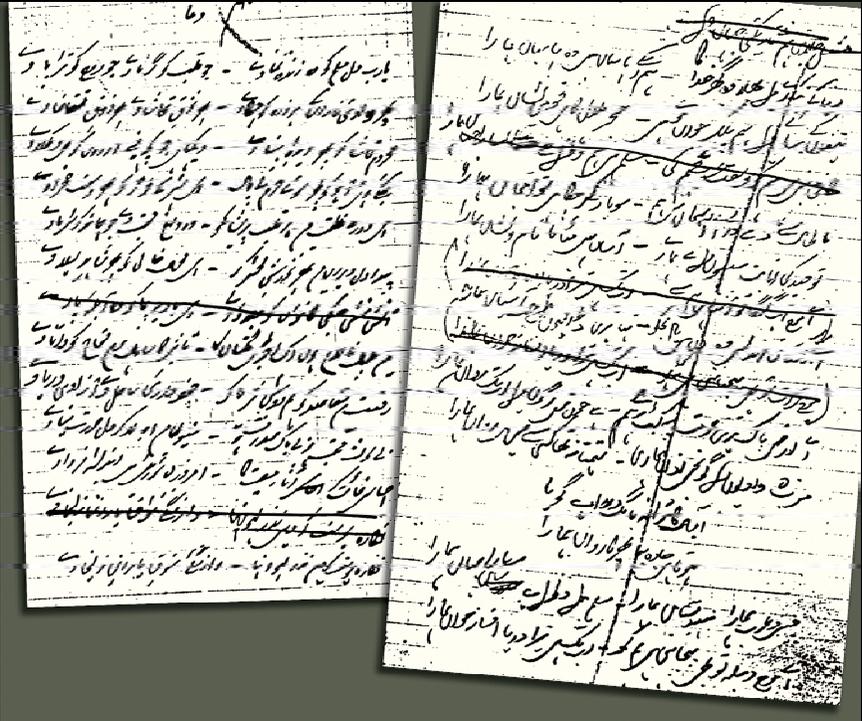
Top right: Uqab Bin Nafe' runs to meet the Atlantic Ocean in an outburst of missionary zeal – the scene is immortalized for the Urdu speaking world by the famous lines in 'The Complaint.'

1911 was the year of Iqbal's comeback as a public poet (for the last seven years he had published his poems in literary journals but had refrained from recitals and shown a general lack of enthusiasm for poetry).

Apart from 'The Complaint,' the year 1911 also saw two other poems becoming a rage: 'National Anthem' (not to be confused with the current national anthem of Pakistan) and 'Prayer.' Muhammad Ali Jauhar turned the first into a gramophone record and ran quarter-page advertisements in his newspaper *Comrade*.

Right: Initial drafts of 'National Anthem' (*Tarana-i-Milli*) and 'Prayer.'

Below: Shibli Nomani with his Turk guests in the days of the Balkan Crisis. He had lost his right foot by then and was using a wooden replica.



Shibli Nomani (1857-1914) is best remembered for such biographies as *Al-Farooq* (1899) and the unfinished biography of the Prophet, *Seeratun Nabi*. He was also a poet and a political activist while he was far ahead of his times as a religious thinker – in 1905 he highlighted those commen-

taries of the Quran by classical authors which had interpreted certain passages of the Holy Book to establish that women too had been prophets.

Shibli's impact on Iqbal was immense and deep even if it might not have been too obvious in their own times. Shibli's historical works provided the fabric of historical background in Iqbal's poetry (although the analysis was his own) while Shibli's ideas about *ijtehad* and his unfinished dream of reconstructing a new metaphysics for religious thought in Islam found its culmination in Iqbal's lectures.

Shibli was responsible for revising the language of Iqbal's only prose publication in Urdu, *Ilmul Iqtisad* (1904), he mentioned in the footnotes of *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, and a crucial passage from Shah Waliullah possibly found way in Iqbal's *Reconstruction* lectures through Shibli's *Ilmul Kalam*. He was also the chief guest for a ceremony at the annual session of Muhammadan Educational Conference in

December 1911 at Delhi where Iqbal was officially presented garlands on behalf of the Muslim Community in India.

As a political activist Shibli was the pioneer of agitational politics among the Muslims of India, beginning from the protest against the British Government on the annulment of the partition of Bengal at the end of 1911. In that he was perhaps hasty and partially guided by feelings of personal rivalry against the mainstream leaders of the Aligarh Movement, such as Nawab Mohsinul Mulk. Such poems of Iqbal as 'Patriotism,' which contain bitter criticism of territorial nationalism among the Muslim politicians could have been directed against the policies of Shibli Nomani and his ardent disciples such as Muhammad Ali (Jauhar) and Abul Kalam Azad.

Other notable pupils of Shibli included the journalist Zafar Ali Khan and the religious scholar Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, both of whom were Iqbal's friends.



(7)

تو ز نادری قسم بگو ای قندار - در سخن علی غلامان علی

دل کلفت صفا، پاره نقره ای  
 کسوت قیاسی صورتی تو در گل  
 جو کدو اندر آتش تو ای  
 اندر زنده ای ای جان بزم

کون گزین را هیچ تعدادی تو - در دوزخ پندیده سرگزشت چون در گلزار  
 سینه ترا بر سرک پیروزان - و نظام در بر سینه امی، سینه گلزار  
 نغمه تو در این دوزخ است و نغمه - تو از آن قوتی تا زنده سال گلزار  
 ای کسوت بیاد تو که در آن کسوت - ای کسوت بیاد تو که در آن کسوت  
 تو زنده ای ای جان بزم

(10)

راز از آن تو ای جان بزم  
 در آن تو ای جان بزم  
 در آن تو ای جان بزم

آنجا که کوه کوه است  
 در نظر داشت چه صفت بارانها  
 استوار بودم زخم آفرین باد  
 زخم خوردهم بخت تو ای بارانها  
 ز میخ زنده سالان خیزد که خوار  
 زین کوه تو ای جان بزم

تو ز نادری قسم بگو ای قندار  
 دل کلفت صفا، پاره نقره ای  
 کسوت قیاسی صورتی تو در گل  
 جو کدو اندر آتش تو ای  
 اندر زنده ای ای جان بزم

کون گزین را هیچ تعدادی تو  
 سینه ترا بر سرک پیروزان  
 نغمه تو در این دوزخ است و نغمه  
 ای کسوت بیاد تو که در آن کسوت  
 تو زنده ای ای جان بزم

'The Candle and the Poet' was recited at the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam in February 1912. Iqbal described it as his own reply to 'The Complaint' recited the last year and called upon the audience, especially those familiar with English literature, to pay attention to his craft as well as his message – a rare appeal to come from him.

The first poem consists of 11 stanzas (including the opening stanza in Persian). It starts with the poet wondering to the candle at his home why no moth comes to him though he also burns like a candle. The candle answers him to say that it burns out of an inner calling while the poet burns pretentiously; the candle burns silently till her single sigh, which announces her death, whereas the poet churns out a poem with every breath. The rest of the poem presents an analysis of social and national problems through the candle's speech and ends on a note of optimism: the dawn is not too far.

Above: A page from an initial draft of 'The Candle and the Poet' from Iqbal's second notebook of poetry.

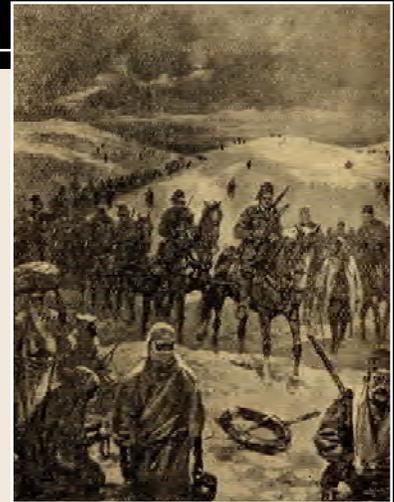
Italy invaded the Ottoman strongholds in North Africa in 1911, beginning with Tripoli on October 20. Ben Ghazi was finished quickly and on November 5, the conquerors announced the annexation of Libya, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. However, that was only the end of the beginning.

The Turkish garrison had retreated into the desert and there it enlisted the support of Arab villagers – including men, women and even children – to put up resistance against the Italians. The war did

not finish until a year later when the Bulgarian invasion of Balkan, closer to the Turkish capital, forced the Ottomans to give up the African colonies in order to concentrate on defending their own home.

The resistance movement in Tripoli was widely supported by the Muslims throughout the world, including India, where newspapers like *Al-Hilal* poured out supportive articles, pictures and news items.

*Right: Women volunteers leaving for the front – a picture from Al-Hilal.*



Fatima Binte Abdullah was an eleven-year-old Arab girl who got killed while serving water to the wounded Turk soldiers in the battlefield. Her picture (below) was printed in *Al-Hilal* on November 13, 1912, along with a detailed covering article.

Iqbal was deeply moved and wrote a poem that has remained very popular, especially among students.

In the poem ‘Fatima Binte Abdullah’, the Arab girl turns into a symbol of the future regeneration of the Muslim World – there is hope if the young are spirited like her.

*Below: Picture of Fatima Binte Abdullah from Al Hilal, Calcutta, November 13, 1912.*



On October 6, 1911, Iqbal recited a brief poem of 24 lines to maximum effect at Badshahi Mosque, Lahore, where people had gathered to raise funds for supporting the Ottomans in Tripoli. A photograph taken on this occasion is the only surviving picture of Iqbal reciting poetry.

The poem, ‘The Arabian Nightingale’s Offering Before the Holy Prophet’ (included in *Bang-i-Dara* with shortened title) tells of the poet’s imaginary ascension to heavens where angels take him to the presence of the Holy Prophet of Islam. It was hard to collect a suitable gift from the world since everything here is polluted with impurity and infidelity but the poet was able to offer one flask of glass (symbolically it could be interpreted as a tear also), which was filled with something that was matchless even in the Paradise. “The honor of your following is reflected in its contents,” the poet says to the Prophet. “It contains

the blood of the martyrs of Tripoli.”

*Above: Iqbal reciting his poem in the Mughal (‘Badshahi’) Mosque at Lahore. October 6, 1911.*

*Below: A zoom on Iqbal from the same picture.*

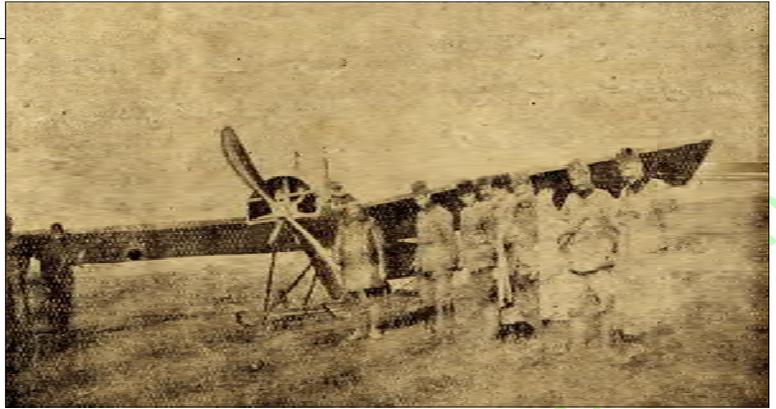


On a personal level the poem must have provided a much-needed catharsis to him because after writing it he became willing to be seen as a poet once again. Then, soon afterwards, he embarked on the fulfillment of his primordial dream: a formula for global prosperity.



The first impediment in the way of human happiness was the fragmentation of humanity into interest-driven groups. The grouping took place, according to Iqbal, not on the basis of class-conflict as suggested by Marx, but on the basis of reduced identities. In the past these false identities were the various idols, which were fortunately not revered anymore (he didn't count the Hindu deities among idols but interpreted them as somewhat corrupted notions of angels). However, the modern times presented the humanity with new impediments instead of the old ones, and "chief among these fresh idols is 'country,'" he unfurled his banner in the poem 'Patriotism – 'or country regarded as a political ideal'. And hence he decided that it was his aim "to discover a universal social reconstruction."

Religious belief could serve as an antidote against parochial grouping of humanity by uniting the human with the Divine and creating a universal bonding through the unity of the Creator. All religions lead to the same destination but it seemed to Iqbal that Islam was a suitable starting point in the modern age, since, unlike Hinduism and Judaism, it was not a racial belief



Above: An aeroplane used by the Ottomans for bombarding the enemy during the Balkan War, 1912. The caption with this picture in Al-Hilal stated that the bomber completed several successful sorties from the Chatalja Fort.

Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia formed an alliance in 1912 to liberate the European territories from the Ottomans. The war started in October and the Turkish capital Constantinople was at once threatened as the Ottoman armies faced unremitting defeat.

The Muslims across the world saw the war as an invasion against Islam. The Caliph at Turkey saw it also as an attack against imperialism – he counted his empire among the European imperialists – and asked the other great powers to intervene before it was too late. The fall of Constantinople could launch a World War and disintegrate Europe, it was feared.

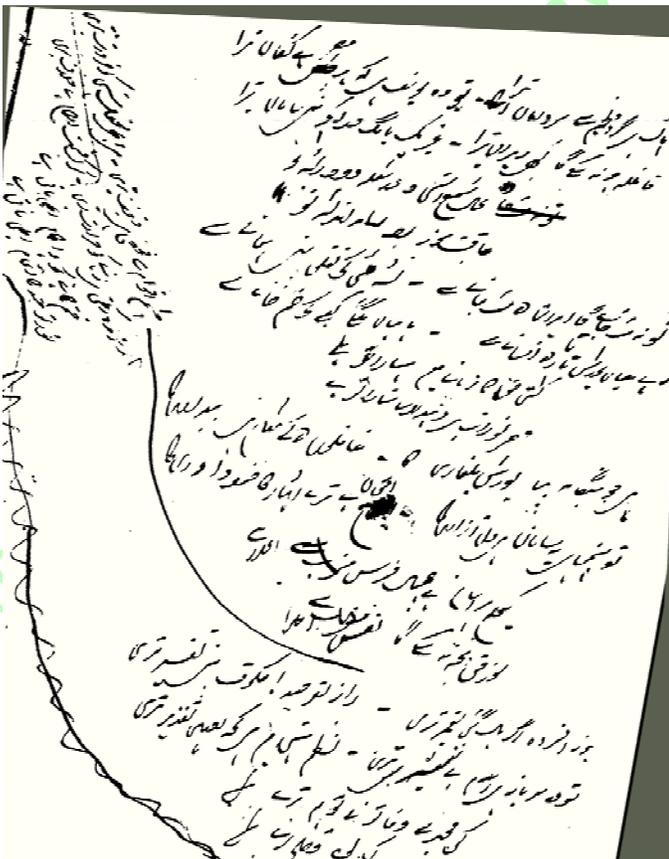
The first casualty was Libya, from where the Turk soldiers had to be pulled back for defending their homes. A peace treaty was signed within a month – Albania became independent and the Ottoman Empire lost significant parts of its Greek and Serbian territories.

In India, the Urdu newspaper *Zamindar* came of age through efficient reporting of the Balkan Crisis in India. Iqbal recited 'The Answer,' a long rejoinder to 'The Complaint' on November 30, 1912 in a fundraising event called by Zafar Ali Khan, the editor of *Zamindar*.

Left: A page from an initial draft of 'The Answer' in Iqbal's hand.

and unlike Buddhism and Christianity it didn't turn its back on the material world. The idea that Islam offered a model for a universal citizenship had settled in his mind while he was in Europe where he ecstatically sang in a *ghazal*: "That Arabian architect gave it a unique construction: the fortress that is our religion is not founded in the unity of the homeland."

Some initial conclusions drawn out of this otherwise sound principle were





bizarre. In his 1909 lecture he declared that since the political ideal of Islam was democracy and the British Empire was democratizing the world therefore the British Empire was a “Muhammadan Empire”! Thankfully, he never repeated this statement but apart from the ‘psycho-logical’ relief that he may have found in re-interpreting the British rule he might also have been wondering if the Muslims were the only followers of the path laid open by Islam: in the poem ‘The Answer’ (1912) the Divine Justice bestows the rewards of the Muslims upon heathens who have become Muslims in practice even if not in name. Likewise, towards the end of his life he stated in a conversation that all truth is an interpretation of the Quran even if it comes from a non-believer, or from Lenin. Islam, in the mind of Iqbal, was not a monopoly whereby some self-righteous persons should sit in judgement upon the spirituality of the others. “God is the birthright of every human being,” he said in another writing.

Somewhere along the way he outgrew his late anxieties over the plight of the Muslim World. “You will not perish by the fall of Iran,” God informed the Muslim complainant in ‘The Answer’ (1912). “The effect of the wine doesn’t depend on the cup in which it is served.”

This was the transformation famously mistaken as his shift from “nationalism” to “Islamism.” His concern remained the humanity, always. His interest in Islam was also heavily focused on doing something for the human race through the undiscovered wisdom of this religion. “The nations of the world remain unaware of your reality,” God tells the Muslims in ‘The Answer’. “The world still needs you as you are the warmth that keeps it alive and your mantle is the ascendant of the Possibility’s destiny. It is not the time to rest and relax, for work still remains; it still remains to culminate the light of Unity.” Ironically, it was just the time when the Muslim masses in India had been roused for the first time by Shibli and his disciples to join hands with the Congressional patriots to construct a regional identity. Iqbal didn’t openly criticize them; such criticism would have defeated its purpose and would have been mistaken as a service to the policies of the colonial rulers. However, the fact that he wrote his most bitter criticism of regional patriotism in those same days is a sufficient indication of his views.

1913 was the year when Iqbal settled down. His domestic life acquired a blissful character after separation from the unfortunate first wife and consummation of two more marriages (although he would have been content with only one, if the strange bent of circumstances had not forced him to take two – he wrote in a private letter). It was also the year when he was offered a generous stipend by an extremely cultured patron—Maharajah Kishan Prashad, the Prime Minister of Hyderabad (Deccan). The offer, which would have been accepted by any poet of the old school as a natural order of things and bought him endless time to spend for creating masterpieces, was respectfully but firmly declined by Iqbal. He was a poet of the new order—perhaps belonging to an age that was yet to be born.

This decision was taken by him around the same time when he was beginning to write down a long Persian poem about the most important issue in the human life: *The Secrets of the Self*.



Facing page and left: Sirdar Begum (c.1892-1935), the third wife of Iqbal and the mother of Javid (b.1924) and Munira (b.1930)

Sirdar Begum was an orphaned Kashmiri girl

living in Lahore when Iqbal married her in the winter of 1910. Only *nikah* was performed on this occasion while the *rukhsati* was to be held later but got indefinitely postponed when the bridegroom received hoax letters casting doubts about the bride’s character. It was only in the summer of 1913 (after Iqbal had married another woman, Mukhtar, and completely given up the idea of Sirdar) that it was learnt that the letters did not contain any truth and were written by someone who wanted Sirdar for his own son.

Sirdar herself wrote to Iqbal, saying that she would never remarry and hold him responsible for her grief – writing such a letter was a bold step by the standards of those times and Iqbal, with his second wife’s permission, brought her to his home.

She remained his favorite wife. “It is a strange tale of love. I wish I had known the truth before taking the second wife,” he wrote to a friend. Other friends felt a change in his life style: he would now spend nearly all his time at home. Apparently this new routine precipitated the completion of *Asrar-i-Khudi*, his first long Persian poem and exegesis of his philosophy.

Sirdar died of prolonged illness in May 1935, merely a few days after shifting to their own house Javid Manzil, which was purchased and built partially from her savings and jewelery.

Iqbal never forgot her – he felt that her soul was in contact with him even after her death. “She has often told me that she has been judged and has passed the purgatory,” he used to say.

## FAMILY

Mukhtar Begum (d.1924) was Iqbal's second wife and died in her first childbirth in 1924. She left no offspring.

Iqbal's marriage to Mukhtar was almost a case of mistaken identity, we are told by his friend Mirza Jalaluddin. Iqbal and his family were under the impression that they had proposed the daughter of a well-to-do person in Ludhiana (Punjab), but it was only learnt after the marriage that Mukhtar was the orphaned niece of the gentleman. However, it was hardly an issue and Iqbal was quite happy with her.

Mukhtar had an amiable nature and fond of keeping pets, especially a cat.

Mukhtar and Sirdar became pregnant around the same time and it is reported that they affectionately decided to exchange their children.

Iqbal accompanied Mukhtar to her parental home for the childbirth and was much moved by her death. "When I asked her minutes before her death how she was doing she just replied, 'I am fine,' although she was about to die and knew it," he wrote to his elder brother Ata Muhammad. "To bring forth an ordinary human being into this world where he would not even live more than fifty or sixty years the nature gives so much pain to a weak woman!"

*Right: Picture of Mukhtar Begum from the Iqbal Museum (Javid Manzil), Lahore*



CHAPTER  
THREE



**ILLUMINATION**

1914  
to 1922



Copies of this portrait are quite well-known but the original (above) is now damaged. Not dated.

Picture used on p. 79 was painted by Ajab Khan from this photograph.

Thirteenth Century scholar Rumi was lecturing his pupils when he was interrupted by a wandering dervish Shams Tabriz, who pointed at the books and asked what were they. He was met with sarcasm by the irritated scholar, "Something you would not comprehend." Presently, Tabriz threw the books into a nearby pond and when Rumi was devastated on their loss he took them out, dry and unharmed – or, according to another variation on this parable the dervish burnt the books and later restored them from the ashes. In either case, when Rumi asked him in disbelief what was it he had done, the dervish returned him his own words, "Something you would not comprehend!" Rumi fainted and found himself a changed man when he recovered several days later.

This historically unreliable anecdote contains a candid metaphorical approximation of what happened when Rumi met Tabriz who was to become his master. The passage from knowing to witnessing is indeed nothing less than a miracle and requires a master to perform it for the disciple. The master who came to Iqbal's aid was, remarkably, none other than Rumi himself. For it is said that Iqbal dreamed that the master of Rum was asking him to write a *mathnavi*. "You command us to negate the self whereas it appears to me that the self ought to be strengthened," Iqbal protested in this dream. "The meaning of what I say is not different from what you understand," said the cryptic master of Rum before Iqbal woke up to find himself inspired for writing his own *mathnavi*.

He intended three volumes. The first would define the source of all good in the practical world: the human ego, or the self, receiving its illumination from the Absolute Reality and in turn illuminating all areas of human existence. The second part would establish the relation between the individual ego and the society, and how an ideal nation could emerge from the collective will of enlightened individuals. The third and the final volume would predict the possible destinies of such a nation and what it could achieve in terms of human history.

The human possibilities, Iqbal thought, were as yet unexplored and he truly believed that his message was derived from those meanings of the Quran that were awaiting the modern times to be fully realized. Little did he imagine that he would soon be accused of misinterpreting the divine book and muddling the stream of religious thought with greed and egotism.

The perception of being alone, and unique, made it easy for Iqbal to see himself as a poet from another time and space: a poet of tomorrow. It liberated him from his world so that he could open himself to what he would frequently describe, in various ways, as the source life itself. What he later said of some contemporaries was equally true of himself too: "Such men are liable to make mistakes. But the history of nations shows that even their mistakes have sometimes borne good fruit. In them it is not logic but life itself that struggles restless to solve its own problems." It is this 'connectedness' (in the New Age sense) that makes Iqbal sound so contemporary in the 21st Century.

"Life is but a manifestation of the selves," he opened the first chapter of his book after the prelude, "Everything you see is counted among the secrets of the self." The self (or the ego) is the creator of its own opposites, it manifests itself through power, strife, love, life and death – hence in one sweep Iqbal flies through anonymous allusions to Hegel's philosophy and Nietzsche's will to power. However, the self is none of these and more – the

references to these attributes are merely poetic references to figures of speech comprehensible to the readers. The point Iqbal really wants to make is that whatever we know about life and the universe, whether we know it through science, religion or metaphysics, eventually boils down to one basic fact: by strengthening the ego you live; through its renunciation you perish. True and lasting expansion does not come from invading the space of others; it comes from growing stronger in yourself. The principle of growth is inward-out, not out-and-out. The seed contains the stem in it, and likewise by nurturing the fountainhead within and not by envying the power of others a human being grows stronger.

Thinkers who aspire to present a coherent picture of the world often take off by focussing on one issue as a starting point and the central problem to Iqbal, in life as well as thought, remained the nature of love. Here, he tried to make sense of the ultimate madness, i.e. love. If there were no “others” in the world and no distances, no pangs of unrequited feelings (and the spurs), then there would have been no desire; and desire is to the ego what fuel is to an engine and water to all living things. Desire is the lifeblood of the ego. Rumi started his *mathnavi* by saying that the music of the flute was nothing but the reed’s cry in pain over separation from its source. Iqbal ventured to show, rather boldly, the other side of the coin: the flute became what it was by separation from its source. True, the separation is virtual rather than real (and Rumi had already pointed out that the music is coming from the breath of the player and hence there is no distance between the two ends of the flute). Iqbal accepted Rumi’s perception of the Divine origin but went on to state that separation had its own virtues: in a perfect union things would turn to nothings.

The anatomy of desire is usually seen as comprising of love and begging. Iqbal was probably right in claiming that he was unravelling the secrets no one else dared reveal in the East before him: he was the first Eastern thinker to point out that love and begging were the opposites of each other and you could only choose one of these two. Love, in its essence, is the tool through which the ego elevates itself above the impediments of the physical world; love could teach rebellion to the humblest creatures. “The hardest rocks are shivered by Love’s glance,” said Iqbal. “Love of God at last becomes wholly God.” Asking, however, dissociated the ego from its Divine source of illumination.

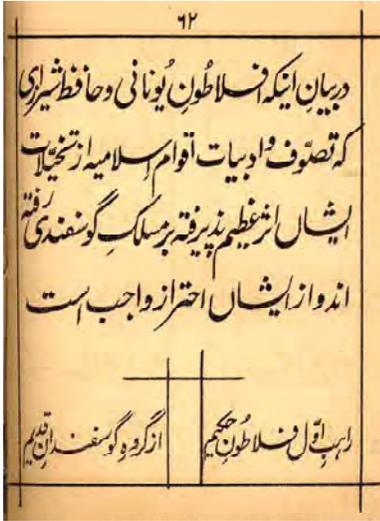
Naturally enough he deplored much of the Eastern literature for following conventions of self-negation and perpetuating a distorted image of love that equated desire with beggary (it was Iqbal’s criticism of Hafiz in the first edition of *Asrar-i-Khudi* that raised the storm of protest in 1915). Iqbal also criticized Plato, as should be expected from someone whose position on the reality of the physical world and the significance of ‘purpose’ in defining things was in a direct line of inheritance from the man who said that A is A (Iqbal’s dislike for being labelled would prevent him from wanting to be seen even as an Aristotelean; in his notebook he jotted down difference with the Greek philosopher over a non-issue after admitting agreement on the basics).

In his characteristic spirit of ruthless objectivity Iqbal glorified Time, which to him was neither a sequence of day and night, nor just another dimension of space, but was nothing less than a Divine manifestation. “Do not villify



Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-73), best known for his multi-volume *Mathnavi* (started c.1260) was born to a renowned jurisprudent and mystic, whom he succeeded at the age of twenty-four. He received further guidance from Burhanuddin Tirmizi, but it was a chance encounter with the enigmatic Shams Tabrizi at the age of thirty-seven that “exteriorized his contemplative states in the form of poetry and set the ocean of his being into a motion which resulted in the vast waves that transformed the history of Persian literature,” (as a modern biographer aptly comments).

Iqbal revered Rumi in invariably every book written after 1913 – Rumi’s spirit appears before him even to lead him through the celestial journey in his greatest masterpiece *Javidnama* (1932). However, just as the influence of Shams Tabrizi on Rumi should not be overrated, so the influence of Rumi on Iqbal needs to be defined carefully. Rumi was a role model and Iqbal even attempted to reinterpret the master for the modern world (his prediction that the modern world stands in need of Rumi’s message, which is most suited for its emotional and spiritual requirements seems to be coming true at least in the North America today). Yet, Iqbal’s poetry is not a series of footnotes on Rumi; the points of departure include insistence on separation rather than union and even the doctrine of the self (*khudi*) is a rather bold reinterpretation of the master, which few would have dared to attempt.



Above: Opening page of the chapter from the first edition of *Asrar-i-Khudi* denouncing Plato and Hafiz of Shiraz, while exonerating Urfi of Shiraz. The chapter was the major reason of outrage against the book and was expunged from subsequent editions.

The diction of Iqbal's Persian *ghazal* borrowed from two poets of Shiraz (Iran) more than from anyone else: Hafiz (1326-91) and Urfi (c.1555-91). In terms of literary ideals both were diametrically opposed to each other, as Iqbal proposed in the first edition of *Asrar-i-Khudi*.

Hafiz is known as a mystic and aesthete who prefers inner peace over struggle. Iqbal denounced him as an escapist although he never ceased to take inspiration from the literary quality of his poems.

Urfi was a short-lived romantic who came to India, reportedly besotted by the young Mughal prince Salim (later Emperor Jehangir) and was perhaps the only classical poet to celebrate pride and ceaseless struggle. According to Shibli Nomani, he was also the only Persian poet who managed to translate complex philosophical ideas into natural emotion and put it into seamless couplets. In short, he was an Iqbal born in the Mughal period.

In addition to praising Urfi in the first edition of *Asrar-i-Khudi*, Iqbal also offered him glowing tribute in an Urdu poem 'Urfi' written around the same time and now included in *Bang-i-Dara*. The poem praises the fruits of his imagination as superior to the glass-houses of Avicenna and Al Farabi.

Time, for God says 'I am Time,'" the Prophet had told his followers. With this remarkable *hadith*, Iqbal also used a quotation from Imam Shafi'i by way of further explanation: "Time is a sword." One who reads the signs of the Time instead of finding faults with it is the one who masters all difficulties. Escape from Time is lethal – and here we may add that nostalgia for the past and unrealistic wishes for the future are two chief examples. The ego needs to discover a symbiotic relationship with the sublime energy that is Time.

Moving from the general to the specific, Iqbal points out the love his Muslim readers carry for the Prophet and shows them that the education of the Self has three stages: (a) obedience; (b) self-control; and (c) the divine vicegerency. The purpose of the Muslim's life was to exalt the Word of God. *Jihad*, if it be prompted by land-hunger, was unlawful in the religion of Islam.

Iqbal had to move on from the exaltation of the individual ego to a glorification of the society, since he was coming from a philosophical position where the individual was an organic component of the larger social organism. The society was an ego too, he propounded in *Rumooz-i-Bekhudi*, the second part of his *mathnavi*. The individual finds an everlasting strength by submerging his or her ego into that of the nation. The Muslim nation was independent of time and space and its eternity was promised (unlike the individual, whose immortality was only conditional). The two fundamental principles of this nation were monotheism (which cured fear and despair, the two spiritual diseases fatal to the ego), and prophet-hood (which aimed at providing liberty, equality and fraternity to the human race). The nationality of Islam, fortunately, was based on the principle of equality and freedom (in the proof of which Shibli had left behind enough anecdotes from history before dying in November 1914, while Iqbal was still working on the first part of the *mathnavi*).

What is more significant is that Iqbal provided an alternate position on the relationship between the individual and the society, rooted in love and like-mindedness rather than whim or racist principles.

The idea of the individual ego merging into the larger ego of the community was a movement of growth: one cannot achieve what many can achieve together, as we are now realizing through such concepts as synergy and teamwork in management sciences. What could not be achieved in the world if the entire human race could turn into a like-minded creative whole?



Back in 1910 he had made a mental note on shifting the focus of the Eastern metaphysics from the existence of God to the existence of the human being. The anatomy of the human ego presented in *Asrar-i-Khudi* was glowing with the light of the Divine Existence. "I have conceived the Ultimate Reality as an Ego," he later wrote. "From the Ultimate Ego only egos proceed." Individuality implies finitude, and although he did not raise the issue in *Asrar-i-Khudi*, he addressed it boldly many years later in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. "The Ultimate Ego is... neither infinite in the sense of spatial infinity nor finite in the sense of the space-bound human ego whose body closes him off in reference to other egos. The infinity of the Ultimate Ego



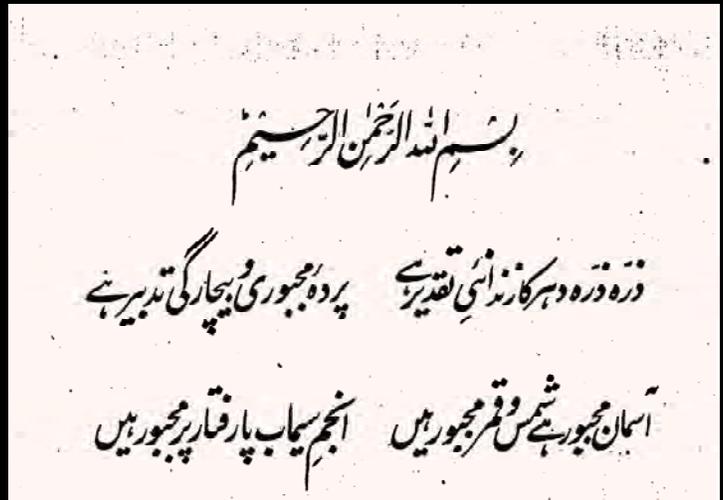
Above: Imam Bibi's grave in Sialkot.

Right: Detail from a page of the copy sent by Iqbal to his father Shiekh Nur Muhammad. It was calligraphed by some professional scribe.

Iqbal grieved like a little child upon the death of his mother Imam Bibi (November 9, 1914). "My interest in the worldly matters and my urge to be successful in life was due only to her," he wrote to a friend. "Now I am just awaiting my death..." Even if that was an overstatement it wasn't unfounded, for 'In the Memory of My Late Mother' stands out among his poems for its mellow tone, gentle rhythm and touching statements of personal grief – all very unlike Iqbal.

The argument of the poem moves from recollections of maternal love, the universality of death and the even greater abundance of the life instinct in the world. It follows that existence, and not annihilation, is nature's favorite and hence there must be hope for life after death. The poem ends with a brief prayer that has become perhaps the most common epithet on tombstones after the Quranic inscriptions in the Urdu-speaking world: "Aasman teri lebed per shabnam afshani karay..." ("May the sky shed dewdrops on thy grave; may this abode be guarded by ever-growing blossoms").

The poem was also sent to his father Shiekh Nur Muhammad in a neat copy prepared by a professional scribe along with a summary in Iqbal's own hand (now preserved in the Iqbal Museum).



## SYNOPSIS

### Secrets and mysteries

*Asrar-o-Rumooz*, the collected edition of *Asrar-e-Khubdi* (1915) and *Rumooz-e-Bekhubdi* (1918), is the most detailed expostulation of Iqbal's philosophy of *khubdi*, or the self. Individuality – fervently emphasized in the first part – must be subjected to the teachings of the Prophet in order to promote an egalitarian society of the Islamic nation.

#### Secrets of the Self (1915)

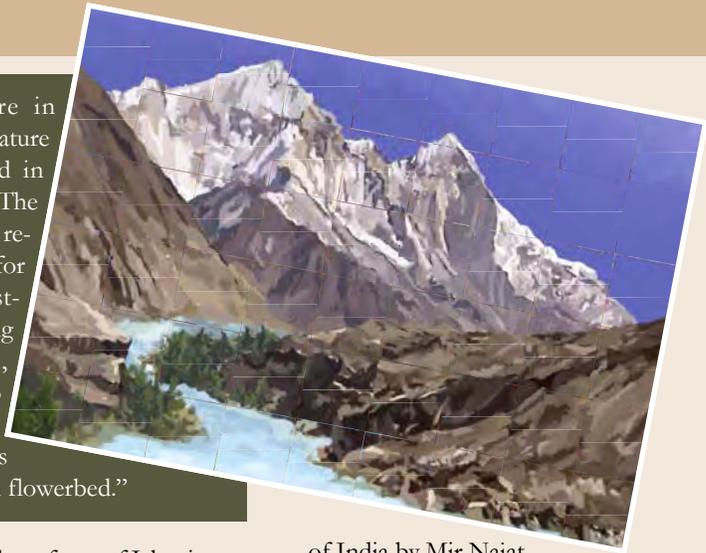
##### *Prefatory:*

Opening the book with verses from Rumi and Naziri, Iqbal goes on to emphasize that the book is focused on message and must not be treated as mere poetry.

*The usually detailed headings of the subsequent chapters (translated by R. A. Nicholson) are to a great extent self-explanatory.*

- Showing that the system of the universe originates in the self, and that the continuation of the life of all individuals depends on strengthening the self
- Showing that the life of the self comes from forming desires and bringing them to birth
- Showing that the self is strengthened by Love
- Showing that the self is weakened by asking
- Showing that when the self is strengthened by Love it gains dominion over the outward and inward forces of the universe
- A tale of which the moral is that negation of the self is a doctrine invented by the subject races of mankind in order that by this means they may sap and weaken the character of their rulers
- To the effect that Plato, whose thought has deeply influenced the mysticism and literature of Islam, followed the sheep's doctrine, and that we must be on our guard against his theories
- Concerning the true nature of

Like elsewhere in Iqbal's poetry, nature images abound in *Asrar-o-Rumooz*. The mountain here rebukes the river for making its existence an offering to the ocean, "To live is to grow in thyself/ and gather roses from thine own flowerbed."



poetry and the reform of Islamic literature

- Showing that the education of the self has three stages: obedience, self-control, and divine vicegerence
- Setting forth the inner meanings of the names of Ali
- Story of a young man of Merve who came to the saint Ali Hajveri – God have mercy on him – and complained that he was oppressed by the enemies
- Story of the bird that was faint with thirst
- Story of the diamond and the coal
- Story of the Sheikh and the Brahmin, followed by a conversation between Ganges and Himalayas to the effect that the continuation of social life depends on firm attachment to the characteristic traditions of the community
- Showing that the purpose of the Muslim's life is to exalt the Word of Allah, and the jihad, if it be prompted by land-hunger, is unlawful in the religion of Islam
- Precepts written for the Moslems

"This money ought to be given to our Sultan, /Who is a beggar wearing the raiment of a king," the pious Mian Mir admonishes the ambitious Shahjehan in Iqbal's poem. The conversation is probably fictitious and might not have occurred during the king's meeting with the saint depicted in this Mughal miniature.

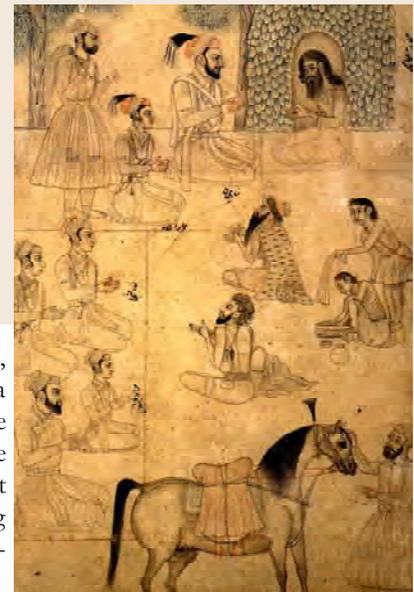
of India by Mir Najat Naqshbandi, who is generally known as Baba Sahrai

- Time is sword
- An invocation

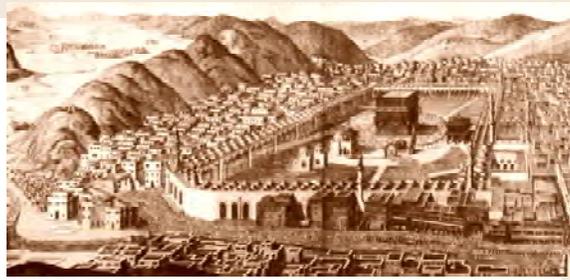
#### Mysteries of Selflessness (1918)

*This part opens with couplets from Rumi and Urfi, and a dedication to the Islamic millat. The chapter headings are as follows:*

- Preface, on the connection between the individual and the nation
- Showing that nation is born in the mingling of individuals and comes of age with prophet-hood
- Fundamental principles of the Islamic nation; the first principle, monotheism



“National life requires a physical center and the Holy Ka’bah is the center of the Islamic nation,” said Iqbal in *Rumooz-i-Bekhudi* (1918). However, he maintained that the real unity came “from grasping the national ideal,” since Islam was essentially a community of like-minded people. The ideal of the Islamic nation is to eliminate fear through the preservation and propagation of monotheism.



- Showing that despair, sorrow and fear are sources of all evil and enemy of life; and monotheism cures these evil diseases
- Dialogue between the arrow and the sword
- Story of the lion and Emperor Aurangzeb (may God have mercy on him)
- Second fundamental principle: prophet-hood
- Showing that liberty, equality and fraternity of the human race is the purpose of the prophet-hood of Muhammad (peace be upon him)
- Story of Abu Ubaida and Jaban, showing the meaning of fraternity in Islam
- Story of Sultan Murad and the architect, showing the meaning of equality in Islam
- Showing the meaning of liberty in Islam, and the secret of the tragedy of Karbala
- Showing that since the Islamic nation is based on monotheism and prophet-hood, hence it is free of regional boundaries
- Showing that nationality is not based on country
- Showing that the Islamic nation is free of periodical boundaries too, since its eternity has been promised
- Showing that a constitution is essential for organizing a nation, and the Quran is the constitution of the Islamic nation
- Showing that taqleed is better than ijtehad in this age of degeneration
- Showing that national character

strengthens by following the divine constitution

- Showing that the beauty of national character is from respectfulness to the manners of the Prophet
- Showing that national life requires a physical center and the Holy Ka’bah is the center of the Islamic nation
- Showing that real unity comes from grasping the national ideal

and the ideal of the Islamic nation is the preservation and propagation of monotheism

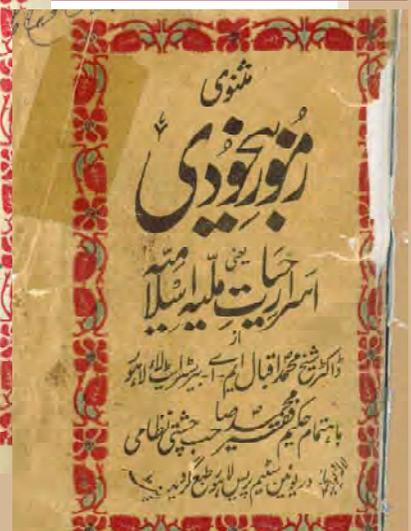
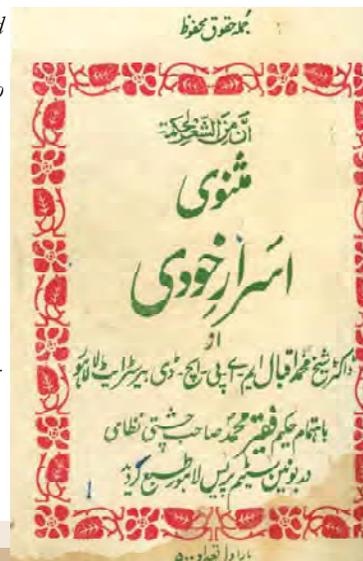
- Showing that the national life extends by attaining supremacy over the physical world
- Showing that the perfection of national life is when the nation attains an awareness of Self like a single individual and this awareness is possible through the discipline of national traditions
- Showing that the preservation of species is from motherhood; Islam is about preserving and respecting motherhood
- Showing that Lady Fatima is an ideal of perfection for the women of the Islamic nation
- Address to the women of Islam
- Summarizing the *mathnavi* through a commentary of the Surah Akhlas
- An invocation before the Prophet

*Asrar-e-Khudi* was first published on September 12, 1915. The scribe was Munshi Fazl Ilahi; Hakeem Faqir Muhammad Chishti Nizami, who also paid the cost, supervised printing. Only 500 copies were printed, which sold out fast as the poem became controversial.

Accordingly, some portions were omitted from the next edition and the text underwent more changes when reprinted in a collected edition with its second part *Rumooz-e-Bekhudi* (first published separately in 1918). The collected edition, *Asrar-o-Rumooz*, appeared most probably in 1923.

Right: The page on which it all started. It comes from Iqbal's earliest surviving notebook of poetry. The lines were written in 1911 and crossed out later but incorporated into *Asrar-i-Khudi* in 1913 with many changes.

Right and far right: First editions of *Asrar-i-Khudi* and *Rumooz-i-Bekhudi*.



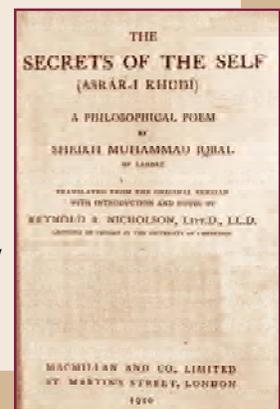
**Showing that the system of the universe originates in the self, and that the continuation of the life of all individuals depends on strengthening the self**

The form of existence is an effect of the self,  
Whatsoever thou seest is a secret of the self,  
When the self awoke to consciousness  
It revealed the universe of Thought.  
A hundred worlds are hidden in its essence:  
Self-affirmation brings Not-self to light.  
By the self the seed of opposition is sown in the world:  
It imagines itself to be other than itself  
It makes from itself the forms of others  
In order to multiply the pleasure of strife.  
It is slaying by the strength of its arm  
That it may become conscious of its own strength.  
Its self-deceptions are the essence of Life;  
Like the rose, it lives by bathing itself in blood.  
For the sake of a single rose it destroys a hundred rose gardens  
And makes a hundred lamentation in quest of a single melody.  
For one sky it produces a hundred new moons,  
And for one word a hundred discourses.  
The excuse for this wastefulness and cruelty  
Is the shaping and perfecting of spiritual beauty.  
The loveliness of Shirin justifies the anguish of Farhad.  
One fragrant navel justifies a hundred musk deer.  
’Tis the fate of moths to consume in flame:  
The suffering of moths is justified by the candle.  
The pencil of the self limped a

hundred todays  
In order to achieve the dawn of a single morrow.  
Its flames burned a hundred Abrahams  
That the lamp of one Muhammad might be lighted.  
Subject, object, means, and causes  
All these are forms which it assumes for the purpose of action. The self rises, kindles, falls, glows, breathes, Burns, shines, walks, and flies.  
The spaciousness of Time is its arena,  
Heaven is a billow of the dust on the road.  
From its rose-planting the world abounds in roses;  
Night is born of its sleep, day springs from its waking.  
It divided its flame into sparks  
And taught the understanding to worship particulars.  
It dissolved itself and created the atoms  
It was scattered for a little while and created sands.  
Then it wearied of dispersion  
And by re-uniting itself it became the mountains.  
’Tis the nature of the self to manifest itself  
In every atom slumbers the might of the self.  
Power that is expressed and inert  
Chains the faculties which lead to action.  
Inasmuch as the life of the universe comes from the power of the self,  
Life is in proportion to this power.  
When a drop of water gets of Self’s lesson by heart,  
It makes its worthless existence a pearl.  
Wine is formless because its self is weak;  
It receives a form by favour of the cup.  
Although the cup of wine assumes a form,  
It is indebted to us for its motion.  
When the mountain loses its self, it turns into sands  
And complains that the sea surges

over it;  
The wave, so long as it remains a wave in the sea’s bosom,  
Makes itself rider on the sea’s back.  
Light transformed itself into an eye  
And moved to and fro in search of beauty;  
When the grass found a means of growth in its self,  
Its aspiration clove the breast of the garden.  
The candle too concatenated itself  
And built itself out of atoms;  
Then it made a practice of melting itself away and fled from its self  
Until at last it trickled down from its own eye, like tears.  
If the bezel had been more self secure by nature,  
It would not have suffered wounds,  
But since it derives its value from the superscription,  
Its shoulder is galled by the burden of another’s name.  
Because the earth is firmly based on itself,  
The captive moon goes round it perpetually.  
The being of the sun is stronger than that of the earth  
Therefore is the earth fascinated by the sun’s eye.  
The glory of the red beech fixes our gaze.  
The mountains are enriched by its majesty,  
Its raiment is woven of fire,  
Its origin is one self-assertive seed.  
When Life gathers strength from the self,  
The river of Life expands into an ocean.

Asrar-i-Khudi  
was translated by  
R.A.Nicholson as  
Secrets of the  
Self and published  
from London in  
1920.



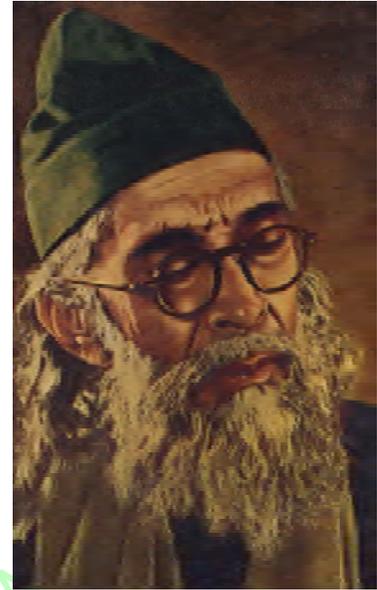
consists in the infinite inner possibilities of His creative activity of which the universe, as known to us, is only a partial expression. In one word, God's infinity is intensive, not extensive."

Other important elements in his conception of God, from the intellectual perspective, would be later named as Creativeness, Knowledge, Omnipotence and Eternity. In each of these God is superior, and elementally different, from the human being since the universe and reality is not an 'other' to Him. "The Absolute Ego... is the whole of Reality," Iqbal would state in *The Reconstruction*. "The perfection of the Creative Self consists... in the vaster basis of His creative activity and the infinite scope of His creative vision."

Iqbal's position on Sufism has long posed a problem in the study of his thought, beginning with *Asrar-i-Khudi*. The preface to the first edition denounced *wahdat al wujud* (which was subsequently translated as pantheism in his English writings). Like his predecessor Shiekh Ahmad Sirhindi, who had done the same in the early 17th Century, Iqbal could not access the original writings of Ibn 'Arabi to whom the popular opinion ascribed the origin of *wahdat al wujud* (Iqbal's adolescent familiarity with *The Bezzels of Wisdom* was far from an ideal starting point for an understanding of Ibn 'Arabi). Iqbal, like the Orientalists, ignored the fact that *wujud* in Arabic had the same root as *wajdan* (intuition) and carried a second meaning of 'finding.' These connotations were tragically lost through translation as 'the unity of being' or 'the unity of existence.' To equate it with pantheism (as Iqbal did) was an even bigger blunder.

The corrupted usage of this term, current especially in India as early as the days of Sirhindi, was even far removed from the origins. Here, the handful of the ruling Muslim elite understandably needed some philosophical justification for the weakening of their nerves (which was an unavoidable consequence of living in a perpetual tug of war with multitudes of unwilling Hindu subjects). *Wahdat al wujud* became a convenient variable to be substituted with the value of anything that could defend procrastination, lack of determination or inaction on any given occasion. Hence the couplet of a Pathan poet, aptly quoted by Iqbal in a hostile essay: "I used to turn away armies in the battlefield but ever since I became familiar with the *wahdat al wujud* I squirm away even from breaking a straw since it might hurt God (since the Almighty was supposed to be existing in everything according to the corrupted usage of this doctrine)." Ibn 'Arabi would have been shocked at this blasphemy but, due to heaps of misunderstandings, Iqbal was led to believe that the Spanish mystic was the original perpetrator of such attitudes. Consequently, although Ibn 'Arabi was spared slants in the poem itself he was shown no reverence in table talk and correspondence for some time. "The *Bezzels of Wisdom* used to be taught at my father's house while I was growing up," Iqbal wrote in a letter. "From what I know, it contains nothing but atheism and impiety." This view was changed afterwards and reverence was restored to Ibn 'Arabi.

Hence it should not surprise us that while Iqbal denounced *wahdat al wujud* on one hand he was also the most eloquent mouthpiece of some of its aspects. Mir Dard included, the entire repertoire of mystic poetry in Urdu cannot furnish one example to match this remarkable couplet from *Bal-i-Gabriel* (1935): "The gnosis can thus be summarized: life is an arrow spent and yet never far removed from the bow." Another couplet from a Persian

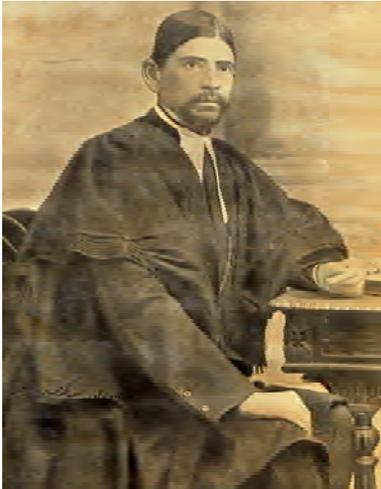


Above: Khwaja Hasan Nizami, a best friend who temporarily became embittered adversary on the publication of *Asrar-i-Khudi*.

Iqbal's writings and interviews on mysticism from this period include: (1) Interview in *Tareeqat*, an Urdu weekly from Lahore, August 1914 (while *Asrar-i-Khudi* was not yet printed); (2) 'Asrar-i-Khudi' and Mysticism' (Urdu) in *Wakil*, Amritsar, January 15, 1916; (3) 'Islam and Mysticism' (English) in *The New Era*, Lucknow, July 28, 1917; and (4) 'Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Poetry' (English) in the same journal the same month.

While the first interview praised the early saints, the other writings more directly attacked the later mystics. The intellectual decadence of the Muslim World was attributed to (i) a spirit of magism with its tendencies towards escape and fatalism, always awaiting a master with supernatural powers; and (ii) *wahdat al wujud*, which Iqbal erroneously interpreted as pantheism. Dominant schools of Eastern literature were criticized as antithesis of the healthy ideals the Holy Prophet might have recommended.

Meanwhile *Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf* (A History of Sufism) was taken up but soon aborted due to scarcity of primary sources. Rudimentary notes depict an intellectual position from which Iqbal soon moved on: the mystic Mansur Hallaj, denounced here, was later a hero. Iqbal's writings on mysticism from this period should therefore be approached with caution and his position on the issue determined from later works, especially *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1930/34) and *Javidnama* (1932).



*Akbar Allahabadi (1846-1921), a senior friend and role model for Iqbal's few attempts at satirical poetry is seen here as a young official of the Raj judiciary. This rare photograph was printed in Makhzan in 1907.*

'Touch of Hegelianism in Lisanul 'Asr Akbar' was a short write-up in English appearing in *The New Era*, Lucknow, August 18, 1917. Iqbal interpreted a couplet from Akbar to show that "in a few simple and well-chosen words" he revealed a metaphysical reality about the nature of conflict inherent in the physical existence.

Akbar's superb word play, subtle attack on the Western culture and bold defense of the Eastern civilization all made him attractive to Iqbal, who treated him like a mentor and visited him thrice at his Allahabad residence, the first time in 1913 (they had started corresponding a few years ago).

Iqbal's satirical poems were also a tribute to the great master (first published as a pamphlet, *Akbari Iqbal*, in 1914, some of which were later included in *Bang-i-Dara* along with new pieces).

Akbar mediated between Iqbal and Hasan Nizami in their controversy over mysticism but he was personally averse to Iqbal's approach and while he didn't oppose it in public he wrote about it with bitterness in his private correspondence to other friends.

*ghazal* gives us this analogy for the distance (or closeness) between the human being and its Creator: "Between me and Him is the equation of the eye and the sight, for one is with the other even in the greatest of distances."

Critics have found difficulty reconciling such expressions with his well-known stand against *wahdat al wujud*, and the most convenient alibi is, of course, to say that Iqbal had yet another change of heart some time after writing *Asrar-i-Khudi!* We can avoid such melodramatic explanations if we simply understand that Iqbal, like most of his contemporaries, confused two different concepts: the *wahdat al wujud* as experienced by Ibn 'Arabi and the greater mystics, and the *wahdat al wujud* as perceived by the decadent Muslim societies of the later period. Since Iqbal believed that both were the same he criticized both. His inner life, however, discovered and retained a contact with the Divine illumination which, whether he knew it or not, was directly in line with the original Sufi connotations of *wujud*.

All said and done there was one irreconcilable point of departure. All mystics, including Rumi (and especially Rumi), favored union over separation. Union was a blessing while separation was a curse: the drop becomes the ocean itself by becoming a part of it. According to Iqbal, however, the drop should lodge itself in an oyster and become a pearl.

"The wave, so long as it remains a wave in the sea's bosom makes itself rider on the sea's back," he stated in *Asrar-i-Khudi* (The same imagery had been used earlier in 'The Candle and the Poet' (1912) to illustrate the dependence of the wave on the ocean). Here, an emphasis was added on the importance for the wave of retaining its own form and identity within the ocean.

From a traditional mystical position this sounds like an affront to love. However, this is just another point where Iqbal seems to be in touch with the pulse of our times even more than that of his own. Today, the society itself seems to be imposing the mixed blessing of personal space on individuals – the large percentage of broken marriages and an increased number of people, women included, who opt for living single are already being interpreted by some observers as a change in the patterns of personal growth in the modern world.

Mysticism had a unique role in the East where the traditional society was polarized between the court and the shrine. In the absence of political movements the shrine provided catharsis for the socially oppressed classes (and any non-conformist drop-outs from the elitist circles, such as the aristocrat Ameer Khusro and the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh). Obviously, this was also a safety valve that prevented the masses from questioning the roots of oppression. Iqbal appeared at a time when this non-questioning character of the Eastern society was changing due to contact with the Western political thought and it was therefore inevitable that his interpretation of the tradition, no matter how mystical, could not be in full conformity with the past. In that he was guided, fortunately, not so much by logic but more by what he termed as "an inner synthesis of life."

Beyond his own age Iqbal was also criticized by such eminent writers as Syed Hossien Nasr. That Iqbal was not a Darwinian becomes evident in the light of what has passed in the present book up to this point. The other accusation that Iqbal departed from the traditional Muslim thinking (which is

implied in Nasr's comment) should be seen in the light of Nasr's own position on the issue of tradition.

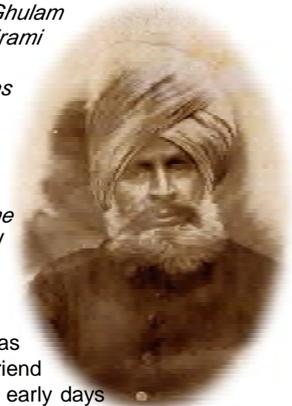
Nasr and his school has played a pivotal role in restoring the original context of the classical Muslim thought for the first time after the medieval period – an achievement measurable in historic terms. It should not surprise anyone if the energy necessary for such a monumental task carries the thrust just a little too far. Isolating the classical writers from every other context except the true context of their own thought restores their originality but an indulgence with this approach brings us close to that self-restricting isolationism for which Sprengler was notorious in the days of Iqbal. While Iqbal had deep respect for tradition he was almost fanatically committed to the principle of human growth. To him, the humanity was one and the differences between cultures were to be *used* for empowerment of the people and not to be idolized as pseudo-identities: "Give up not on the East, nor shun the West when the Nature itself signals you to turn every night into a bright morning," was his message.



Considerable portion of *Asrar-i-Khudi* was devoted to the philosophy of art, especially literature, and this theme recurred in many subsequent writings – most notably in 'The Book of Slaves' in *Zuboor-i-Ajam* (1927) and *Zarb-i-Kaleem* (1937). All such views taken collectively form a kind of poetics of Iqbal, and may be approached from two aspects. Firstly, the psychology of creation, and secondly, the aim of art and literature.

So much has been written about Iqbal's lofty ideals in arts that it is very often forgotten how much importance he placed on the basics. The craft is important. Iqbal himself mastered the classical skills of poetry while still at school. These included the science of metre, numerology of alphabet and the rules governing various genres. The medieval tradition of apprenticeship held these rules as inviolable and there was a degree of truth in that belief: the rules of any art are not *made* by the masters but *discovered* by them. They are just like the laws of nature; you need to discover the laws governing gravity if you want to make an aeroplane. Likewise, you need to understand the effect of language on the listeners if you wish to move them with your poem. It is true that the poet may be inspired with an idea that is difficult to be expressed through conventional manner of writing. However, it is the destiny of a true artist to struggle against the scientific laws of his or her craft, so that the great idea becomes more than an idea – so that it becomes a piece of art that can appeal not only to the mind but to the entire being of the audience. It was with reference to these labors and rigors that Iqbal later said in *Zarb-i-Kaleem*: "Although the invention of meaning is nature's boon, yet from striving and struggling the craftsman cannot be free. By the heat in the mason's blood does it take its life: be it the tavern of Hafiz or the temple of Behzad! Without persistent labor no talent reveals itself, for the house of Farhad is illuminated by the sparks of his spade."

*Shiekh Ghulam Qadir Girami (c. 1856-1927) was probably the last great Persian poet of the classical order in India.*



Girami was a close friend since the early days of the century and Iqbal usually consulted him on his Persian poems. It was on Girami's suggestion that the famous line about Plato "*rahib-i-awwal aflatoon-i-hakeem*" (see illustration on p.84) was changed to the more semantically elegant "*rahib-i-dirina aflatoon hakeem*" after the second edition of *Asrar-i-Khudi*.

Girami was a court poet with the Nizam of Hyderabad from 1890 to 1917 but remained a simpleton to the end of his life. In the later years he often used to stay with Iqbal at Lahore and many jokes about his forgetfulness are well-known.

A *tonga* (two-wheel horse carriage) was once brought to take him to the railway station for his return home. Engaged in some literary conversation with Iqbal, Girami let the carriage wait for hours in the scorching sunlight and then finding its seat too hot, sent this message home: "The *tonga* became hot. I will now return in the winter."

Once he ordered Ali Bakhsh to cook cabbage for dinner, saying that he had not eaten it in a long time but rebuked him thoroughly when the dish was served: "You are giving me cabbage all the time, do you want to kill an old man with gastric trouble?" It was to no avail that the astonished servant tried to remind him that this was the first time the vegetable was cooked during his visit and he himself had ordered it. Iqbal laughed at this and told the servant, "Since asking you to cook it this morning he has eaten it so many times in his imagination. Hence both of you are right!"

His terrible amnesia was restricted to everyday life only – he was famous for holding an unbelievable repertoire of Persian verses in his head.



Plato and his pupil Aristotle (depicted above from 'The School of Athens,' by the Renaissance painter Raphael) represent opposite worldviews that can hardly be reconciled (Al-Farabi's attempt to do so was a failure, as Iqbal suggested in a footnote in *Asrar-i-Khudi*).

According to Plato, objects in this world are mainly reflections of archetypes. As Iqbal complained in *Asrar-i-Khudi*, this position leads to a falsification of the earthly existence, regarding it virtual rather than real.

Plato presented his views as dialogue of his teacher Socrates (whose trial is recorded with superb dramatic force in *The Apology*). Modern scholarship, however, has doubts about how much of the argument presented in such books as *The Republic* and *The Laws* could be safely attributed to Socrates himself – other historical material we have on him, such as the *Memorabilia* of Xenophone, gives us a different picture.

Aristotle placed more importance on reality, emphasized that contradictions do not exist, 'A is A' (i.e., each identity is different from another) and things are defined, not only by their physical properties but also by their purposes – something that has four legs and a seat but on which you cannot sit, may look like a stool but technically speaking it cannot be a stool. It must be something else, and only by finding out what it is meant for can you discover what it is.

Aristotle wrote over 170 books. All were lost and his reputation to posterity rests on some 40 lecture notes on various subjects – sufficient to establish him as the man who organized almost ever subject of classical knowledge and practically founded many of them. *Poetics*, *Ethics* and *Politics* may be regarded as the most influential of his 'notes.'

Both Aristotle and Plato influenced the currents of Muslim thinking through translations of their works into Arabic, though it may be said that most writings attributed to Plato by the Arabs were actually the works of 'Neo-Platonic' interpreters of later Alexandria.

The first criterion for any piece of art, therefore, is perfection. It should be beautiful, grand and pleasing. It must give pleasure. However, since ego is the most cherished value in life, a piece of art must also aim at strengthening the ego and not at weakening it. "Thus the idea of personality gives us a standard of value," he wrote in his explanatory notes to Nicholson when the latter set out to translate *Asrar-i-Khudi* a few years later. "That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it is bad. Art, religion, and ethics must be judged from the stand-point of personality. My criticism of Plato is directed against those philosophical systems which uphold death rather than life as their ideal – systems which ignore the greatest obstructions to life, namely, matter, and teach us to run away from it instead of absorbing it."

It is here, in his theory of art, that Iqbal comes closest to Aristotle (a point often ignored). His concept of art rests heavily on such dictums as A is A, contradictions do not exist, purpose defines the object, and growth is a central value in life – basic Aristotelean dictums. It is quite likely that although he was acquainted with Aristotle's writings too, he absorbed these ideas more passionately through the tradition of the Muslim thinkers of the medieval period who reinterpreted Aristotle. Similarities between Iqbal and the American author Ayn Rand (1905-1982) present a kind of laboratory test on how far Iqbal's literary views were enriched by the Aristotelean tradition in the Muslim thought as well as the Romantic Movement of the West. Iqbal and Ayn Rand never heard of each other and while their views were diametrically opposed on some other issues their writings were almost literal translations of each other when it came to defining the purpose of art. Rand described art as "the technology of soul" and the means for the human being's "psychological survival." Passages from *The Romantic Manifesto*, published by her in 1971, could easily pass for Iqbal's own words if one didn't know better: "Since man's ambition is unlimited, since his pursuit and achievement of values is a lifelong process – and the higher the values, the harder the struggle – man needs a moment, an hour or some period of time in which he can experience the sense of his completed task, the sense of living in a universe where his values have been successfully achieved. It is like a moment of rest, a moment to gain fuel to move further. Art gives him that fuel. Art gives him the experience of seeing the full, immediate, concrete reality of his distant goals."

It is interesting to notice that Rand deplored the influence of Plato on the intellectual life of the West while Iqbal deplored the same in the East. The common strand was Aristotelean, rooted in that fundamental alternative, "existence or non-existence."



The third part of the *mathnawi*, describing what the human race in general could gain from following this philosophy, got delayed for some reason. When he attempted it many years later his poetic inspiration ended up with something very different – the much more lyrical and therefore also more ambiguous *Zuboor-e-Ajam* (to be discussed in the next chapter). However, it seems that he

never completely gave up this strand of thought and his last Persian *mathnavi*, *Pas Cheh Bayad Kerd* (1936), extensively answers the questions one might ask at the end of *Rumooz*.

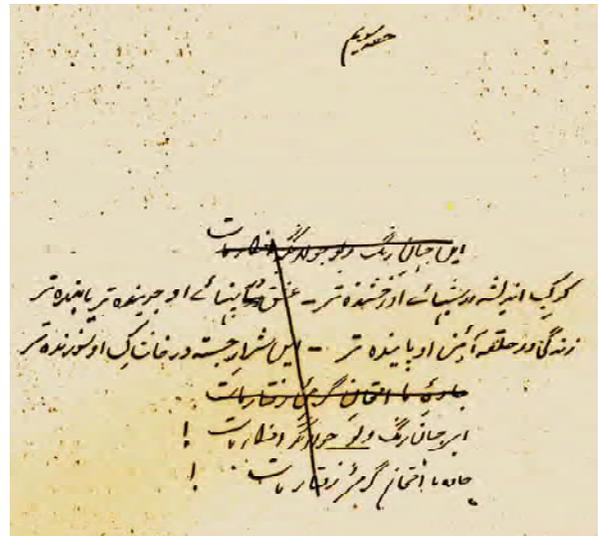
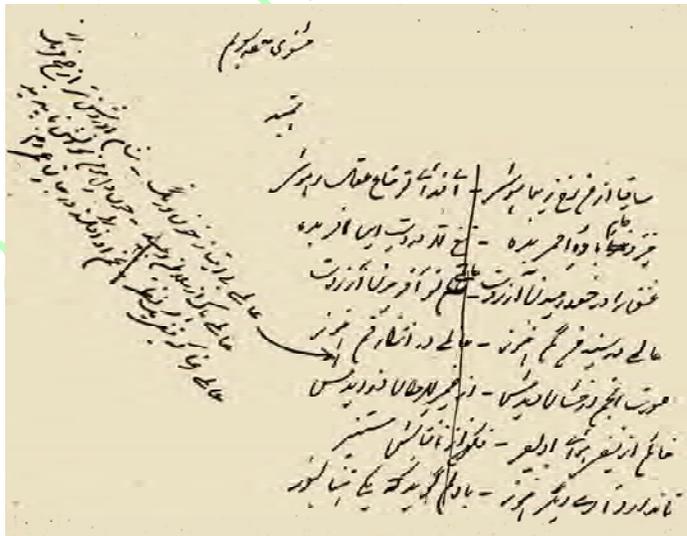
“You know very well,” he says in *Pas Cheh Bayad Kerd*, “Monarchy is about the use of brute force. This brute force, in our own times, is commerce. The shop is now an extension of the throne: they acquire profit through commerce and tax through kingdom.” He advises the Eastern nations to strengthen their self-esteem by drawing upon the healthy traditions of the past, and by attaining economic independence. He insists that healthy personalities cannot develop without political independence, and he explains that political wisdom is either divinely inspired or diabolic. The divinely inspired political wisdom liberates, like Moses; the diabolical political wisdom enslaves, like the Pharaoh.

“The object of my Persian poems is not to make out a case for Islam,” he stated to the Western audience at one point. “My aim is simply to discover a universal social reconstruction,” and he explained why it was philosophically impossible to ignore a social system that met this ideal of combining matter with spirit. He might have also seen the religious belief as a useful latent resource for mobilizing the people. If they were willing to die in the name of faith then there must be no limit to the wonders they could achieve if their faith was reinterpreted as a formula of ‘universal social reconstruction.’

However, this approach was not without its fatal drawback and with our knowledge of what happened to his message after his death we can see the irony more clearly than he might have anticipated in his own times. If he were expecting that the masses would jump with a pleasant surprise at finding a more liberating interpretation of their ancient beliefs then he was obviously overlooking those countless numbers to whom religion wasn’t necessarily a tool for self-actualization but rather a convenient escape from critical thinking.

This was evident in the reaction to his poems. The first appearance of *Asrar-i-Khudi* was met with a widespread outrage but criticism was restricted to the author’s irreverence to Hafiz and his dedication of the poem to a controversial personality. Virtually nobody questioned the main argument of the book or asked the author whether his philosophy was practicable or not, whether it was based on fact or delusion; people were not bothered about the truth of what he was saying, they were merely concerned with its propriety. Once the storm subsided, his former reputation as a poet of Islam was

*Iqbal made at least two aborted attempts at writing the third part of his mathnavi, but ended up with metaphysical ghazals – the two pages of notebook shown below were discarded while the piece written after them went into Zuboor-i-Ajam.*



Right: Sir Ali Imam, the Muslim politician from Punjab, to whom *Asrar-i-Khudi* was dedicated in the first edition.



Sir Syed Ali Imam (1869-1931) was a leading barrister and the first Muslim nominee to the Viceroy's Executive Conference, the first Indian to represent India at Geneva and at one time the Prime Minister to the Nizam of Hyderabad.

He presided over the annual session of the Muslim Educational Conference in Amritsar in 1908 – in which Iqbal participated but had to leave early due to his brother's sudden illness.

He participated in the Second Round Table Conference (traveling on the same ship with Iqbal) but fell ill due to the cold London climate and returned quickly. He died soon afterwards.

Iqbal dedicated *Asrar-i-Khudi* to him in 1915 and was criticized for flattering a knighted dignitary. The dedication was expunged from the second edition.

remembered and in fact, new colors added to it. Then the balance tilted in the other direction with an equal sway of emotion: his works were scanned to pick up references to Muslim kings and warriors until those few and sparse verses where he had glorified the past became his best known lines. Mercilessly taken out of their context they were printed on calendars and banners in his own lifetime and ever since, and serve as fuel to whatever direction the mass hysteria takes at any given time. Holistic view of Iqbal's message has been rare while the real worth of his poems perhaps still lies undiscovered – as he himself prophesied at the beginning of *Asrar-i-Khudi*: “My own age doesn't know my secrets; this isn't the market for what I have to sell... Many a poet there has been who are born after they die, opening our eyes while closing their own; like flowers they sprout from the soil of their tombs.”

Political correctness is one issue that seems very relevant here. Indeed, Iqbal is held in such reverence in his own country that the idea of apologizing on his behalf is understandably offensive to many. It must be remembered, however, that he himself was quicker than most thinkers in responding to ever new manifestations of reality and even when he had to retract from a previously held proposition he did so not with a grudge or dismay but with an almost childlike fascination at finding the possibility of a new position. This is what he did throughout his life and this is what he might have wanted to do even after his death: he even anticipates growth in the grave when he mentions that like flowers some poets sprout from the soil of their tombs. How would he modify his thought if he were living in the 21st Century? This question cannot be irrelevant to the legacy of a living philosopher and can be answered at least in some parts if we distinguish his thought from analogy, principle from example.

One such issue is Iqbal's position on the women's role in society. *Rumooz-i-Bekhudi* doesn't finish without 'An Address to the Maidens of Islam,' in which the poet emphasizes the importance of motherhood in ways that sound today like a denial of the woman as an individual in her own right. Indeed it might be so, but we must remember that neither England nor America had granted its women the right to vote by that time. In stating the views that he stated in his writings, Iqbal wasn't being backward but only taking sides with a large section of men and women throughout the world who feared that women's equality with men could not be translated into practice. That the world didn't come to an end when the women eventually started participating in political life is such an obvious fact that it is hard to believe that Iqbal would have missed it if he was living in our times. That he advocated many social rights for women in his later life (which will be discussed in their proper place), is a reassurance to this, if needed.



The First World War (1914-1918) began while Iqbal was writing the first part of his poem, and ended after the publication of the second. Meanwhile came the Russian Revolution and afterwards, Gandhi's non-cooperation tactics (including the great Khilafat Movement of the Muslims of India). Iqbal gave

two cheers to the first, and perhaps only one to the second. He was obviously delighted to see the uprising of the downtrodden against an oppressive system in Russia, but communism was alien to his fundamental thesis that the nature of reality is essentially spiritual and the human capability grows organically from within to master the physical world. Iqbal was moved, not by the ideology of the Bolsheviks but the earth shattering cry of freedom that came from the throats of millions in a grand unison during that Red October.

Gandhi's heroic defiance of the British imperialism also won some versified praise from Iqbal (which remains half-forgotten today, since it was later kept out of the collected edition of Urdu poems). However, just as the Bolsheviks had denied the spiritual principle in the name of modern technology, Gandhi apparently denied modernity in the name of some spiritual principle that was only partially revealed to him yet, and his followers were promised to be updated periodically when and as, and if, the guru's inner light illuminated him. Iqbal joined the Khilafat Movement initially but quit it over disagreement on constitutional procedures – the Khilafat leaders were well-known for being driven by a noble expediency that often made them incapable of fulfilling rational requirements, and it is interesting to recall that Jinnah also dissented from the Indian National Congress around the same time over similar disagreements with Gandhi.

'Khizr of the Way,' the Urdu poem Iqbal recited in 1921, captured his appraisal of the current affairs and in some ways summarized the contents of the third part of his Persian poem, which was very much on his mind at that point but he was delaying its writing (and the composition of an exhaustive Urdu poem could be one reason why he was left without the appetite to revisit the subject even in Persian too soon).

Khizr, the traditional ever living guide of Islamic folklore, gives a quick recap of the principle of movement and existence – as if for the benefit of those who might have missed Iqbal's longer Persian dissertations on the subject – and then comes to three crucial issues: imperialism, capital versus labor, and the Muslim world.

"Imperialism is sorcery of the dominant nations," the old sage speaks through Iqbal, and euphemistically criticizes the recent constitutional reforms of the British government as mere eyewash.

Through Khizr's salute to the Russian people, Iqbal comes out as most magnanimous; he goes to the extent of defending the Bolshevik philosophy against his own spiritual principle. "The human spirit broke free of all fetters," says Khizr. "After all, how long, could Adam weep for a lost paradise?"

References to the current situation of the Muslim world in this poem are, simply, poetic expression at its best. "The sons of the Trinity took away the legacy of Abraham; the dust of Arabia turned into a brick in the wall of the Church," Khizr comments on the tactful subjugation of the Middle East by the British by pitting the Arabs against the Turks. "The tulip-colored cap [a reference to the traditional Turkish *fez*] earned a bad reputation in the world, and those who were used to be coy and vain are now forced to beg and borrow [apparently referring to the negotiations between the Ottoman Sultan and the Allied conquerors over a humiliating treaty]. Iran is buying from the West, a liquor that will melt the container with its heat [alluding to the trade treaties between Iran and the Western imperialists]; the stratagem of the West did to the Muslim nation what rust does to gold and turns it into pieces. The

*Right: Punjab witnessed an additional emphasis on military recruitment during the four rigorous years of the First World War (a 'Europan War,' according to Iqbal).*



Iqbal attended two poetry recitals in 1918 connected with the War, mainly because he was approached by the Governor through one of his close friends, Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan. The first was aimed at boosting the recruitment efforts of the British and Iqbal recited a minor poem, 'The Answer of Punjab,' which opened with a eulogy of the Government and culminated with an address of the Spirit of Punjab to its sons, urging them to join the battle. Needless to say, it was not included in his anthology.

On the second occasion he recited two poems – an untitled fragment in Persian and a beautiful poem 'A Ray of the Sun,' in Urdu (the latter is included in *Bang-i-Dara*). The Persian fragment, later discarded, was a candid statement on the role assigned to various nations in the scheme of things (a theme closely associated with Iqbal's perception of a community as an ego):

"Do you know, the Creator of Life bestowed upon France colorful imagination, a warm heart and red wine. Russia was given the equipment to bind the people together so that the mountains may tremble at their unified power. Government, strategem and trade was invested in Britain while upon Germany was bestowed a curious eye and a longing heart. So that the harp of the world may forever play the song of freedom, a plectrum was given to the American President.

"Hence, everything was taken away and the Creator was left with nothing for us [i.e. the Muslims], so He gave Himself over to us!"

The postwar friction between the British masters and their subjects resulted in the brutal massacre of protestors at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, by the Martial Law Administrator Brigadier R.E. Dyer in April 1910. The incident elicited another brief poem from Iqbal, not included in the anthology:

"The sacred soil [of Jallianwala Bagh] asks all visitors to beware of the strategems of destiny. Since it has sprouted on the blood of the martyrs, spare not any tears that you may shed on this plant."

Palestine (especially its capital city Jerusalem) had a twofold importance for the Muslim World. It was the land of the prophets, and even the Holy Prophet was believed to have ascended from here on his celestial journey of *mi'raj*. It was also the home to over 450,000 Arabs who constituted 95% of the total population in the 1880's when the Jewish immigrants started pouring in with their investments.

Palestine, like the rest of the Middle East, was ruled by the Ottomans at the time of the First World War. The Arabs rose against them when the British promised the Husain of Makkah (in their correspondence in 1915-16) the independence of all Arab countries after the war. However, in the secret Sykes-Picot Treaty (1916) the British promised France and Russia to divide the Middle East and rule it with them. On November 2, 1917, the Jews were also promised a homeland in the heart of Palestine through the Balfour Declaration (named after the British statesman Arthur James Balfour), later incorporated into the League of Nations mandate on Palestine on July 14, 1922. By establishing a Zionist state under their protection in the Middle East, the British hoped to control the terminus of pipelines from the rich oil-bearing nations and an important checkpoint on the trade route to India.

The Palestinians rejected the right of the British to barter away their country to a third party and feared dispossession.

Iqbal was first invited by the British government to participate in one of its conferences on the Palestine problem in 1919 but could not travel due to financial considerations (which seems justified, since his foreign travels over a decade later proved fatal to his legal practice). He visited the Palestine in 1931 on his way back from the Second Round Table Conference in London.

In his poetry he supported the Palestinian cause and criticized the British policy, "the jugular vein of the Europe is in the grip of the Jews."

*Right: The Allied armies enter Jerusalem after defeating the Ottoman garrisons with Arab support. Iqbal regretted the Arab 'defection,' calling it a disgrace.*

*Below right: Iqbal participates in the inaugural session of Mutamar al Alam al Islami in Palestine, 1931 (He is seated fourth from the right).*

blood of the Muslims is being taken at the price of water; however, your anxiety is based on ignorance. Rumi said long ago: whenever an old foundation is to be resurrected, do you not know that the ancient edifice is first demolished?"

Iqbal's advice to the Muslim world was starkly variant to the dominant trends of those days, represented by the leaders of the Khilafat Movement, who, on one hand were forging alliances with the Hindu community without any constitutional basis, and on the other hand taking deputations to those very colonialists against whom they were struggling on other fronts.

"Let the country slip out of your hands if it does," Iqbal had said two years ago in a poem titled 'The Beggars of the Caliphate.' "You must not deviate from the commandments of the Truth!" Now, Iqbal advised through Khizr that the Muslim countries must unite, regardless of their political situations, and the message came in the verses that have since then become proverbial: "The Muslims ought to unite in order to defend their Holy Shrine; from the banks of the Nile to the soil of Kashghar" (*Eik houn Muslim harem ki pasbani kay liye/ Neil kay sahil say lay ker tabakhak-i-Kashghar*). He advised the Muslim world to hold its calm and fix its eyes on the long-term vision, ignoring the emergent opportunities that seemed expediently attractive but defeated the ultimate goals.



Events in the following years proved that Iqbal, the alleged dreamer, was correct on every count and the heroic men of action were wrong in each of their disagreements with the poet-philosopher.

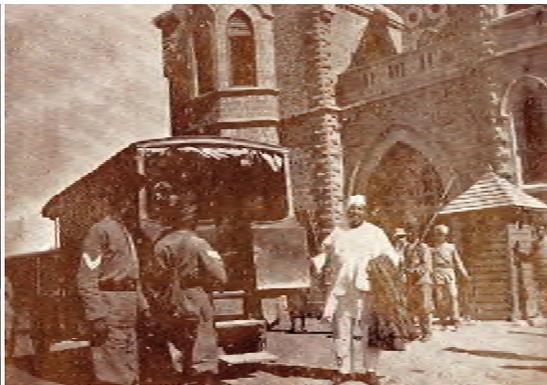


*Asrar-i-Khudi* was translated by R. A. Nicholson in 1920, a year before Iqbal recited 'Khizr of the Way.' The English speaking world noticed it at once, and two years later the 'Lieutenant Governor of Punjab' (the Raj jargon for the Governor of Punjab), upon hearing the name of Iqbal from a foreign journalist, woke up to the pertinence of raising the native poet to the status of an Indian Knight. In the meanwhile, the mainstream literary current of the West had taken an outrage against Iqbal's philosophy. Whatever the world might have thought at that time a fresh reading of those reviews stir our sympathy for Iqbal as a giant stranded among pygmies.

To begin with, the well-meaning noble Nicholson had an unfortunate gift for grasping details with penetrating understanding while missing out the larger picture even if it were thrust under his nose. Prior to the publication of his translation he asked Iqbal for a summary statement, which the poet-philosopher hurriedly drew up.

"The idea of personality gives us a standard of value: it settles the problem of good and evil," Iqbal wrote in his notes for Nicholson. "That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it is bad. Art, religion, and ethics must be judged from the stand-point of personality..." Nicholson, despite the benefit of Iqbal's complete statement (which ran into several pages), had the adamant capability of presenting him as "a religious enthusiast, inspired by the vision of a New Mecca [*sic*: Makkah], a world-wide, theocratic, Utopian state in which all Moslems, no longer divided by the barriers of race and country, shall be one... It must be observed that when he speaks of religion he always means Islam. Non-Muslims are simply unbelievers, and (in theory, at any rate) the *jihad* is justifiable, provided that it is waged 'for God's sake alone.'" It is a lucky coincidence that Iqbal was called afterwards by the Governor with an offer of knighthood and not by the Inspector General of CID for further investigation.

Leslie Dickinson, an acquaintance from Cambridge who had tried to draw similarities between William Blake and Oriental sages for Iqbal's benefit



Maulana Muhammad Ali (1876-1931) – more famous after his death by his penname "Jauhar" – and his brother Shaukat Ali often found themselves at odds with the British Government since their involvement in political agitation around 1912. Jauhar brought out the well-received English newspaper *Comrade* from Calcutta and later its Urdu counterpart *Hamdard* from Delhi, both of which praised Iqbal as a Muslim inspirational poet. They remained close friends despite contrasting opinions.

Iqbal displayed a lack of enthusiasm for the Khilafat Movement launched by the Ali Brothers and voiced disagreement with Gandhi's program of civil disobedience. Jauhar accused him of 'inaction,' complaining that the poet was generally lethargic and specifically unwilling to act what he preached – a widespread misconception precipitated by Iqbal's own light-hearted remarks, such as "You dance while I sing."

Jauhar's activism was led by his passion for the international solidarity of Muslims (to him signified by the Ottoman Caliphate) and his distrust of the European powers as conspirators against this solidarity. In his zeal he overlooked the grievances of the Arabs against their Turk masters as well as the democratic struggle of the Turkish people against their Ottoman despot. From Iqbal's point of view he was also overlooking the separate national identity of the Muslim community in India and the need for its recognition by the Hindus.

Jauhar was a fiery speaker, undaunted journalist and a hasty leader, who had to change his position on several occasions, most notably in the late 1920's when he reconciled with both Iqbal and Jinnah. His dramatic death merely a few days after telling the British in London that he would not return to an enslaved homeland earned a final tribute from Iqbal.

*Far left: Muhammad Ali "Jauhar"*

*Left: Shaukat Ali, the elder brother of Jauhar, boarding a police van during internment by the British Government.*

in those days, was quick to take alarm. "Quite clearly Mr. Iqbal desires and looks forward to a Holy War, and that too a war of arms," Dickinson wrote in *The Nation*, London, and lamented that weary of a Great War, the West was now looking towards the East to look for a new star but what they find there is "not the star of Bethlehem, but this blood-red planet" (Dickinson might have read Yeats' latest poem, 'The Second Coming'). "The East, if it arms, may indeed end by conquering the West but if so, it will conquer no salvation for mankind," he concluded. "The old bloody duel will swing backwards and forwards across the distracted and tortured world... Is this really Mr. Iqbal's last word?"

Dickinson's 'et tu Brutus, then fall Caesar' feeling was coming from the fact that the optimists in Europe at the end of the Great War had begun to hope that there would not be any more wars, especially since the establishing of the League of Nations. Iqbal, as much as he might have desired peace, was under no illusions; the League of Nations was a rendezvous of coffin thieves for distribution of graves. He wrote to Nicholson asking him to pass on the message, "Mr. Dickinson... is quite right when he says that war is destructive, whether it is waged in the name of truth and justice, or in the interests of conquest and exploitation. It must be put an end to in any case. We have seen, however, that Treaties, Leagues, Arbitrations and Conferences cannot put an end to it. Even if we secure these in a more effective manner than before, ambitious nations will substitute more peaceful forms of the exploitation of races supposed to be less favored or less civilized. The truth is that we stand in need of a living personality to solve our social problems, to settle our disputes, and to place international morality on a sure basis..."

Iqbal looked forward to the possibility that the evolution of civilization may one day outgrow war and conflict, but, he added, "I confess, I am not an idealist in this matter and believe this time to be very distant. I am afraid mankind will not for a very long time to come, learn the lesson that the Great European War has taught them."

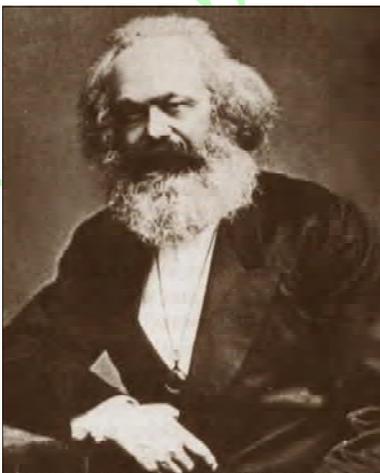
The reviewer had also complained that Iqbal applied his universal philosophy only to a particular nation while the non-Muslims were kept out of the promised kingdom. Replying to that he pointed out that universal humanitarian ideals need to be started with a group of like-minded people when it comes to putting them into action. While it was not his purpose to make a case for Islam at all, he had still chosen to start with the Muslim society because "it has so far proved itself a more successful opponent of the race idea which is probably the hardest barrier in the way of the humanitarian ideal... Tribal or national organizations on the lines of race or territory are only temporary phases in the unfoldment of collective life, and as such I have no quarrel with them; but I condemn them in the strongest possible terms when they are regarded as the ultimate expression of the life of mankind." It might have been very difficult to grasp the full significance of his statement in those days, but it is perhaps easier to do so today when the natural course of human development has presented us with the word, 'global village.'

The unkindest cut of all came from none other than the novelist E. M. Forster (whose *Passage to India* was still in the making and would appear two years later). Reviewing Nicholson's translation in *The Athenaeum*, he lamented the fact that Iqbal had not been translated earlier, unlike Tagore; he compared

References to Karl Marx, socialism or some related theme are present in every poetic work of Iqbal after 1917. Perhaps the most memorable of these is the trilogy of poems in *Baal-i-Gabriel* (1936): 'Lenin in the Divine Presence,' 'The Song of the Angels' and 'The Divine Will.' Elsewhere he praised Marx as "a Moses without a Sinai, a Messiah without a cross."

However, Marxism didn't go well with Iqbal's fundamental premise that the ultimate nature of reality is spiritual and his advice – offered through the spirit of Jamaluddin Afghani in *Javidnama* (1932) and otherwise on several instances – was that the economic principles of the Quranic teaching should be rediscovered. He laid a special emphasis on the verse of the Quran that bids the Prophet to tell his followers that all surplus should be given away (*Qul al-afu*).

Below: Karl Marx (1818-83), the co-founder (with Friedrich Engels) of scientific socialism (modern communism).



him with Tagore in a more favorable light, “Tagore was little noticed outside Bengal until he went to Europe and gained the Nobel Prize, whereas Iqbal has won his vast kingdom [among his own people] without help from the West.” This compliment was truer to the characteristic self-respect of Iqbal than any from his own people. However, Forster was a blind visionary and he anachronistically placed the so-called ‘nationalist’ poems of the Bhatti Gate period as Iqbal’s latest; his understanding was that the poet, after writing Islamic poetry, changed his position to join the mainstream Indian liberation movements and was now coming close to the vision of a homogenous Indian nation!

Through this same fatal review, the kind and well-meaning but also myopic and ignorant Forster reinforced the misunderstanding originally made by Nicholson and subsequently picked up by every reviewer: Nietzsche’s alleged influence on Iqbal. However, Forster went a step further than the rest. “The significance of Iqbal is not that he holds [the doctrine of Nietzsche] but that he manages to connect it with the Koran. Two modifications, and only two, have to be made...”

One can only imagine how Iqbal must have felt at reading this utter nonsense. “[The writer in the *Athenaeum* does not] rightly understand my idea of the Perfect Man which he confounds with the German thinker’s Superman,” Iqbal complained to Nicholson, “I wrote on the Sufi doctrine of the Perfect Man more than twenty years ago, long before I had read or heard anything of Nietzsche...” He went on to quote the date of publication of his *Al-Jili* thesis and also hoped that if the reviewer “had known some of the dates of my Urdu poems referred to in his review, he would have certainly taken a totally different view of the growth of my literary activity.” Frankly, we cannot be so sure of that. Firstly, Forster was in a habit of mugging up his facts – in another article, years after Iqbal’s death, he attributed to him not only poems in Urdu and Persian, but also in Punjabi! Secondly, Forster was diametrically opposed to Iqbal in his beliefs about art and literature, and Iqbal should not have hoped for any good from him despite the best intentions.

*A Passage to India* is generally hailed as Forster’s humanitarian outcry against racism, and therefore the evils of that book have gone unnoticed: why are the best examples of personalities from both sides – the Indian as well as the British – absent in that book? This pathetic piece of self-deprecating guilt originated a long line of writings in which the sub-continent is presented as home to pitiable creatures tormented by the advances of a cruel modernism, and this tradition has come down to our own times in many presumed masterpieces.

Long time ago, Iqbal made a prediction about the future of Western literature but kept it to himself; in 1920 he still might not have realized that his prophecy had come true with more accuracy than he could grant it. “By the time I arrived in England in 1905, I had come to feel that despite its seeming beauty and attraction, the Oriental literature was devoid of a spirit that could bring hope, courage and boldness,” Iqbal stated at one point. “Looking at the Western literature [while in Europe], I found it quite uplifting but there, the science was poised against humanities and infusing pessimism



Above: Lenin addresses the Bolshevik crowds. The Russian Revolution received a glowing tribute in ‘Khizr of the Way.’

‘Khizr of the Way’ can be considered as a capsule summary of Iqbal’s two-part Persian *mathnavi*. The Urdu poem also contained the gist of what he had in mind for a third part of the *mathnavi* (which eventually expanded into *Pas Cheh Bayad Kerd* in 1937). The poem was recited at the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore, on April 16, 1921.

The poem opens with picturesque description of a river to which the poet has come with a heavy heart (much like *Javidnama* a few years later). There he is met by Khizr, a traditional guide in the Muslim folklore who is supposed to have found the Water of Life and hence living perpetually – some believe him to be the unnamed sage who knows more than Moses in a story in the Quran, and Iqbal’s poem also draws upon this view. Asking him why he lives in the desert, the poet seeks to understand (a) existence, (b) imperialism, (c) conflict between labor and capital, and (d) the destiny of Islam.

The answers (divided by subheadings in *Bang-i-Dara*) describe life as a continuous struggle and point out that there is always more to the world than meets the eye.

“Says Rumi: Whenever an old foundation is to be resurrected, do you not know that the ancient edifice is first demolished?” This is Khizr’s comment on the fragmentation of the Muslim World after the First World War, and incidentally the first reference to Rumi in Iqbal’s Urdu poetry (except for some uncollected verses from his student’s days, facilitating a teacher for his translation of Rumi).

Khizr’s applaud for the Bolshevik Revolution in this poem led to a widespread impression that Iqbal was a socialist – a suggestion he immediately refuted through a press statement.



R. A. Nicholson (1868-1945) stood first in the Tripos of Indian Languages in 1892 from Trinity College, where he was appointed a fellow the very

next year and Sir Thomas Adams' Professor of Arabic after Brown's death in 1926. He translated selections from Rumi into English as part of his thesis for the fellowship and several portions from the master's *Diwan-i-Shams Tabriz* in 1898. His translation of the entire six volumes of Rumi's *Mathnavi* and two volumes of commentary played a major role in the understanding of Rumi in the Western world.

Nicholson offered to translate *Asrar-i-Khudi*. The translation was published in 1920 as *Secrets of the Self*, received instant notice in the academic circles of Europe (and severe criticism as well) and finally led to Iqbal's knighting. Unfortunately, Nicholson's introduction to the book was way off the point in introducing the author as a shortsighted Muslim revivalist who was recycling Nietzsche (misconceptions that Iqbal vigorously tried to correct through his correspondence with Nicholson).

into it. The Western literary situation was no better than the Oriental in my eyes by the time I returned in 1908."

With uncanny prophetic accuracy, Iqbal the last romantic foresaw the dawn of an age when loss of pride in the human soul would manifest itself in all walks of life – through fascism, Nazism and tyranny of the masses in politics; through an obsession with exploring mental diseases without defining mental health in psychology; and in art through disintegration of form itself and an aversion to beauty (form, according to Iqbal, was important for the existence of the ego, and he defined it as 'some kind of local reference or empirical background').

In the aftermath of abundant reviews on his poem in the British literary circles (and perhaps also alarmed at their intellectual deficiencies), he decided to give a helping hand to the West. His next work was going to be addressed to the Europeans. *Payam-i-Mashriq*, or 'A Message From the East!

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## Letter from Iqbal to M. K. Gandhi, November 29, 1920

*Declining the offer of Vice-Chancellorship of Jamiah  
Milliyah Islamiyah, Aligarh*

Thank you so much for your letter which I received the day before yesterday. I regret very much my inability to respond to the call of those for whom I have the highest respect, for reasons which need not and perhaps cannot be mentioned at present. While I am a strong supporter of National Education I do not think I possess all the necessary qualifications for the guidance of a University which requires a man who would steer the infant institution through all the struggles and rivalries likely to arise in the earlier stages of its life. And I am, by nature, a peacetime worker.

There is one further point. Situated as we are, political independence must be preceded by Economic independence and in this respect the Muslims of India are far behind other communities of this country. Their principal need is not Literature and Philosophy but Technical Education which would make them economically independent. And it is on this latter form of education that they should, for the present, focus all their energies. The gentlemen responsible for the creation of the new University of Aligarh will be well advised if they make it an institution devoted mainly to the technical side of Natural Science supplemented by such religious education as may be considered necessary.

There is no doubt that in view of the events that have happened in the Muslim world – especially with regard to Arabia and the Holy places – the Mussulmans of India will consider themselves justified in adopting some form of Non-cooperation, but the religious aspect of the question of education is, to my mind, still obscure, and I have already published proposals for a thorough discussion of the whole question. I am afraid I am not an expert on the Shari'a, but it is my conviction that in connection with the question of education the law of Islam cannot fail to give us a suitable line of action under our present limitation.

Hoping you are well.



Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) received some initial acclaim from Iqbal for indomitable courage in the face of foreign rule, but the admiration soon faded out. The two met at the Amritsar session of the Khilafat Movement in 1919, but no details of that interaction survive. A more comprehensive encounter occurred during the Second Round Table Conference in London, 1931, where Iqbal was thoroughly disappointed by Gandhi's refusal

to concede constitutional safeguards to the minorities in India. Love without justice turns into emotional blackmail and Gandhi may be accused of employing it successfully against the Untouchables (*Dalits*) in September 1932 when he announced a fast unto death unless the Untouchables surrendered the right to separate electorates granted to them by the British Government.

According to Iqbal, the political methods of Gandhi arose out of a contact between the opposing world-consciousnesses of the Western mind (chronological and evolutionary) and the Eastern mind (non-historical). "The British as a Western people cannot but conceive political reform in India as a systematic process of gradual evolution. Mahatma Gandhi as an Eastern man sees in this attitude nothing more than an ill-conceived unwillingness to part with power," Iqbal stated in his Presidential Address to a session of the Muslim Conference in Lahore, 1932. According to him, the communal issue was the only real problem in India (and not the inherently temporary British colonial rule).

In 1933, when Jawaharlal Nehru accused Iqbal of standing in the way of nationalism he retorted, "Perhaps the greatest anti-national leader in India today is Mr. Gandhi who has made it a life-mission to prevent the fusion of Untouchables with other communities."



*Top: Gandhi with a spinning wheel – upheld as a symbol against industrialization and adopted by many Muslims during the Khilafat Movement in the early 1920's (above).*



Sir Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan (1873-1930), a friend and admirer of Iqbal, wrote the first book on him, *The Voice of the East* (1922). He was the scion of a feudal family from Malir Kotla and an important political and social figure in Punjab.

*Above: Iqbal and Sir Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan in the 1920's.*

CHAPTER  
FOUR



**UNSUSPECTED  
HARMONIES**

1922  
to 1930



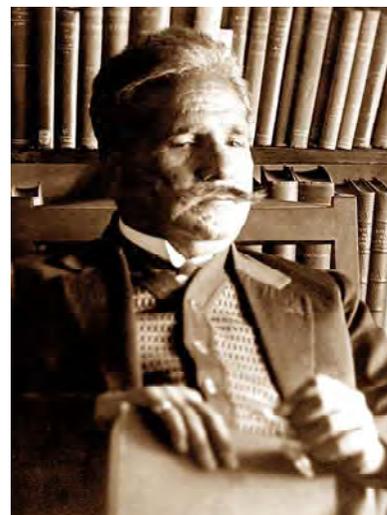


On January 1, 1923, Shiekh Muhammad Iqbal of Lahore, formerly of Sialkot, officially became ‘Sir Muhammad Iqbal’ through the announcement of his Knighthood by His Majesty’s Government of India. This was the second time within eight years that he outraged his people, the first time being his censure of Hafiz and conventional mysticism in *Asrar-i-Khudi*. The nationalist press denounced him and the most powerful attack came from one Abdul Majid Salik, a young journalist and a disciple of Iqbal for ten years, “*Sirkar ki dehleez pay Sir ho gaye Iqbal!*” This was a robust pun on the noun ‘Sir,’ which in Urdu is also a verb carrying the meaning of being overcome by an adversary, and the line became famous overnight. Salik could not face Iqbal for quite a while afterwards but when a meeting eventually happened he was amazed to find no change in the warmth and affection of his former mentor.

Iqbal must have anticipated the adverse reaction (as well as prestigious receptions now being held in his honor by the loyalists), but he was not a man to care for public opinion. He must have also known, unlike his reactionary critics, that he was not *taking* a favor from the government but *giving* one; this was a time when the British regime of India was being criticized even by its own people, who were too weary after the Great War. It was a timely gesture for the Anglo-Indian rulers to save their face back home by showing a sign of cooperation from a great Indian poet whose songs of liberation were by that time well-known among the informed circles of England. On his own part Iqbal had shown the British Government that the non-cooperation movement was an essentially Hindu affair and he, as a prominent spokesperson of the Muslim nation, was willing to defy it. In other words, as far as Iqbal was concerned, the Hindus and the Muslims were two separate nations despite the Ali Brothers.

Other things had been happening around the world, such as the victory of the Turks at Smyrna on September 9, 1922. Apparently, the Allied had overlooked one small detail while meticulously charting their division of Turkey after the Great War; and that small detail was a relatively little known soldier Mustapha Kemal Pasha, who now turned the tables.

The Turks had won temporary victories even in the Tripoli and Balkan wars and throughout the Great War, and the Indian Muslim newspapers had celebrated each of them like a final triumph. Iqbal, who remained unmoved by those was now roused to prophetically announce the birth of a new age and came up with ‘The Dawn of Islam.’ This could have been the greatest Urdu poem if he had stopped writing after that. No other Urdu poem, by him or anyone else, has such high concentration of verses to become proverbial even beyond the poet’s admirers: “The nargis weeps over her blindness for thousands of years for it is not every day that a seer is born in the orchid” (*Hazaroan saal nargis apni baynoori pay roati hai, etc*), is well-known even to those who do not know that the subject of these lines was Ataturk. Likewise, “Neither strategem nor swrods come to avail in slavery but the chains can be broken with the ecstasy of belief” (*..Jo ho zaug-i-yaqeen paida, etc*) is not only well-remembered but also very often misinterpreted.



Above: This portrait of Iqbal was taken by an admirer Dr. Shuja Namus in 1923 when he got his copy of *Payam-i-Mashriq* signed by the author (previous page).

Left: The medal awarded to Iqbal at the time of knighthood.

Portrait used on p.101 was painted by Ajab Khan from this photograph and won the first prize in the All Pakistan Iqbal Painting Competition held by Iqbal Academy Pakistan in 2003.

Indian Muslims retained keen interest in the affairs of Turkey since the Ottoman Emperor Selim III (1789-1808) declared himself caliph. Being situated at the geographical crossroads of Europe and Islam led to three different strands of thought in Turkey: (a) the religious (*millat*) culture; (b) the Western (*tanzimat*) culture; and (c) the national (Turkish) culture. The last was advocated by the poet-philosopher Zia Gokalp, who wrote, "The humanity is heading towards an international society by the federation of free nations," and called upon the Turks to adopt Western culture while remaining Turks and Muslims. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1888-1938) was essentially a product of this outlook although he evolved his own brand of 'Kemalism' and antagonized many veterans such as Halide Edib (1882-1964) and Rauf Bay (1881-1964) – both of whom, incidentally, visited India in the 1930's and offered extensive lectures presided over by Iqbal.

Iqbal advised the Indian Muslims to offer "a healthy conservative criticism" on modern Turkey. "If the renaissance of Islam is a fact, and I believe it is a fact, we too one day, like the Turks, will have to re-evaluate our intellectual inheritance." In his article 'Islam and Ahmedism' (1935) he mentioned Zaghlul Pasha of Egypt, Raza Shah of Iran and Mustafa Kemal as a set of men emerging on the grounds prepared by reformers like Jamaluddin Afghani. "Such men are liable to make mistakes but the history of nations shows that even their mistakes have sometimes borne fruit. In them it is not logic but life that struggles restless to solve its own mysteries."

*Below: Mustafa Kamal Pasha Atatürk*



In March, 1923, just after reciting 'The Dawn of Islam' he received a book from an admirer that set him on a new course of thought. It was an American publication on Muslim financial laws and it mentioned that according to some Muslim jurists even the clear sanctions of the Quran could be overruled with common consensus among the Muslims. Was that so? This was a question Iqbal tried to answer substantially, and honestly, over the next few years.

Meanwhile, he had completed *Payam-i-Mashriq*, which came out in May 1923. An anthology of his poems was long overdue, and until a few years ago he was thinking of compiling his Urdu and Persian poems together but his newfound motivation to address the issue of Western art and literature inspired a different plan: the book should have a character to it, just like Goethe's *Divan*. It is significant that he chose Goethe as comrade from the other side. Goethe was not only a herald of that Romantic Movement of which Iqbal was the last remnant now, but had also been peculiarly alive to the tradition of the Persian poetry. Iqbal could not be misunderstood as pleasing the white masters if he responded to one of their poets who himself imitated the Persians. Besides, the Germans had never ruled over India and were in fact an ally of the defeated Turks against the British in the recent war.

The book was dedicated to Amanullah, the king of Afghanistan, through a poem clearly reminiscent of Urfi as far as the poet ventured to praise himself before a king. With due respect he also went ahead to offer some unsolicited advice, asking the despot to look inside, open up to the deeper meanings of life and remember his obligation towards his people. (Incidentally, King Amanullah was deposed by his people a few years later for doing these very sort of things and received Iqbal in Rome in 1931 while still in exile).

This same book was also the first detailed expose of a theme that dominated Iqbal's poetry from this point onwards: the conflict between love (*ishq*) and reason (*aql*, or *khirad*).

He had lightly touched upon it earlier, and one couplet from 1904 was already proverbial by then: "The heart ought to be chaperoned by reason, but let it be abandoned too." (*Achha hai dil kay saath rahay pasban-i-aql/Leikin kabhi kabhi issay tanha bhi chhor day*). However, the concept was not elaborated before in such detail as now appeared, for instance, in 'The Message,' which opened the Western section of the book. Here, Iqbal invoked the Western philosopher to rise above the limitations of a reductionist logic and become aware to the ever living powers of love.

We can assume that Iqbal would have expected his audience in the East as well as the West to interpret his notion of 'love' in the light of *Asrar-i-Khudi* (or its English translation) where several chapters were dedicated to its explanation. Love in that sense was not anti-reason, but rather a connectedness with one's sense of life.

Reason is also divinely originated but it is a tool to be used. Also, it has a dubious tendency to be subdued by 'the other' and therefore the owner's sense of life must keep a check on it, as he now proposed in 'A Dialogue Between Knowledge and Love,' where Love invokes upon Knowledge: "Come,

just take a little of my sympathies and let's create a lasting paradise on earth. We are comrades since the Day of Creation; we are the high and low notes of the same song."

His fellow-philosophers of the West he addressed in a spirit of comradeship and felicitated the advancement of the sciences. "Springing forth from the solitude of love we turned humble dust into a mirror... and burnt the old world with the fire in our hearts," went on the poem, 'The Message.' "However, love turned into lust and breaking free of all bondage it preyed upon humanity."

Elsewhere in the book he criticized the materialistic bias of the Western civilization and the injustices of the Western imperialism but balanced his censure with a remarkable tongue-in-cheek appreciation of the British gifts to India. The British should not complain about the unruly behavior of the Indians because it were none other than they themselves who taught volition to the worshippers of fate in this sub-continent (In an open letter to a British author in 1931 he would again emphasize the need for keeping the sense of humor alive if India and Britain were to get over their grievances once independence was gained by India).

"The inner turmoil of the nations, which we cannot fully comprehend since we, too, are subject to it, is precursor to some great spiritual and cultural change," Iqbal wrote in the Preface of his book. "The Great War of Europe was an apocalypse," he went on (he would always refer to the First World War as a 'European' war), "and it has annihilated the old world order in nearly every dimension. Nature is now creating a new Adam and a new world to suite him in the depths of life from the ashes of culture and civilization and we can see a vague glimpse of this in the writings of the philosophers Einstein and Bergson." Iqbal then warned his European counterparts to pay attention to the 'decline of the West,' which, according to some Western statesmen, was already set in motion. "Looking from a purely literary point of view the debilitation of the forces of life in Europe after the ordeal of the Great War is unfavorable to the development of a correct and mature literary ideal. Indeed, the fear is that the minds of the nations may be gripped by that decadent and slow-pulsed *Persianism*, which runs away from the difficulties of life and cannot distinguish between the emotions of the heart and the thoughts of the brain. However, America seems to be a healthy element in Western civilization, the reason for which perhaps is that it is free from the trammels of old traditions and that its collective intuition is receptive to ideas and influences."

He did not forget to have a word for his Eastern readers too at the end of his introduction to the book that was primarily addressed to the West. "The East, and especially the Islamic East, has opened its eyes after a centuries-long slumber," he wrote. "But the nations of the East should realize that life can bring no change in its surroundings until a change takes place in its inner depths and that no new world can take shape externally until it is formed in the minds of the people."

Nicholson was quick to respond with his usual lack of perception. Reviewing the book in a European journal, he reminded the English-speaking



Iqbal's fascination with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), German poet, dramatist, novelist, and scientist (seen left) might have started in the college days but he studied *Faust* (1808/32) in original German in 1907 in Heidelberg (Germany). The immediate impact was, by his own admission, a recognition of "the infinitude of Goethe's imagination," and the discovery of "the narrow breadth" of his own. Comparing him with Shakespeare he observed that while both "rethink the Divine thought of creation" the realist English playwright rethinks the individual whereas Faust is "humanity individualized." Iqbal's *Payam-i-Mashriq* was a literary response to Goethe's *Westöstlicher Divan* (1819), which had represented the Oriental Movement in German literature.

References to Goethe in the poems of Iqbal are generally concentrated in *Payam-i-Mashriq* but resonance of his thought may be felt throughout. Goethe's emphasis on the right and power of the individual to enquire freely into affairs both human and divine, and to work out his or her own destiny, was close to Iqbal's own heart and while the favorite motif of the running stream in Iqbal's poetry might have preceded his acquaintance with Goethe's *Mahomets Gesang* (The Song of Muhammad, which Iqbal later translated for *Payam-i-Mashriq*), the Prologue in Heaven at the opening of *Javidnama* as well as various other 'songs of the angels' were almost certainly modeled after *Faust*. In a poem 'Jalal and Goethe' (Jalal being Rumi's first name) in *Payam-i-Mashriq*, the German poet recites his *Faust* to Rumi in heaven and elicits the favorable comment, "Cunningness belongs to the Devil, love to the human being."



Albert Einstein (1879-1955) presented his theory of relativity in installments from 1905 onwards and received the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921. Iqbal somewhat hastily inferred that "Classical Physics has learned to criticize its own foundations. As a result... the kind of materialism which it originally necessitated is rapidly disappearing and the day is not far off when Religion and Science may discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies."

Iqbal paid glorious tribute to Einstein, starting with a poem in *Payam-i-Mashriq*: "Like Moses he sought a theophany until his mind, in quest of light, unveiled its mystery," and commenting that "a Zarathustra has come from the Jewish race."

In the first lecture of *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal stated: "Personally, I believe that the ultimate nature of reality is spiritual: but in order to avoid a widespread misunderstanding it is necessary to point out that Einstein's theory, which, as a scientific theory, deals only with the structure of things, throws no light on the ultimate nature of things which possess that structure. The philosophical value of the theory is twofold," since it shows that substance is not a persistent thing but a sequence of events and, secondly, that space is dependent on matter."

However, the theory presented one great difficulty, i.e., the unreality of time. To regard time as a fourth dimension of space is likely to present the future as already given and as indubitably fixed as the past; Iqbal pointed out that it was very difficult to understand what the real nature of Einstein's time was, although it seemed to be neither Bergson's pure duration nor serial time.

world that Iqbal had two voices of power. One appeals to the Indian patriot in Urdu while the other, "Which uses the beautiful and melodious language of Persia, sings to a Moslem audience..."

Of course, Nicholson conveniently overlooked those poems that didn't substantiate his view of Iqbal as a narrow-minded Muslim preacher. "A true lover makes no distinction between the Ka'ba and the temple, for the Beloved meets openly in one place and privately in the other," Iqbal had said in one of the many *ghazals* of *Payam-i-Mashriq* that invoked upon the humanity to rise above petty differences. Such references could not prevent Nicholson from wondering "why membership of [Iqbal's ideal society] should be a privilege reserved for Moslems?"

Chastised by Iqbal's previous strong objection to the naming of Western philosophers as his mentors, the absent-minded professor was careful to recount that Iqbal's spirit remained essentially Oriental although he "has been profoundly influenced by Western culture..." but complained that his criticism of the West, though never superficial was sometimes lacking in breadth. "With the Humanistic foundations of European culture he appears to be less intimately acquainted," he wrote. The truth was that Iqbal was as close to the Humanistic foundations of Europe as any living European author with such inclinations, but unfortunately there weren't many who belonged to that creed anymore.

The mind of Europe was already in the grip of the very same pessimism Iqbal was trying to warn it against; *Payam-i-Mashriq*, or *A Message from the East*, went unattended by those to whom it was addressed and who were unfortunately more prepared to embrace poetry of boredom and the aesthetics of dadaism than listening to the songs of ego and human greatness.

Once again, a parallel may be drawn between Iqbal and Ayn Rand, since they shared the same ideals in art and literature. In 1923, Iqbal was expressing his fear that the West "may be gripped by that decadent and slow-pulsed" ideals in art that "run away from the difficulties of life and cannot distinguish between the emotions of the heart and the thoughts of the brain." Forty years later, Ayn Rand was recording her disagreement with the mainstream currents of the Western literature in these words: "It is rationality, purpose and values that they regard as naive – while sophistication, they claim, consists of discarding one's mind, rejecting goals, renouncing values and writing four-letter words on fences and sidewalks. Scaling a mountain, they claim, is easy – but rolling in the gutter is a noteworthy achievement... Man's soul, they proclaim with self-righteous pride – is a sewer... It is a significant commentary on the present state of our culture that I have become the object of hatred, smears, denunciations, because I am famous as virtually the only novelist who has declared that *her* soul is *not* a sewer, and neither are the souls of her characters, and neither is the soul of man." (*The Goal of My Writing*, 1963). This was how the mainstream treated the novelist who dared say that "if a dedication page were to precede the total of my work, it would read: To the glory of Man."

This comparison also helps us understand why Iqbal became a target for many liberals in his own region in the later part of the 20th Century. The mainstream literature, whether in South Asia or elsewhere, could not forgive any man or woman for glorifying the human soul.

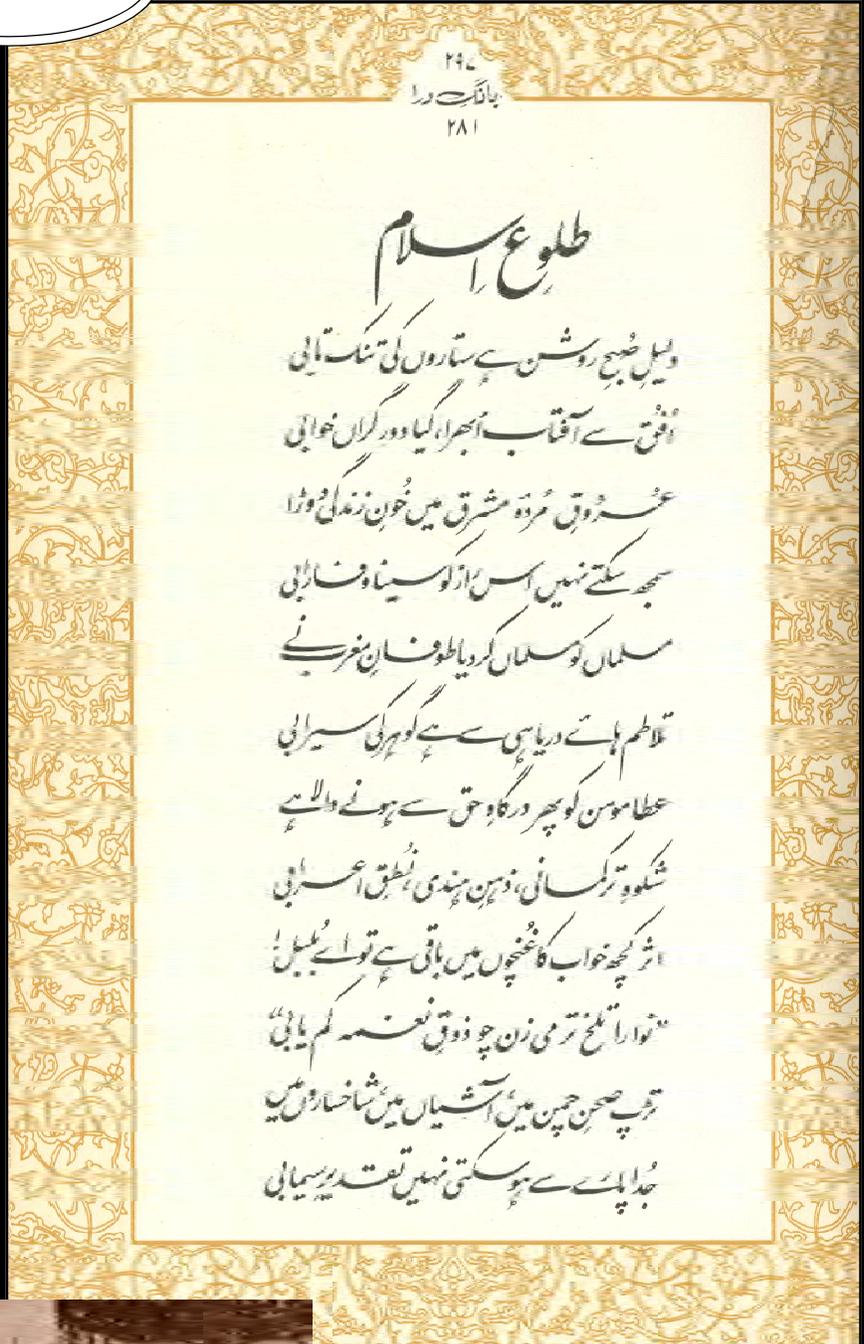
## NOSTALGIA

'Dawn of Islam' was recited in the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam in March, 1923.

The inspiration was provided by the victory of the Turks over the Greeks at Smyrna, which ensured the survival of Turkey as an independent state and also its rebirth as a young, vibrant member in the international community of nations.

The poem takes a lead from Iqbal's previous long Urdu poem, 'The Khizr of the Way,' and proclaims the birth of the new world order promised at the end of that poem. Other themes include the position of the Muslim community in the cosmic scheme of things as well as its role as 'the defender of Asia' at a more earthly level; an appraisal of the First World War (1914-18); and general dissatisfaction with the exploitative principle of the nation states—apparently Iqbal hoped that with the acquisition of political and economic independence (which was now in sight at least in Turkey, Egypt and Iran) the Muslims would succeed in presenting an alternate model of international relations based on the Islamic ideal of human unity.

From a literary point of view the poem is a delightful exercise in brevity, imagery and variety of expression. Many verses from it have become part of the linguistic furniture in the region.



Above: A page from 'The Dawn of Islam' in the collected works of Iqbal produced by Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

Left: A famous couplet from 'The Dawn of Islam' was used on the banner over the dais on the occasion of the famous Lahore Session of the All India Muslim League (March 1940), where the Pakistan Resolution was passed. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan can be seen in this picture while Chaudhry Khaliquz Zaman seconds the resolution.

## SYNOPSIS

### *Payam-i-Mashriq* (1923)

“The impulse that brought forth the *Payam-i-Mashriq* was provided by the *Westöstlicher Divan* of the German ‘philosopher of life,’ Goethe,” Iqbal wrote in the preface to his third book of poems. “There is undoubtedly some resemblance between Germany as it was a hundred years ago and today’s East. The truth, however, is that the internal unrest of the world’s nations, which we cannot assess properly because of being ourselves affected by it, is the forerunner of a great spiritual and cultural revolution.” Apparently, Iqbal hoped to provide some desirable options for coping with that impending revolution.

#### *Dedication*

The book is dedicated to Amanullah, the ruler of Afghanistan.

#### *The Tulip of Sinai*

The 163 quatrains of the first section in many ways define the range and flavor of Iqbal’s poetry for the years to come: metaphysics, dialogue with God, human supremacy over nature, Gnosis and contemporary politics in its wider context are just some of the subjects that feature here in fluid and powerful language.

#### *Reflections*

51 poems revisit in greater detail the themes fleetingly covered in the quatrains. The imagery stands halfway between Iqbal’s earlier poetry (such as the one contained in *Bang-i-Dara*) and his final masterpieces. His old favorite, glowworm, for instance reappears to signify self-containment while that most well-known of all Iqbal’s symbols, the proud falcon, makes its debut in these very poems.



The tulip—traditionally identified with the lover in the Eastern poetry—was elaborately described in *Payam-i-Mashriq* as a primordial entity that lent flame to the celestial bodies but subsequently lost its fire upon donning the robe of existence as a flower. It now longs to borrow back its heat from the sun.



### THE PERFUME OF THE FLOWER

In a bower of heaven’s garden,  
A houri became anxious and said:  
‘No one ever told us about the region  
On that side of the heavens.  
I do not understand  
About day and night; morning, and  
evening,  
And I am at my wits’ end  
When they talk about birth and  
death.  
She became a waft of perfume  
And emerged from a flower-branch;  
Thus she set foot  
In the world of yesterday and  
tomorrow.  
She opened her eyes,  
Became a bud, and for a time smiled;  
She turned into a flower,  
Which soon withered and crumbled  
to the ground.  
The memory of that lovely maiden—  
Her feet unshackled—  
Is kept alive  
By that sigh of hers which is called  
perfume.

*Translated by Mustansir Mir*

#### *The Leftover Wine*

45 *ghazals* follow the poems – most of them blatantly reminiscent of Hafiz Sherazi, whom Iqbal had earlier condemned for being a nihilist. Indeed, the *ghazals* here represent the best tradition of oriental poetry in a distinctly contemporary manner.

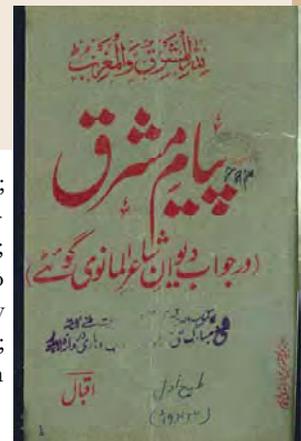
#### *Western Themes*

24 poems, significantly covering Western themes, remind us of the immediate inspiration of the book. Just as *Westöstlicher Divan* betrayed the influence of Persian poetry on Goethe, so does this section of *Payam-i-Mashriq* acknowledge Iqbal’s debt to the Western thought and poetry – Byron and Browning are found conversing with Rumi and Ghalib in paradise, the philosophies of Locke, Kant, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Tolstoy, Karl Marx and Bergson are discussed while Goethe himself receives complimentary feedback on *Faust* from Rumi.

#### *Fragments*

17 aphoristic pieces appear at the end of the book: “If only the good people had freed themselves from following the bygone! For, if following the past was a virtue then the Prophet himself would have followed his ancestors.”

*Payam-i-Mashriq* was first published in May 1923; scribed by Abdul Majeed (Parveen Raqam), and printed at Kareemi Press (Lahore) of Mir Ameer Bakhsh; supervised by Chaudhri Muhammad Husain, who looked after the printing of Iqbal’s works from now on. Nearly half of the copies sold out within a week; a thoroughly revised and expanded second edition appeared 10 months later.



## SYNOPSIS

### **Baang-i-Dara (1924)**

*Preface by Shiekh Abdul Qadir, Barrister-at-Law, Editor Makhsan*

This is a succinct literary biography of Iqbal up to 1924, the year when the book was first published.

#### *Part I (Up to 1905)*

Contains 49 poems and 14 ghazals from the earliest period – almost all of them thoroughly revised and edited by Iqbal himself. The poems reflect a generally mystical approach and a distinctly Wordsworthian attitude towards nature. The section also includes a few poems for children and a bunch of nationalist poems – perhaps the most famous of which is ‘The Indian Anthem,’ (*Saray jahan say achha Hindustan hamara*).

#### *Part II (1905-1908)*

Contains 24 poems and 7 *ghazals* from Iqbal’s stay in Europe (including three later poems: ‘On Seeing a Cat in the Lap of...,’ ‘The Song of Sorrow’ and ‘The Inconstant Lover’).

This section features some of his most lyrical personal poetry along with the earliest intimations of his later philosophy of political and social reconstruction.

#### *Part III (Since 1908)*

Contains 70 poems, 8 ghazals, and an additional chapter of 29 satirical poems. Most of Iqbal’s longer poems feature here, such as ‘The Complaint,’ ‘The Answer,’ ‘Khizr of the Way,’ and the ‘Dawn of Islam.’ This section – composed when the poet was also expostulating his philosophy of the Self and his program for Muslim revival in Persian – marks the maturation of Iqbal as a poet-philosopher of the East.

*Above right: The poems for children in Part I (and mostly adapted from English works for inclusion in textbooks at the beginning of the 20th Century) include ‘A Spider and a Fly’ and ‘A Cow and a Goat,’ illustrated here by Bina Ilahi for a publication of Iqbal Academy Pakistan.*

### THE NIGHT AND THE POET

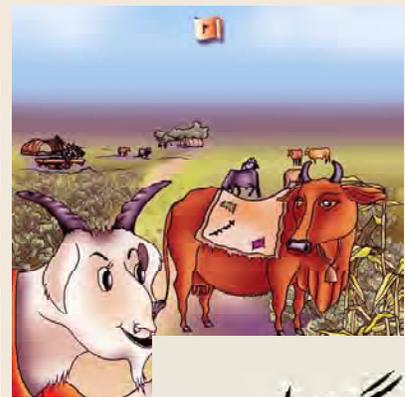
#### THE NIGHT

Why do you roam about in my  
moonlight,  
So worried,  
Silent as a flower, drifting like per-  
fume?  
Perhaps you are a jeweler  
Dealing in the pearls that are  
called stars,  
Or are a fish that swims in my  
river of light;  
Or a star that has fallen from my  
brow,  
And, having forsaken the heights,  
Now resides in the depths below.  
The strings of the violin of life  
are still;  
My mirror reflects life as it sleeps.  
The eye of the vortex too is sleep-  
ing  
In the depths of the river;  
The restless wave hugs the shore  
and is still.  
The earth, so busy and bustling,  
Slumbers as though no one lived  
on it.  
But the poet’s heart is never at  
peace –  
How did you elude my spell?

#### THE POET

I sow pearls in the soil of your  
moon;  
Hiding from men, I weep like  
dawn.  
I am reluctant to come out in the  
busy day,  
And my tears flow in the solitude  
of night.  
The cry pent up inside me,  
Whom should I get to hear it,  
And to whom can I show my  
burning desire?  
Lying on my chest the lightning  
of Sinai sobs:  
Where is the seeing eye – has it  
gone to sleep?  
My assembly hall is dead like the  
candle at a grave.  
Alas, night! I have a long way to  
go!  
The winds of the present age are  
not favorable to it:  
It does not feel the loss it has suf-  
fered.  
The message of love,  
When I can no longer keep it to  
myself,  
I come and tell it to your shining  
stars.

*Translated by Mustansir Mir*



*Baang-i-Dara remains the most popular of all poetical works of Iqbal among all ages of readers. It was the long-awaited collection of the poet’s most popular pieces that appeared almost a quarter century after those verses first came in demand. Right: The title page of the first edition published in 1924.*

بانگِ دَرَا  
(پنج گزشتہ کتابوں کے مجموعہ)

اقبال

In 1922, Iqbal moved to a bigger house on 116, McLeod Road (Lahore), and settled down in his famous 'armchair routine.' When at home, especially in the evening, his time was spent in open-ended conversations with anyone who cared to visit, and strangers were welcome without prior appointment. Among those who left recollections of such meetings was Prof. Hameed Ahmad Khan, a college student at that time.

"One displays many mental and physical states in life but deep thinking was above all other shades of personality in the case of Iqbal," writes Khan. "Whether speaking or silent, peaceful or agitated, he was a thinker first and last... A little pause in the conversation, and he would be visibly lost in some new direction of thought.

"This also meant that he was rather unmindful of normal human relationships. A passionate involvement in conversation did not mean he was interested in the person but simply that he was moved by the idea he was expressing at that time. He could even remain silent and be a good listener, but people had ceased to be individuals for him; they were hangers on which he could conveniently put his ideas. He was not talkative as such but belonged to that old type of Eastern teachers whose favorite pastime used to be sitting among pupils and providing insights on every topic that came up."

*Below: Iqbal in the 1920s.*



Soon after *Payam-i-Mashriq* came the Urdu anthology, quite aptly titled *Bang-i-Dara*, or *The Caravan Bell*, an expression used more than once in the poems included between the covers.

The poems were presented in a roughly chronological order and divided into the three phases of his life up to that point: (a) up to 1905, before he left for Europe; (b) from 1905 to 1908, while he was studying abroad; and (c) from 1908 to the present (1924), since his return home.

The early poems were thoroughly revised, abridged and polished, and nearly half of them were discarded – either because they were artistically deficient or because they represented that Eastern sentimentalism deplored in the preface of *Payam-i-Mashriq* (written around the same time when *Bang-i-Dara* was being compiled).

Poems from the European period were so scant that many written in the same strain in the years following his return had to be smuggled into that section – this anachronism could only be deliberate, since it is unlikely that he could have forgotten the occasions of such poems as 'On Seeing a Cat in Lap of ...'

The third section was obviously the longest and although 'The Complaint' and 'The Answer' were usually seen as twin poems they were separated here not only by smaller poems but also by the longer 'The Candle and the Poet,' as should have been the case.

On the whole the book was an enjoyable document of his mental odyssey and it was possible to trace the steps of his intellectual evolution from a careful reading of these poems.

Most of them had explanatory prefaces and notes when they were published in *Makhzan* but this editorial material was now done away with. The most fateful of such omissions was related to 'The Sun,' Iqbal's translation of 'Gayetri,' a widely recited sacred mantra of the Hindus. "O Sun! Grant us a ray of awareness and illuminate our intellect with the splendors of the heart," the poem concluded after addressing the star as *parvardigar* (a Persian expression – meaning the Sustainer – which was reserved for God among the Muslims). Iqbal had explained in the prefatory note in *Makhzan* that the 'Sun' metaphorically addressed there was the Divine Illumination from which the celestial body received its light. The omission of this explanation earned him a formal denunciation by the *mufti* of the second largest mosque in Lahore within a year of the publication of *Bang-i-Dara* (the *fatwa* appeared in 1925, and was not a reaction to 'The Complaint,' as is commonly believed).

It was a common practice in live recitals those days to precede a long poem with some *ghazal*, quatrain or *qat'a* (a brief poem, usually not longer than a stanza). Iqbal himself followed this practice while reciting his poems in such public gatherings as the annual sessions of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam. In his Urdu anthology he was probably aiming to provide a similar experience to his readers when he preceded each long poem with some shorter curtain-raisers.

There was only one exception to this rule: 'The Khizr of the Way' was followed without interval by 'The Dawn of Islam,' and this exception

highlighted how the prophecy made at the end of one poem came true before the next one was written.

It is a pity that Iqbal's anthologies are seldom studied in their entirety and therefore the relationship between the poems, the significance of their sequencing, transitions from one piece to another and the rich subtexts are lost upon the general readers as well as the specialized scholars. This is mainly because most readers become so partial to some famous poems through textbooks and media that when they open a volume of Iqbal for the first time they dive right away for favorite poems. The overall scheme of the book is usually ignored. Also, because Iqbal is portrayed as heavily biased towards the seriousness of his task it is not expected of him to bother about subtext and subtleties. That is a grave error. Iqbal was a meticulous editor of his own work and a shrewd creator of subtexts – as should have been expected from a man of his wit and sensitivity.

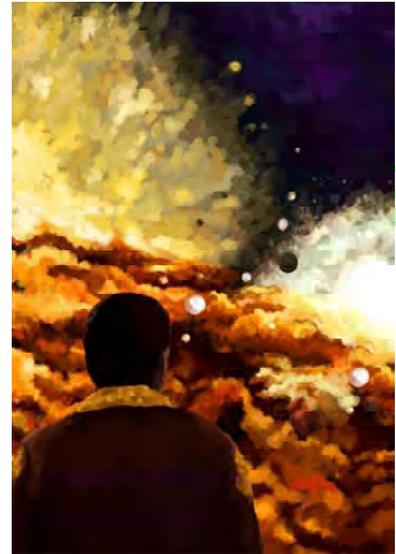
There is ample reward for those who may take the trouble of reading between the lines in his books. For instance, in *Bang-i-Dara*, the poem 'Imprisonment,' in which he felicitates the release of the Ali Brothers from the British gaol is immediately followed by one that is tilted 'The Beggars of Caliphate.' Both poems together with an elegy form an informal prelude, a curtain raiser, to 'The Khizr of the Way.' (His mastery of subtext and arrangement reached its peak in *Baal-i-Gabriel*, as we shall see in Chapter 5).



The question arising from the American publication eventually led to a renewed interest in *ijtihad* (interpretation), which was one of the four sources of jurisprudence in Islam.

The religious scholars whose opinion he sought on the American author's statement all replied in the negative; no Muslim jurisprudent of the past or present was known to have said that the sanctions of the Quran could be overruled. Iqbal accepted that position. However, within the carefully defined boundaries of the Muslim law there was enormous scope for reinterpretation, and this he wanted to emphasize by way of empowerment and intellectual liberation of the people. Traditional Muslim scholars by his own times had come to hold that only the Quran, *hadith* and consensus of previous lawgivers were active sources of Muslim law while *ijtihad* must be held in abeyance.

Iqbal, despite his passion for change and emancipation, had maintained in *Rumuz-i-Bekbudi* that in an age of decadence it was more prudent to follow the institutions laid down in a healthy past than trying to invent new ones that might carry the inherent evils of decadence in them. The resurgence of Turkey must have marked the end of that period in modern Muslim history, as he was going to say a while later in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, "If the renaissance of Islam is a fact, and I believe it is a fact, we too one day, like the Turks, will have to re-evaluate our intellectual inheritance. And if we cannot make any original contribution to the general thought of Islam, we may, by healthy conservative criticism, serve at least as a check on the rapid movement of liberalism in the world of Islam."



Many intimate prayers were included in *Zuboor-i-Ajam* (literally, and aptly, meaning *The Persian Psalms* and published in 1927). These were apparently aimed at reviving the mystical dimension of worship in the complexity of the modern times. The following (translated by Mustansir Mir) occurs as Number 39 in the first part:

If a sight causes loss of self, it is  
better hidden from view:  
I do not accept the deal, Your price is  
too high.  
Speak to us unveiled, the time for  
being reserved is gone –  
When others told us whatever it was  
You wanted of us.  
My insolent eyes have pierced the  
blue sky.  
If you want to have a barrier between  
us, build another world.  
How You look out for Yourself ! For all  
Your unconcern,  
You demand the blood of friends to  
prove you exist.  
Worship is one station, love is  
another:  
You want angels to bow before you,  
but men to do still more.  
With love I convert the crude copper I  
have into gold,  
For when I meet you tomorrow, You  
will want a gift from me.



Iqbal was a member of the Punjab Legislative Council (above) from 1926 to 1930 (he didn't seek re-election). He was elected as an independent candidate backed by the Khilafat Committee and usually endeavored to protect the interests of the lower and middle classes against the feudal lords.

Nine of his speeches are on record: (1) On the Budget for 1927-28 (March 5, 1927); (2) On the Cut Motion on Government's Demand for Grant under 'Education' (March 10, 1927); (3) On Government's Demand for Supplementary and Additional Grants, 1927-28 (July 18, 1927); (4) On the Motion for Adjournment regarding Communal Riots in Multan (July 18, 1927); (5) On the Resolution regarding Filling of Posts by Open Competitive Examination (July 19, 1927); (6) On the Resolution regarding the Unani and Ayurvedic Systems of Medicine (February 22, 1928); (7) On the Resolution regarding Application of the Principles of Assessment of Income Tax to the Assessment of Land Revenue (February 23, 1928); (8) On the Budget for 1929-30 (March 4, 1929); (9) On the Budget for 1930-31 (March 7, 1930).

He was referring to the innovations of Kemal Ataturk when he made this statement in 1929, but back in 1924 those innovations had not taken place although the banishment of the Caliph occurred that year. Iqbal, however, insisted on the availability of the right to *ijtihad*, since in his mind, the argument was based on the finality of the prophet-hood of Muhammad – out of many prophets only he claimed to be the last one and insisted that there would be no other after him. To Iqbal, this was nothing less than a declaration of freedom for the human intellect.

“The birth of Islam... is the birth of inductive intellect,” he was going to write in *The Reconstruction*. “In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition. This involves the keen perception that life cannot forever be kept in strings; that, in order to achieve full self-consciousness, man must finally be thrown back on his own resources.” Mystic experience, according to Iqbal, was possible and God may still speak to individuals in whatever manner He chose by His divine grace. However, such intuition could not be binding upon another individual: “the abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Quran, and the emphasis it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality.” Everyone was one's own guide now; the last revelation of God was there to stay and must be obeyed but since there were going to be no more prophets it was the privilege and responsibility of every human being to understand the word of God on their own. The right to interpret religion was inviolable.

Iqbal lectured on this issue to a wide audience in Lahore in 1924 and ended up creating yet another uproar against his irreverence to convention. He then tried to pen that long overdue final sequel to *Asrar* and *Rumooz* but his mind went metaphysical. “O You Who Sustain My Life!” He addressed the Almighty in Persian verse, “Where is your sign? The world and hereafter are but ripples of my existence, where is *your* world?” Soon afterwards he informed his friends that he was writing a book of verse in Persian for which the working title was, “The Songs of a Modern David.” It was finished and printed three years later as *Zuboor-i-Ajam* (The Persian Psalms). By that time he was also a member of the provincial legislative council and dabbling in politics. Let's look at the development of his metaphysical thought first.

Right: Iqbal's accountant 'Munshi' Tahiruddin who became a trusted friend. He earned fame and fortune from a patent medicine 'Dilroze.'





## FAMILY

Next to his writings Iqbal was known for his sense of humor. During his stay in Europe he often met people who perceived India as a wilderness and when one such lady asked him if there was a snake under his bed every morning when he was in India, he replied solemnly, “No, every third day!”

He would sometimes express even his deliberate opinions flippantly. Once, when he was praising the impression of strength and permanence in the Moorish architecture and was asked about the Grand Mosque of Delhi (which was rather too delicate for his tastes), he replied, “She is a lady.”

On another occasion when a visitor claimed that God used to speak to him, Iqbal remarked, “Don’t believe everything He tells you. Sometimes He doesn’t mean it.” (Which was a rather unorthodox manner of stating the importance of distinguishing between intuition and illusion, as any Sufi master would have pointed out to that person).



*Right: Iqbal’s wife Sirdar Begum (left) and niece Wasima (right).*



Wasima Mubarak (1912-93) was the youngest daughter of Shiekh Ata Muhammad, Iqbal’s elder brother. Iqbal’s wife Sirdar Begum adopted her from infancy and she lived with them till her marriage in 1934. Her oral reminiscences form the basis of *Iqbal Daroon-i-Khana*, Volume I (1971), a memoir of Iqbal’s domestic life by Wasima’s son Khalid Nazeer Sufi. A few extracts follow:

1

He had a loud voice and usually spoke with authoritative tone. His eyes would shrink while he was speaking but opened wide if the conversation picked up pace and then his face would also turn ruddy with emotions. He recited from the Holy Quran in a sweet voice every morning and usually wept while he read it so that his tears stained the pages of the Book.

He preferred a simple living, usually wearing only a *dhobi* with a short-sleeved vest – which he would often forget to change – and remained occupied with dispersing the gems of wisdom to the visitors in the drawing room...

2

My uncle [i.e., Iqbal] did not approve of watching movies and nobody from the house was allowed to go to the cinema, which was rather close to our residence on the McLeod Road. He was even against playing radio or gramophone at home although Aunty Sirdar was quite fond of listening to music. My elder brother Mukhtar [Iqbal’s nephew] once brought a gramophone and some records for her, which we would play behind closed doors in the room at the back after we were sure that my uncle has retired to his room and slept. Aunty Sirdar used to say that music is nourishment for the soul.

*Left: A rare picture of Iqbal. He forbade its publication because showing teeth even in laughter was considered bad manners.*

*Right: Iqbal reclining in an armchair. “He was rather slow by nature,” writes Wasima’s son on the authority of his mother. “He could forget food if preoccupied with reading and would later ask innocently, ‘Have I taken my meals?’”*





Shiekh Ejaz Ahmad (1899-1994) was Iqbal's nephew and the eldest son of Shiekh Ata Muhammad. He turned Ahmed in the lifetime of Iqbal and

some of his claims, such as that Ejaz's father (Ata Muhammad) was among the earliest Ahmeds he has made controversial his otherwise risqué and touching reminiscences of his uncle, *Mazloom Iqbal* (1985).

An interesting anecdote about a journey to Campbellpur in 1913, in which Ejaz accompanied his uncle, is about the time they spent from midnight to dawn at the Wazirabad Railway Station. Iqbal offered a one-rupee tip to the loader if he could procure a *hooka*. The consequent *hooka* was very dirty and half broken but "my uncle was jubilant at seeing it. He ordered his mattress to be taken out of his hold-all and to be spread out on the platform. There he sat, sharing the dirty *hooka* with the loader conversing with him in an uninhibited manner till the morning while I stayed in the train compartment..."

*Top right: Iqbal with 5-year-old Javid at the residence of friend Mian M. Aslam, Haveli Barood Khana (Lahore) on the occasion of Eid, February 17, 1929.*

*Below: Javid and Munira (born 1930) as little kids. Below right: An earlier picture of Javid as an infant.*



Iqbal's younger son Javid (born 1924) has written several books and papers on his father, including *Zindab Rud* (1979/84), the authoritative biography. The following extracts are taken from his paper 'Iqbal: My Father,' presented at a symposium in the United States in 1964.

1

A year or so before I was born (1924), father visited the mausoleum of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, also known as Mujaddid Alf Thani... At the mausoleum, my father prayed for a child – a son – whom he could bring up in accordance with his own ideals of religion and morality. If God did grant him a son, he promised the saint that he would one day bring him to the mausoleum.

His prayer was heard, and later, in the summer of 1934, when I had attained an impressionable age, he took me to Sirhind. I can recollect our visit to the mausoleum of Shaikh Ahmad, for it is impressed vividly on my mind. Father took me inside the mausoleum, sat close to the grave of the saint, and recited the Quran...

2

Father rarely gave me an opportunity to judge how much affection and love he felt for me. He seldom held me close or kissed me, and because of this, I never really felt the warmth of fatherly affection. When he saw me running about the house, he would smile faintly, as if someone was forcing him to smile... However, it would be wrong to conclude that he was incapable of loving or bestowing affection. Although his love for me was devoid of youthful vigor, it had the depth of maturity. I was, as it were, not only his son but "the younger generation of Islam personified" – the little cubs of today who were to be trained so that they could learn to involve themselves deeply with and provide a life-giving response to the dead world in which he lived.

Although mother was very strict and punished me if I was mischievous, father's rebuke always proved a better corrective. On very few occasions did father beat me. The reasons usually were rudeness to the servants (which he resented most) or running about barefooted in the summer sun...

As a child I was very fond of painting, but father was not aware of my interests. When he learnt that I liked painting and saw a few of my "works of art," he encouraged me a great deal and purchased large prints by French, Italian, and Spanish masters for me. I was also very fond of music, but he had neither a gramophone nor a radio in the house. Despite this lack, father, too, enjoyed music and even played a *sitar* before he went [to Europe, 1905-8] for higher studies. His love for music never died. In the later phase of his life, Faqir Najmud-Din, one of his friends, occasionally played the *sitar* for him. Whenever a singer came to our house and sang some of his *ghazals*, father sent for me.

In 1931, when father went to England to attend the Round Table Conference, I was about seven years old. I wrote him a letter asking him to bring me a gramophone. The gramophone never arrived, but my letter moved him to write the poem, 'To Javid on Receiving His Letter' [beginning]:

Build in love's empire your heart and your home;  
Build Time anew, a new dawn, a new eve!  
Your speech, if God give you the friendship of nature,  
From the rose and the tulip's long silence weave.



## NOSTALGIA

The cool hill station of Simla was developed by the British as the summer capital of the Raj and it remained a favorite retreat for Iqbal especially during the 1920's. There he would always stay at the residence of his close friend Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan (author of *A Voice From the East*, the first book on Iqbal published in 1922).

Later, the friends became estranged but such was their emotional bonding that when Iqbal stayed somewhere else during a visit to Simla, the Nawab wept bitterly. A patch up was attempted by their mutual friend Mirza Jalaluddin but the Nawab passed away before Iqbal could meet him again. Iqbal paid homage to his friend by visiting his grave.

Iqbal was often photographed during his stay at Simla, as can be seen on these pages. Also, it was here at Simla that his famous profile in a shawl was photographed (see p.118).



*Top: A view of Simla from the Raj days.*

*Middle: A group photograph taken at the residence of Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan at Simla in the 1920's. Iqbal is seated on the right.*

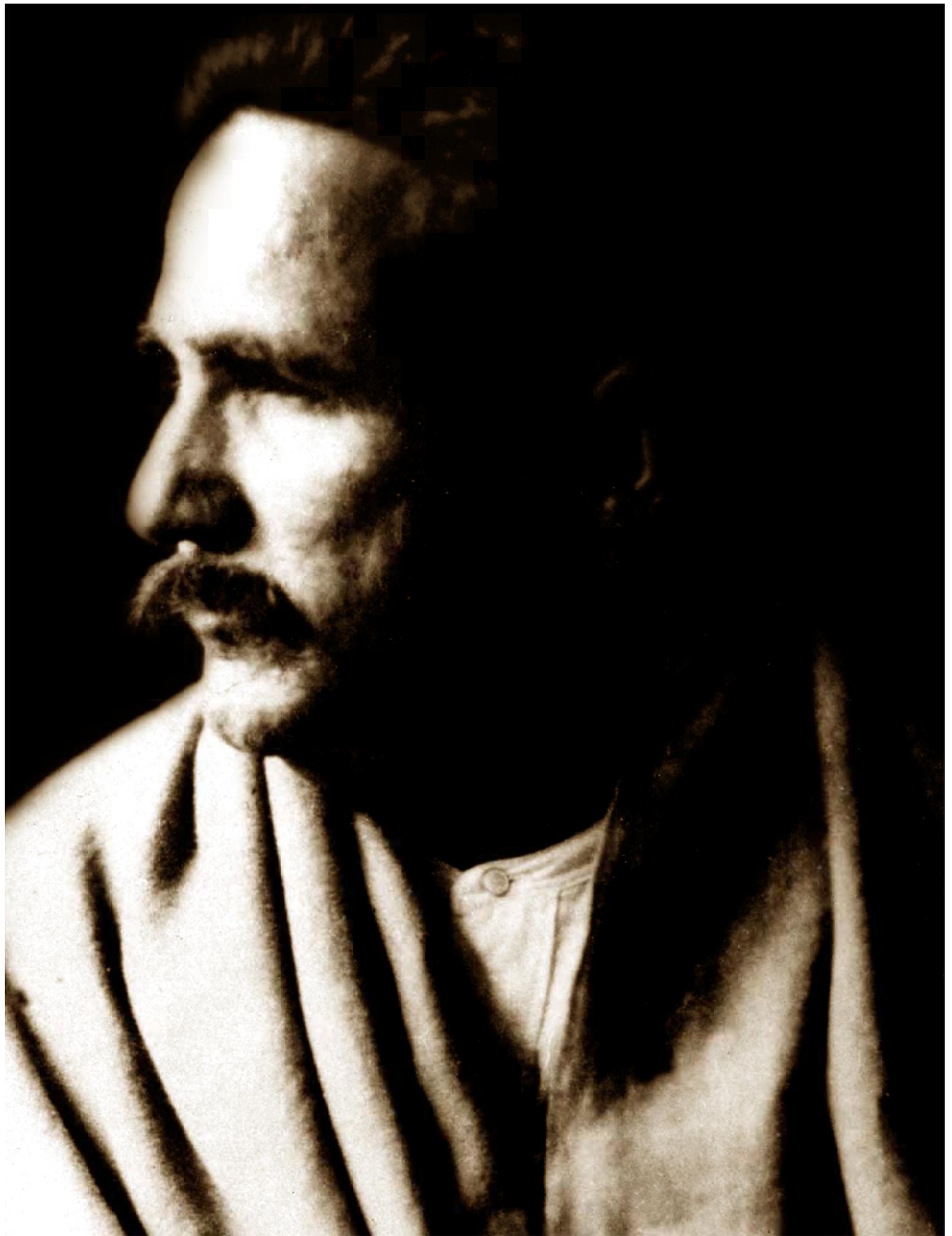
*Bottom: Iqbal leaning on a bed; Simla, 1929.*

*Facing page: Iqbal sitting in a sofa in his usual informal manner; Simla, 1929.*

*After the next page: Iqbal wearing a shawl. This well-known picture was also taken at Simla in 1929.*







## SYNOPSIS

### Zuboor-i-Ajam (1927)

*Zuboor-i-Ajam* (The Persian Psalms), for which the working title was 'The Songs of a Modern David,' represents both the lyrical and didactic strands in Iqbal's poetry – kept mostly separate here from each other. The arrangement of the book is noteworthy – the reader is smoothly guided from moving sufistic themes to a re-interpretation of the world around.

#### To the Reader

Prefatory verses are a reminder to the unpredictable ways of love and, hence, the spontaneity required for all spiritual understanding.

#### Part One

A prefatory couplet and invocation are followed by 56 poems addressed to God. The poems are captioned with numbers instead of titles, and while most in this section and the next conform to the traditional form of ghazal, some are distinctly not ghazals. Each poem is coherent in terms of meaning – unlike traditional ghazal – and all 56 together lend a wider thematic unity to the entire cycle.

#### Part Two

A prefatory couplet and a versified note for the reader is followed by 75 poems, just like the previous section, but these are addressed to humanity.

#### The New Rose Garden of Mystery

The spiritual themes and their implications for action are now condensed into nine questions and answers, fashioned after an older Persian work by Mahmud Shabistri called *The Rose Garden of Mystery*. The questions are: (1) What is the kind of thinking which the Path lies in? And why is thinking sometimes prayer and sometimes sin? (2) What means this union of Necessity and Possibility? What is involved in Distance and in Quantity? (3) How did the Eternal and the Temporal/ Become two things from one...? (4) O tell me who I am and then explain/ What the exploring of oneself may mean; (5) What is the part that's greater to the whole/ What path to tread if its attainment be your goal? (6) ...Whom can I designate the Perfect Man? (8) What does the claim, "I am the Truth," imply...? (7) ...What after all are those/

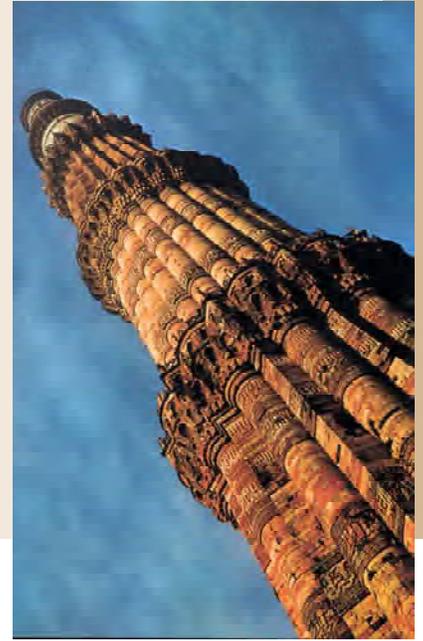
Things that Gnostic knows?

#### The Book of Slaves

The final section expounds that the true spiritual awareness cannot be separated from the necessity of political freedom, and goes on to compare the arts of slaves (music, painting) and their religion with the architecture of free men: "divorced from power, charm is sorcery;/ Combined with power, it is prophethood/ Love makes both charm and power work for it:/ It pools two worlds into a single one."

Note: Translated verses are taken from M. Hadi Husain

"Come witness and admire the art of free men, the creations of an Aibak or a Suri, if you have a living heart and eyes that are not blind," says Iqbal in 'The Book of Slaves'. Architecture of free men represented to him the greatness of their souls and he was especially partial to the Quwatul Islam Mosque in Delhi (seen below the Qutub Minar on the right, both built by Qutbuddin Aibak).



#### Excerpt from Part 1, Ghazal 16

Thinkest thou that to the thresh-  
old  
I have made this pilgrimage?  
With the master of the household  
I have business to engage.

Never more will I look backward  
On the road that I have traced;  
'Tis to gain the far to-morrow  
That, like Time, I forward haste.

Lo, love's ocean is my vessel,  
And love's ocean is my strand;  
For no other ship I hanker,

Nor desire another land.

In the far, fond hope that, haply,  
Thou wilt hunt for me one day,  
From the spinning noose of  
princes  
Like a fawn I left away.

And if thou wilt be so gracious,  
I will give these friends of mine  
A bright glass or two delightful  
Of my night-consoling wine.

Translated  
by A. J.  
Arberry

*Zuboor-i-Ajam* was first published in June 1927. It was scribed by Muhammad Siddique and printed on 'Super Fine' paper.

Right: First edition of *Zuboor-i-Ajam*



## SYNOPSIS

### *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam (1930/34)*



*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* comprises of seven lectures delivered from 1929 to 1932. Iqbal was rightly proud of this work, although he accepted its transitory character: “There is no such thing as finality in philosophical thinking. As knowledge advances and fresh avenues of thought are opened, other views, and probably sounder views than those set forth in these lectures, are possible.” Iqbal’s premise for these lectures was that “Classical Physics has learnt to criticize its own foundations,” and with the weakening of the materialistic approach in Physics “the day is not far when Religion and Science may discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies.”

#### *Preface*

Habits of concrete thought are significant in the modern mind, and therefore Iqbal sets forth to “reconstruct Muslim religious philosophy with due regard to the philosophical traditions of Islam and the more recent developments in the various domains of human knowledge.”

#### *I. Knowledge and Religious Experience*

Religion is opposed to the limitations of human being in looking for answers to fundamental questions about life and universe. Since it aims to guide and transform the humans – who are entitled to question the validity of the path before following it – religion stands in need of a rational foundation of its ultimate principles, and this point becomes obvious from the history of religious thought in Islam.

Regretfully, the complementary nature of thought and intuition has been misunderstood too frequently – a big mistake common to Ghazali and Kant is that they see idea as static and finite, while in fact it is infinite in its deeper motion or else even the finite thinking wouldn’t have been possible.

On the other hand, the heart (which is a kind of inner intuition or insight) is an equally important source of knowledge and this knowledge comes through mystical experience; while sense-perception makes indirect connections with the Ultimate Reality in the external world, the mystical experience establishes a “direct association with that reality as it reveals itself within.” If the humans are meant to be co-workers with God in re-shaping the destiny, and attain supremacy over surroundings (as Iqbal thinks is indicated by the Quran), then we need thought as well as heart.

Through sense-perception we acquire knowledge of those external forces so that we can tame them, but when those forces thwart us we need a capacity “to build a much vaster world in the depths of [our] own inner being,” which could save us from pessimism. Also, it will prevent us from using our power to unfair ends.

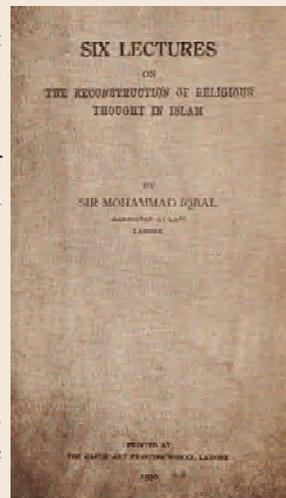
There are five characteristics of mystical experience: (1) immediacy, (2) un-analyzable wholeness, (3) momentary intimate association with the Unique Other Self, (4) incom-

municability, and (5) some relation to common (normal) experience. Mystic experience is not satanic, as proven by the followers of Freud, although Iqbal doesn’t find sufficient evidence to accept the theory of unconscious, nor the attribution of religious consciousness to the working of sex impulse.

#### *II. The Philosophical Test of the Revelations of Religious Experience*

The three logical proofs of God offered by scholastics have rightly been shown as insufficient; cosmological argument (i.e. everything has a cause and the final cause is God) “sets at naught the very law of causation on which the whole argument proceeds”; teleological argument (i.e. there must be a maker of the universe) proceeds on an analogy that is “of no value at all” because the human artificer works upon external material while nature also acts from within; the ontological argument (i.e. can we perceive a perfect being? If the answer is yes, then it follows that the perfect being must also exist, because otherwise it won’t be perfect) only proves that “the idea of a perfect being includes the idea of his existence” but doesn’t bridge the gap between “the idea of a perfect being in my mind and the objective reality of that being.”

However, the last two arguments will reveal their true significance “only if we were able to show that the human situation is not final and that thought and being are ultimately one.”



*Left: First edition of the lectures printed from Lahore, 1930 was printed at Kapoor Art Printing Works, Lahore, and published by Gulab Chand Kapoor.*

*Right: Iqbal with his admirers in Madras, 1929.*

Iqbal proceeds to analyze a number of contemporary theories of physics and philosophy – especially the works of Einstein, Whitehead, Bergson (refuting McTaggart) and Bertrand Russell (refuting Zeno) to arrive at the conclusion that “the Ultimate Reality is a rationally directed creative life;” hence “the ultimate nature of Reality is spiritual, and must be conceived as an ego.”

Hence the philosophical test of the revelation of religious experience is possible if taken on the terms that “intuition reveals life as a centralizing ego. This knowledge, however imperfect... is a direct revelation of the ultimate nature of Reality.”

### III. The Conception of God and the Meaning of Prayer

God has individuality (the metaphor of light in the Quran must be interpreted to mean His absoluteness, and not pantheistic omnipresence; God is not infinite in the sense of spatial infinity but consists of infinite inner possibilities of His creative activities – hence His infinity is ‘intensive, not extensive’).

Other important elements in the Quranic conception of God are Creative-

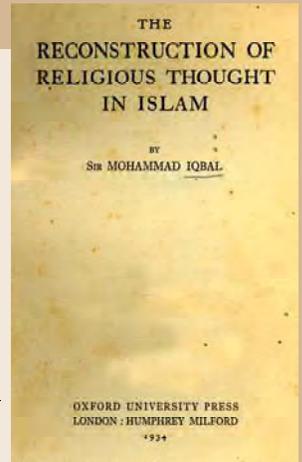
ness, Knowledge, Omnipotence, and Eternity.

The human being has a relatively perfect ego, and is a co-worker with God (the Quranic version of the Fall excludes the serpent and the rib-story altogether, introduces two trees instead of one, and declares the earth to be a source of profit for the humans; hence indicating “man’s rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and disobedience”).

Worship is an agency that brings association with the Ultimate Reality; “the act of worship, however, affects different varieties of consciousness differently,” and therefore search for knowledge is “essentially a form of prayer” too while the scientific observer of Nature is “a kind of mystic seeker in the act of prayer.”

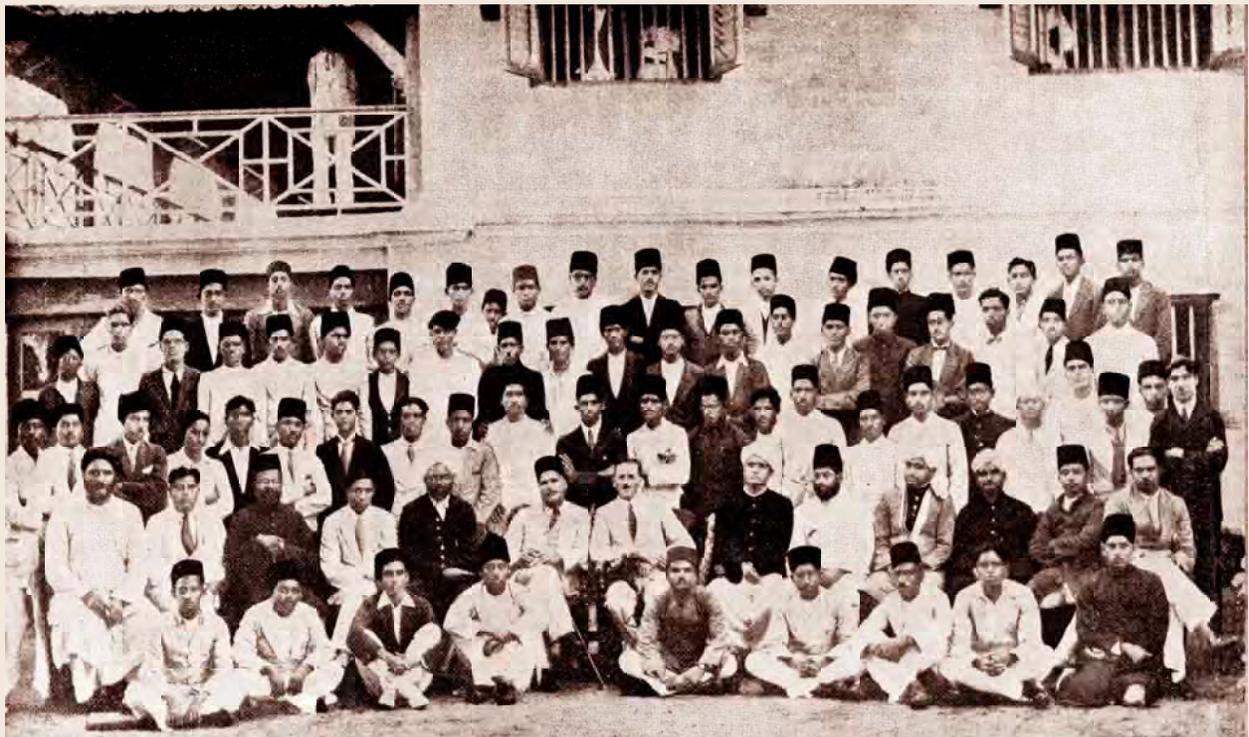
Likewise, vision and power must unite because “vision without power does bring moral elevation but cannot give a lasting culture. Therefore, “the spirit of all true prayer is social,” and in Islam it also reflects the true unity and equality of the human beings.

*Right: The second edition was published by Oxford University Press, London, in 1934. The text was slightly revised by Iqbal and the seventh lecture was added.*



### IV. The Human Ego – his Freedom and Immortality

Three aspects of the human being, “perfectly clear from the Quran” are that the human being is (a) “the chosen of God;” (b) despite many faults, meant to represent God on earth; and (c) the trustee of a free personality. Regretfully, the unity of human consciousness, mentioned in the Quran as one of the three sources of human knowledge along with History and Nature, never became the center of Muslim thought, otherwise it would have long been established that denying reality to the human ego is impossible, “even though its reality is too





Above: Iqbal waiting on the dais to deliver his lecture at Gokhale Hall, Madras, while the hosts present welcome address. Inset: Iqbal being received at Central Railway Station, Madras.

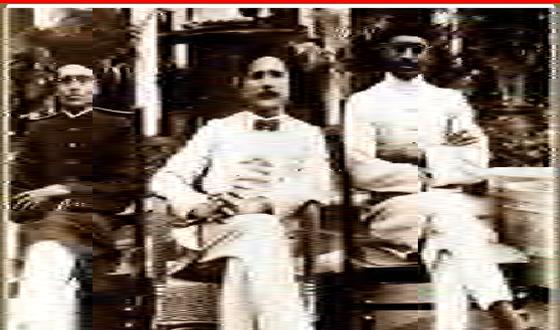


Right: A group photo from the same trip; the picture was taken on January 5, 1929 (the day he arrived in Madras and delivered the first lecture).



Right: Iqbal stopped at Bangalore (where this picture was taken) on January 9, 1929 on way to Mysore, which was the next leg of the tour. His travel companion Abdullah Chaghtai can be seen seated first from right. "The car had to move slow because admirers started running along it,"

Chughtai wrote back to a newspaper in Lahore.



Right: Another picture from the same occasion.

profound to be intellectualized," and characterized by (a) a unity of mental states; and (b) essential privacy ("God Himself cannot feel, judge, or choose for me...").

The soul, according to the Quran, is a directive of the Ultimate Ego, immanent in Nature, and thus personality is not a thing but an action (Iqbal refutes both Ghazali's perception of ego as a soul-substance, and William James' perception as the appropriation of one pulse of thought from another within a "stream of thought").

Emerging out of matter, or a colony of lower egos, the soul may rise to a level of complete independence.

Refuting the mechanistic interpretation of consciousness, Iqbal establishes the human ego as "a free personal casualty," whose independence is not restricted by the rules of Nature, since it is the inventor of those rules and they are not "a final expression of Reality" (the contrary fatalism of *qismat*, long-held in the Muslim world, was due to philosophical thought, political expediency and "gradual diminishing of the life-impulse", and must be discarded). Ibne Rushd didn't achieve anything out of his metaphysical approach to immortality while Kant's ethical approach also leaves much to be desired; Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, while a positive construct in itself, is fatalism worse than *qismat*.

Materialistic denial of immortality notwithstanding, the fundamental precepts of immortality derived from the Quran are: (a) ego has a beginning; (b) there is no possibility of return to this earth; (c) finitude is not misfortune.

It can be maintained that an ego after having reached the very highest point of intensity will retain its individuality in the face of death, apocalypse or even "in the case of a direct contact with the all-embracing Ego." However, resurrection can only happen through "a life-process within the ego" and therefore it cannot be taken for granted; humans are only candidates to it. It is difficult to say whether a form will accompany the resurrection of the

ego, but “some kind of local reference or empirical background” seems necessary for an ego.

However, Barzakh, Heaven and Hell are all states, not localities, through which the human ego “marches always onward to receive fresh illuminations from an Infinite Reality...”

#### V. *The Spirit of Muslim Culture*

Examining a culture can be a way of judging a prophet’s religious experience, since culture springs out of the will of its prophet. By asserting the finality of the prophet-hood of Muhammad, Islam ushers in the era of intellectual independence of the human being, and since “the possession and enjoyment of the Infinite” was the ideal in both the realms of pure intellect and higher Sufism (religious philosophy), Islamic culture focused on the concrete, the finite, for purposes of knowledge, for “it is the intellectual capture of, and power over, the concrete that makes it possible for the intellect of man to pass beyond the concrete.”

All lines of Muslim thought, therefore, converge in a dynamic conception of the universe (time and space), and even some idea of evolution was suggested by the Islamic philosophers and scientists, for whom the highest stage in evolution was the transcending of the time and space by a human soul – this concept of human evolution doesn’t deny immortality to the human being, unlike the modern theory of evolution that has brought so much despair.

Another ruling concept in the culture of Islam is historical criticism, which is based on two principles from the Quran: (a) the unity of human origin; and (b) life as a continuous movement in time. Therefore the contemporary sociologist Spengler is wrong in assuming that Islam belongs to the Magian group of cultures, directly opposed to the anti-classical spirit of the modern times: this very spirit arose out of “the revolt of Islam against Greek thought,” (which Spengler fails to understand that because he doesn’t believe that funda-

mentals can be passed on from one culture to another).

#### VI. *The Principle of Movement in the Structure of Islam*

*‘Ijtihad’* (literally meaning ‘to exert’) is the principle of movement in Islam, since the religion reaches a dynamic view of the universe and a unity of humans that is not rooted in blood relationship.

Decline of *ijtihad* in the history of Islam can be credited to three reasons: (a)

conservative reaction against Rationalism; (b) ascetic Sufism, which absorbed the best minds of the Muslim society and left the legal discussions in the hands of “intellectual mediocrity and the unthinking masses”; and (c) the fall of Baghdad, which prompted a rigid organization in the Muslim society out of fear of disintegration.

Two distinct movements to revive *ijtihad* can be traced in the later Muslim history: Ibne Taimiyyah’s revolt against the finality of the earlier schools

*Below: Iqbal with students in Mysore, 1929. Bottom: Iqbal with students in Hyderabad (Deccan), which was the last stop in his lecturing tour in January*





(resulting in the Wahhabi Movement in Arabia), and the Religious Reform Movement in Turkey (led by Sa'id Halim Pasha), which upholds the transfer of the caliphate from an individual to an assembly.

The rest of the Muslim world must look at the Turkish reforms with an independent mind, e.g. the ideas of the poet Zia Gokalp about regional sovereignty, replacement of Arabic with local languages for better understanding, and gender equality. Liberalism must be greeted with a careful protection against racism and disintegration that usually accompanies liberalism.

Conservative public in modern India may not be prepared for a critical discussion on *fiqh* (Islamic Law), but it must be remembered that: (1) there was no written Islamic law up to the rise of the Abbasides; (2) early theologians also passed from deductive to inductive methods in their efforts to answer the questions of their times; and (3) possibility of further evolution of the Islamic law becomes evident when we carefully look at its four sources: (a) Quran, which is not a legal code but rather aims "to awaken in man the higher consciousness of his relation with God and the universe"; (b) Hadith, which mainly demonstrates examples of how the Prophet applied the broader principles to a specific socio-cultural context; (c) *Ijma'* (consensus), which may be imparted to a democratically elected assembly in a modern Muslim state; and (d) *Qiyas* (analogical reasoning), which is just another word for *ijtihad*.

Hence, "the closing of the door of Ijtihad is pure fiction suggested partly by the crystallization of legal thought in Islam, and partly by that intellectual laziness which, especially in the period of spiritual decay, turns great thinkers into idols. If some of the later doctors have upheld

this fiction, modern Islam is not bound by this voluntary surrender of intellectual independence" (none of the founders of Islamic law claimed finality of their schools).

The modern world needs (1) spiritual interpretation of the universe; (2) spiritual emancipation of the individual; and (3) universal principles to guide the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis. Thought alone cannot have a lasting impact, and the responsibility falls upon the Muslims, who must appreciate their position, reconstruct their social life, and, "evolve, out of the hitherto partially revealed purpose of Islam, that spiritual democracy which is the ultimate aim of Islam."

#### VII. Is Religion Possible?

This chapter comprises of the lecture delivered in London in 1932 on request of the Aristotelian Society.

Three periods in religious life are (1) faith; (2) thought (with emphasis on metaphysics); and (3) discovery (with emphasis on psychology, since "the religious life develops an ambition to come in direct contact with the ultimate Reality," through which the ego discovers its uniqueness).

The question whether religion is possible, is legitimate because there are "potential types of consciousness lying close to our normal consciousness" and can bring life-giving and life-yielding experience.

The question must also be raised because of its scientific interest and practical importance (since naturalism has destroyed faith in future and the modern human being "has ceased to live soulfully, i.e. from within" while the medieval techniques of mysticism have also stopped producing original experience due to conservatism).

Both science and religion are purifiers of experience in different spheres of inquiry – while in science we deal with the 'behavior' of reality, in religion we deal with its 'nature.' The end of the ego's quest is a more precise definition of individuality – a vital rather than an intellectual act.

*Above left and below: Iqbal at Aligarh to deliver his lectures. Sir Syed's grandson and Iqbal's close friend Ross Masud is prominent (to the left of Iqbal in each picture).*





*Zuboor-i-Ajam* was written at the same time when he was putting down the first three lectures on *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (of course in English prose) while the subject matter of the next three lectures was apparently there in his mind too. Together, the two books are a bold attempt to challenge the conventional notions about the nature of God in order to bring some radical changes in the course of human life.

On the surface his Persian poems seem as if he is being fresh with God, and indeed that is also true. However, it is important to understand his motive and reason. As he once jotted down in *Stray Reflections*, he held that the worth of things was through and through human although God created those things. A diamond, for instance, owed its price not so much to what God made it, as it did to the fact that the humans preferred it above other stones. The human being, according to Iqbal, was a creator too and God was 'a co-worker' with him. "When attracted by the forces around him, man has the power to shape and direct them; when thwarted by them, he has the capacity to build a much vaster world in the depths of his own inner being," he summarized the functions of outward and inward dimensions of human intelligence in his lecture on religious experience. "Hard his lot and frail is his being, like a rose-leaf, yet no form of reality is so powerful, so inspiring, and so beautiful as the spirit of man!"

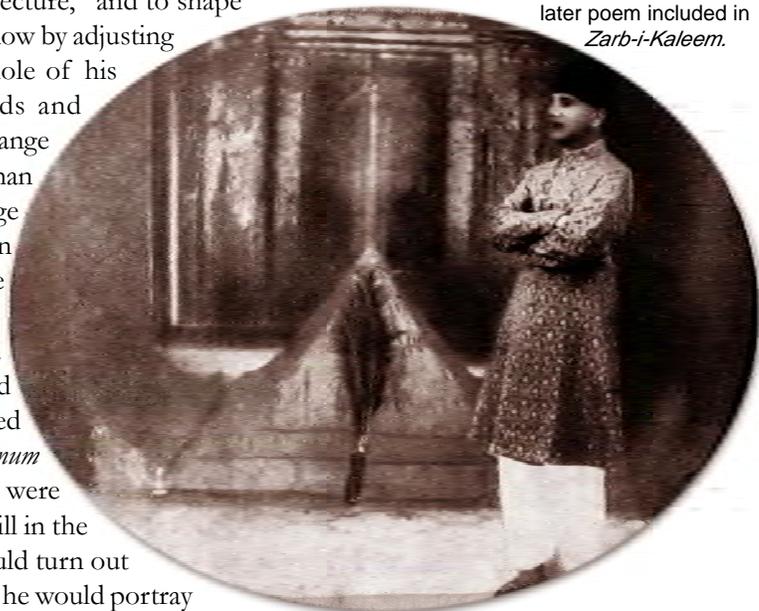
*Zuboor-i-Ajam* was a celebration of this creative relationship with the Divine. Many of its lyrical poems were prayers offered to the divine Beloved by a self-aware devotee: "From whence comes the burning desire in my bosom," the second lyric started. "The cup is from me, but from whence comes the wine in it? I understand that the world is dust and I am a handful of it, but from whence comes the thirst for discovery in my every particle?" The other poems were aimed at explaining this relationship – forgotten in the East and ignored in the West. "It is the lot of man to share in the deeper aspirations of the universe around him," Iqbal wrote in the lecture, "and to shape his own destiny as well as that of the universe, now by adjusting himself to its forces, now by putting the whole of his energy to mould its forces to his own ends and purposes. And in this process of progressive change God becomes a co-worker with him, provided man takes the initiative: 'Verily God will not change the condition of men, till they change what is in themselves.'" The last was a quotation from the Quran.

*Zuboor-i-Ajam* was indeed the psalms of a modern David; the world was not enough, and sometime during writing it the poet conceived the basis of his greatest masterpiece, his *magnum opus*, which he started soon after his psalms were finished in 1927, and while his lectures were still in the process of being written. This other book would turn out to be *Javidnama*, or *The Book of Eternity*, and in it he would portray

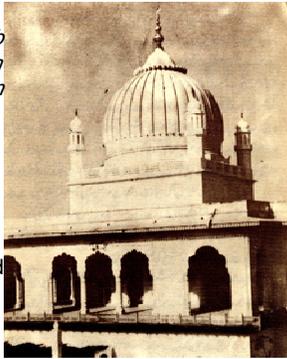
During his trip to Madras Iqbal was given a reception by Anjuman Khawateen-i-Islam on January 7, 1929. Iqbal's speech on this occasion was later summarized as 'The Status of Men and Women in the Muslim Law' for the Lahore based daily, *Inqilab*. Although he observed that it did not include some of the key points it still remains an important document of his views on this subject.

Iqbal stated that men and women have complete equality in Islam; the famous verse from the Quran quoted in support of male superiority should be more appropriately translated to mean that men are the 'protectors' of women. He mentioned that the guiding principle of Islam in such matters was that religion should bring convenience. While assigning women a different role from men by the law of Islam as well as by the law of nature and criticizing the female emancipation movement in the West, he highlighted some important legal rights, which he said must be asserted against convention. These include: (1) Women's right to own property and attain economic independence; (2) Delegation of the right to divorce; (3) Restriction on polygamy.

Below: Iqbal at the mausoleum of Sultan Tipu during his visit to Bangalore, January 1929. Tipu found substantial reference in *Javidnama* as well as in a later poem included in *Zarb-i-Kaleem*.



Right:  
The tomb  
of Shiekh  
Ahmad in  
Sirhind  
(India).



Shaikh  
Ahmad  
of Sirhind  
(1564-  
1624),  
more  
popularly

known as Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani (the Renovator of the Second Millennium) was a major exponent of the Naqshbandi school of Sufism and disagreed with the widely perceived interpretation of *wahdat al wujud*. He was a natural precursor of Iqbal in the sense that he (a) proposed a more assertive view of the human ego without breaking away from the mystic tradition; and (b) he made it his life mission to preserve the political and cultural identity of the Muslim community in India. It seems that Iqbal arrived upon these common themes independently and then discovered Shiekh Ahmad as a valuable precedent (the Shiekh does not feature among the classical writers discussed in the Preface to the first edition of *Asrar-i-Khudi* in 1915 but he finds a mention in 1920 when the same issue is revisited in a letter to Nicholson).

References to him in Iqbal's writings include, above all, a poem in *Baal-i-Gabriel*—apparently inspired by his visit to the saint's tomb in 1934—and a detailed discussion in the lecture 'Is Religion Possible' in 1932 (later included in the revised edition of *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*) to show that "there is a whole universe of inner experience" untouched by modern psychology due to its slavish imitation of biology: a mere analytical criticism of sex-imagery or imaginative means of escapes furnished by religion is not likely "to carry us to the living roots of human personality." A passage from Shiekh Ahmad is quoted to illustrate that the ultimate aim of religious life is "the reconstruction of the finite ego by bringing him into contact with an eternal life-process, and thus giving him a metaphysical status of which we can have only a partial understanding in the half-choking atmosphere of our present environment."

the entire universe, even the paradise and the throne of God, from a novel perspective. That will be discussed in the next chapter.

From 1926 to 1929 he penned down his most famous six lectures, which were soon afterwards published from Lahore and later reprinted by Oxford University Press with the addition of a seventh. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, as the collection was called, aimed at presenting his philosophy in the light of the Quran on one hand, and contemporary philosophical and scientific thought on the other – "the day is not far off when Religion and Science may discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies."

"The demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge is only natural," he wrote in the preface after explaining that the modern mind possessed habits of concrete thought, suspicious of that inner experience on which religious faith ultimately rests. He thought that the time was ripe for the fusion of religious philosophy with modern knowledge (he usually thought that the cosmic designs were on his side if he felt excited about an undertaking), since 'Classical Physics has learned to criticize its own foundations' (obviously a reference to the Theories of Relativity). "It must, however, be remembered that there is no such thing as finality in philosophical thinking," he reminded his readers with his characteristic frankness. "As knowledge advances and fresh avenues of thought are opened, other views, and probably sounder views than those set forth in these lectures, are possible. Our duty is carefully to watch the progress of human thought, and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it."

Hence he trusted the future generations to update this picture and point out his shortcomings with the same ruthlessness that he had displayed in the criticism of his predecessors; he would be happy, as long as everything is seen from a holistic human point of interest. Unfortunately, this hasn't happened and his lectures have been treated like a classic – even those portions where he enjoins upon the readers that the spirit of life, and the Quran, is essentially anti-classical.

To a modern reader, however, the lectures pose a basic problem: beautiful, astonishing statements of Iqbal on life and universe are buried under cumbersome quotations from other authors, many of whom are no longer very familiar to us.

However, his key concepts can be salvaged from beneath the heap and a map of his universe be drawn up. Brick by brick, he creates a well-knitted picture of the universe through redefining the essential constructs of the Eastern mind in these lectures: God, nature, time, reality, thought, destiny, death, resurrection, prayer, and so on. Iqbal ventures to tread where Kant had given up long ago. Religious experience can be tested rationally but thought must rise above its ordinary level in order to do so. Intuition is a higher form of intellect, and through a unity of intuition and thought it can be realized that "the ultimate nature of Reality is spiritual," but it must also be "conceived as an ego." According to him, God is "the Ultimate Ego," and "a rationally directed creative life."

The most divine element in the human being is, therefore, the ego, which unites us with God, so that one may become 'a co-worker' with Him.

Another construct remarkably redefined here is "destiny." Iqbal doesn't see it as predetermined, but merely as an ever-changing cluster of possibilities in the heart of this universe. In *Javidnama*, he would explode in anger against

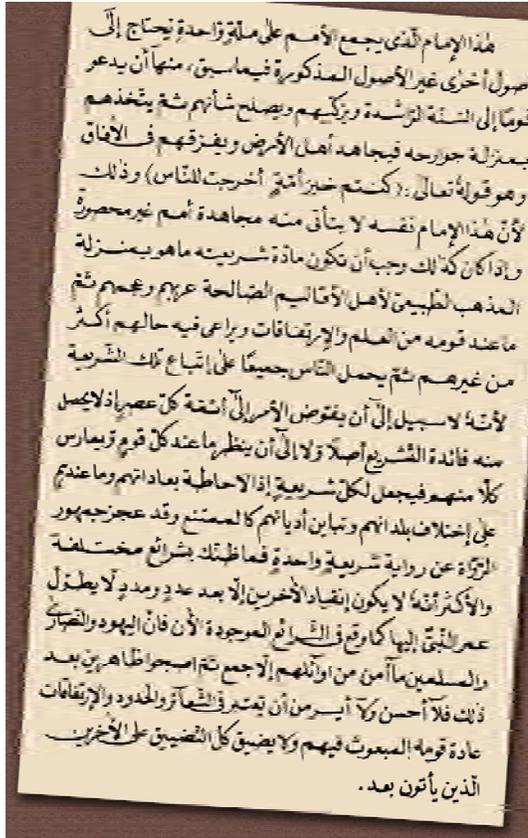
those who clung to pessimistic concepts of life: "Go and ask God to give you a good destiny – He is bountiful, so He must have plenty for you to choose from. If it is the destiny of glass to be broken, very well then, transform yourself into a stone, because humans can change. You change your destiny when you change yourself."

Establishing God as a rationally directed creative life and the Ultimate Ego; the human being as an ego who is candidate to immortality and responsible for shaping its own destiny as well as the destiny of the universe; defining prayer as 'a normal vital act by which the little island of our personality

suddenly discovers its situation in a larger whole of life,' Iqbal finally moved to the subject that had created an uproar in Lahore when he touched upon it a few years ago. However, he still took the precaution of explaining the 'spirit of the Muslim culture' in the fifth lecture before treading again upon *ijtihad* in the next. The spirit of the Quran is essentially anti-classical, he pointed out, and the Prophet of Islam was the person who lifted the ancient world out of its dogmatic cradle and placed it into the modern frame. "Man is primarily governed by passion and instinct," Iqbal wrote. "Inductive reason, which alone makes man master of his environment, is an achievement; and when once born it must be reinforced..."

Moving on to the touchy subject of *ijtihad* finally in the sixth lecture, he stated, "As a cultural movement Islam rejects the old static view of the universe, and reaches a dynamic view. As an emotional system of unification it recognizes the worth of the individual as such, and rejects blood-relationship as a basis of human unity. Blood-relationship is earth-rootedness. The search for a purely psychological foundation of human life is spiritual in its origin. Such a perception is creative of fresh loyalties without any ceremonial to keep them alive, and makes it possible for man to emancipate himself from the earth..."

The idea of emancipating the human being from the earth found yet another exposition in the 'Allahabad Address,' delivered at the annual session of the All India Muslim League in 1930, where he discussed the possibility of a Muslim state "within or without the British India." Although he rendered various other services to the cause of the Muslim League, especially in the last two years of his life, the 'Allahabad Address' of 1930 is the pivot on which rests his reputation as the ideological founding father of Pakistan.



Left: A passage from Hujjatullah-al-Balighah by Shah Waliullah of Delhi (1703-62) in Arabic. It inspired both Shibli and Iqbal.

Shah Waliullah was the renowned religious philosopher and political visionary whom Shibli Nomani placed on an equal footing, if not above, Al Ghazali and Ibn Rushd while Iqbal described him as "perhaps the first Muslim who felt the urge of a new spirit in him."

The concept of *ijtihad* in both Shibli and Iqbal was guided by the same passage in Waliullah's great masterpiece *Hujjatullah al Balighah*. Current scholarship doubts if the passage was interpreted correctly and it is now believed that Shibli – and after him Iqbal – took liberties that could not be sanctioned by the context of the passage in Shah Waliullah's own writing.

Iqbal summarized this passage in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* as following: "The prophetic method of teaching, according to Shah Wali Allah, is that, generally speaking, the law revealed by a prophet takes especial notice of the habits, ways, and peculiarities of the people to whom he is specifically sent. The prophet who aims at all-embracing principles, however, can neither reveal different principles for different peoples, nor leaves them to work out their own rules of conduct. His method is to train one particular people, and to use them as a nucleus for the building up of a universal *Shari'ah*. In doing so he accentuates the principles underlying the social life of all mankind, and applies them to concrete cases in the light of the specific habits of the people immediately before him. The *Shari'ah* values (*Ahkam*) resulting from this application (e.g. rules relating to penalties for crimes) are in a sense specific to that people; and since their observance is not an end in itself they cannot be strictly enforced in the case of future generations."

Iqbal goes on to state that Abu Hanifah, the pioneer jurist some thousand years before Waliullah and having "a keen insight into the universal character of Islam" seemed to have a similar approach.



"The task before the modern Muslim is... immense. He has to rethink the whole system of Islam without breaking with the past," Iqbal wrote in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

According to him, Jamaluddin Afghani realized the importance and immensity of this task and had "a deep insight into the inner meaning of the history of Muslim thought and life, combined with a broad vision engendered by his wide experience of men and manners."

However, his indefatigable energy was divided too much between his anti-imperialist activism in almost every Muslim country from Turkey to India, and his parlaying with the European powers including Britain, France and Russia. His main opponents were decadent Muslim despots and narrow-minded religious scholars.

"His restless soul migrated from one Muslim country to another," Iqbal wrote elsewhere and appropriately showed him offering prayers with his disciple Saeed Haleem Pasha on the planet Mercury in *Javidnama*.

Reportedly, Afghani also proposed in 1879 a Muslim republic comprising the Muslim Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Muslim-majority areas in north-west India.



Left: Jamaluddin Afghani (1838-97), the 19th Century reformer who urged upon the Muslim rulers of the world to join hands against the European imperialism and increase their power through acquisition of modern knowledge. He is cited as the influence behind freedom movements in Sudan, Iran, Turkey and Egypt in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.



Left: Saeed Haleem Pasha (1864-1921), the polite mannered grand vizier of Turkey (1913 to 1917) who did not approve of the Ottoman participation in the First World War.

"Where there is no vision, people perish," Iqbal would indulgently quote from Solomon and then point out the difference between a visionary and a politician. A visionary learns to take "a clean jump over the temporal limitations," while the politician's craft was to tackle those very limitations and work *through* them. In that sense, a visionary could sometime look blind, foolish, crazy, or even treacherous, by overlooking certain problems facing her or his community. If those problems were of a temporal nature it would not befit her or him to give them the dignity of permanence. A visionary's job was to discover the larger pattern, the universal laws governing history.

The central premise in Iqbal's historical vision was probably the phrase he threw in his letter to Sir Francis Younghusband a year later: "readjustments are commonplaces of history."

A hundred years ago, the British imperialism was on the rise in India and then the enlightened elite were looking at its blessings. Now, in the 1930's, the British were on their way out, and hence the masses were rising up to release the negative feelings that were held back for so long out of necessity. This was a changing situation and called upon everyone to *readjust* rather than to *react*.

The British were leaving, of this he was sure. Even in the Preface of *Payam-i-Mashriq* in 1923 he had mentioned "the debilitation of the forces of life" in Europe after the Great War. He was right in his analysis, because the end of the Empire came from very similar reasons although it took one more World War. However, while the politicians and politically motivated historians would be looking at the temporal causes of the fall of the Empire, such as the casualties in the wars, Iqbal would look at how these temporal causes affected the inner life of the British nation. It were not the wars themselves but their effect on the "forces of life" that caused the decline—after all, the British imperialism had marched on unhampered by the great Napoleonic Wars in the previous century.

The people(s) of India should be prepared for two periods of readjustment. Firstly, there was the situation at hand. Here, the "appearance of a revolt" was created because the Western mind was historical in its nature while the Eastern mind was not. "To the Western man things gradually become; they have a past, present and future," he later stated in a public address. "The Eastern man's world-consciousness is non-historical." To the Eastern mind, things were immediately rounded off, timeless, purely present. The British as a Western people could not but conceive political reform in India as a systematic process of gradual evolution, whereas "Mahatma Gandhi as an Eastern man sees in this attitude nothing more than an ill-conceived unwillingness to part with power, and tries all sort of destructive negotiations to achieve immediate attainment. Both are elementally incapable of understanding each other. The result is the appearance of a revolt."

The current hard feelings between Britain and the Indian people would pass, as long as everyone kept their sense of humor alive. Afterwards would come the second phase of readjustment. The independent India would have to match its political independence with a change in the collective character.

On one hand it would have to recognize its new position as a friend and comrade to the former British foes in the global community and on the other hand it would have to decide what role it must play in the world.

Would India become just another nation-state after its independence, a parody of the countries of Europe? Or would it discover something new from the inner depths of its conscience? Could it be that the unique cultures of the peoples of this region contained seeds of other types of political structures that never got a chance to sprout under the despots in the past?

As an Indian, he could not reconcile with the idea of his country aping the modern states of the West. Those states were programmed to compete against each other and enslave the weaker nations – whether politically or economically. He would not like to imagine his country as the imperial tyrant of the next century.

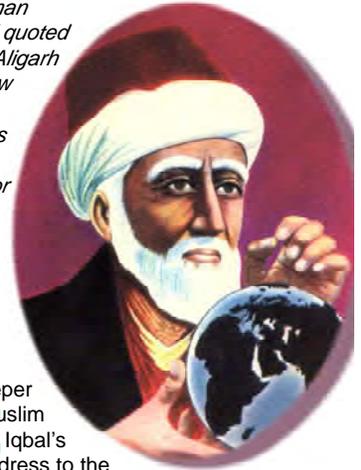
He might also have feared that the independent country could slide back into its backwardness of the pre-British period. Unlike Shibli and the Hindu novelists of Bengal he could not see the past as an unremitting succession of golden ages – whether Muslim gold or Hindu gold. He was perennially critical of the Arab imperialism of the early period although he too gave in to the psychological need of feeling good about icons in poetry. Moreover, he believed that the true ideals of Islam were yet to be discovered. Conversion of India into a nation-state practically ruled by the Hindus by the virtue of numerical majority meant that the last chance of trying out the hitherto undiscovered political humanism of Islam in that country was gone forever.

There was another aspect of anxiety, more real and alarming. “In India, people are not at all used to learn about former times from the facts of history, nor from reading books,” Sir Syed had written with regret while addressing his people after the turmoil of 1857. “It is for this reason that you people are not familiar with the injustice and oppression that used to take place in the days of the past rulers.” It was indeed a dangerous sign that communal atrocities between the Hindus and the Muslims skyrocketed as the movement for Indian independence paced up in the 1920’s. Iqbal was justified in demanding some constitutional safeguards for the preservation of the cultural entity of his community in the future shape of things.

The demand for constitutional safeguards was distasteful to the Congress, apparently because the nationalists were driven by a historical fallacy. It was generally believed that the communities in India were living in mutual affection until the British came and applied a ‘divide and rule’ policy. The fact was that every ruler, political contestant or even a game player tries to divide the opponents. Was there ever a conqueror, whether Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Greek or Roman, who encouraged his adversaries to ‘unite’ against him?

The phrase ‘divide and rule,’ whoever invented it, was a good joke at the expense of the British but it was nothing more than that – a joke. It was to be taken with a pinch of salt but unfortunately became the proverbial grit in the eyes of the nationalists blocking their vision from seeing the reality under their noses. They did not see the Muslim demand for constitutional safeguards as necessary “readjustment,” but only as a continuation of the divisionary process allegedly started by the British.

*Right: Abu Rehan Alberuni. Iqbal quoted Dr. Ziauddin of Aligarh College to show that Alberuni “used Newton’s formula of Interpolation for valuing the various intermediary angles of Trigonometry functions.”*



‘A Plea for Deeper Study of the Muslim Scientists’ was Iqbal’s presidential address to the Oriental Conference, Lahore, in 1928 and later published in *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad Deccan, April 1929.

The questions raised in the beginning are: Is modern science Western in origin? Why did the Muslims prefer architecture over music and painting as a mode of self-expression? What does their mathematics and decorative art reveal about their intellectual and emotional attitude towards the concepts of space and time? Were their psychological reasons for the rise and final acceptance, as an orthodox religious dogma, of a boldly conceived Atomic theory wholly unlike the Greek theory? What is the psychological meaning of *miraj* in the cultural history of Islam?

“The truth is that it is absolutely necessary to answer all such questions, and mutually to adjust their answers into a systematic whole of thought and emotion” in order to discover the spirit of a given culture. “It is in Art as well as in the concepts of special sciences and philosophy that the true spirit of a culture is revealed” and Islam provided the basis for modern Western culture. Ibn Taimiya, Ghazzali, Razi and Suhrawardi Maqul were forerunners of Bacon and Descartes while the concepts of Alberuni and Fakhruddin Iraqi disprove Sprengrer’s assertion that no other culture except the modern Western gives even a hint of the idea of ‘Function.’ Iraqi’s Aristotelian prejudice and lack of psychological analysis, however, prevented him from discovering the relation between Divine Time and serial time, and the essentially Islamic idea of continuous creation and a growing universe.



Culturally descended from the Hindu community, religiously close to the Muslim faith but historically bitter about the atrocities committed by the Mughals, the Sikhs presented an interesting case study in the communal politics of India during the later Raj period.

Their population was concentrated in Punjab and was regarded politically to be a part of the Hindu community until 1919, when the British declared them a separate minority through the 'Gurdawara Act.' Henceforth their role became crucial in the politics of Punjab, and the Muslims often accused the Congress of using the Sikh issue for complicating the power game in this province of delicate Muslim majority.

*Below: Two group photos at Khalsa College, Amritsar, in 1927. Iqbal is seated second from right in each.*



Iqbal responded to at least three different strands in the Hindu leadership. The first was the reactionary and militant movements aimed at annihilating the non-Hindu minorities, especially the Muslims. Such movements naturally inspired fear and insecurity among the Muslims, and Iqbal might have shared some of this anxiety.

The second strand was the educated middle class politicians, such as the Nehrus (Motilal and his son Jawaharlal) or the more broad-minded and conciliatory Gokhale before them. Iqbal saw them as politically displaced dreamers. "The modern Hindu is quite a phenomenon," he had scribbled in his notebook in 1910. "To me his behavior is more a psychological than a political study. It seems that the ideal of political freedom which is an absolutely new experience to him has siezed his entire soul, turning the various streams of his energy from their wonted channels and bringing them to pour forth their whole force into this new channel of activity."

Iqbal suspected that this path would eventually estrange the Hindu to "the ethical ideals of his ancestors," just as the political life of the medieval Christians lost touch with the ideals of Christianity once they accepted the principle of nation-states. However, that was perhaps their own business and Iqbal's attitude towards this class of the Hindu politicians was courteous and sometimes even affectionate: *Javidnama* (1932) contained praise of the Nehrus, apparently inspired by the Swaraj speech of Jawaharlal.

How far were these modern politicians in touch with the pulse of the masses? Intoxicated with Indian patriotism they wanted to throw the British out of their country but was there any guarantee that once the British were gone and India was left to the Indians the multitudes in the streets, villages and fields would be under the sway of these politicians and not give in to the more popular outcry of the militants? After all, the masses were illiterate and untouched by those Western institutions that had moulded the minds of the Nehru-type of politicians. The ideals of patriotism learnt from the West needed modifications to the situation on the ground but these noble minds seemed to be carried too far in their imitation of the heroes of the European liberation movements. Iqbal persistently complained that they had lost touch with reality.

The third strand within the Hindu politics was represented by Gandhi. He was the hier to such extremists as Gangadhar Tilak. He was the philosophical face of the same system that spurned out the Hindu militants in the sense that he was an incarnation of the wisdom of the East— as well as its elemental shortcomings (which does not mean that he shared the views of the militants, just as some common origin of racism and the Theory of Evolution would not make Darwin a Nazi). Working with a non-historical premise, Gandhi too was unable to see that the war he had waged so gloriously was not, in reality, a revolt against the British at all. It was a war against the minorities of India.

The real parties to the contemporary struggle in South Asia were not England and India, "but the majority community and the minorities of India which [could] ill-afford to accept the principle of Western democracy until it [was] properly modified to suit the actual conditions of life in India."



The Muslim League suffered badly from its split over the issue of the Simon Commission in 1927. That split also reflected the same conflict between the Eastern and the Western minds, as Iqbal might had wanted to say. The British did not appoint any Indian to the Commission because, firstly, it was a Royal Commission, and secondly, the political situation in India was not yet ready for such a nomination. However, such conditions could come into being in the near future. Iqbal and his political leader Sir Muhammad Shafi therefore took away a faction of the Muslim League to cooperate with the commission while the volatile Jinnah, acting more closely to the Eastern conscience of the Congress, held back the majority of the League from cooperating. The League could not even hold its annual session in 1929 and its survival remained doubtful even after the reconciliation between the two factions. It was at this time that Jinnah started his plans to retire from the Indian politics after a last bow in the forthcoming Round Table Conference.

In that fateful summer of 1930 when the country was ringing with the Congressional cries of *swaraj*, the half-abandoned Muslim League desperately maneuvered a comeback. Celebrity presence was needed and who could be a bigger star than the poet-philosopher by now being hailed as “Allama” Iqbal. He dispatched his approval after some initial delay but the annual session originally planned for mid-August in Lucknow had to be unceremoniously postponed twice and it was sheer good luck that it took place even at the very end of the year and in a forlorn *haveli* in Allahabad.

“At the present moment the national idea is racializing the outlook of Muslims, and thus materially counteracting the humanizing work of Islam,” he addressed a handful of Muslims in that poorly attended meeting. “And the growth of racial consciousness may mean the growth of standards different and even opposed to the standards of Islam.”

Apparently he was equipped to use this occasion for the promotion of his lifelong dream, the attainment of global prosperity through maximizing the moral capabilities of humanity, and now proposed that the Muslim majority provinces in India should be turned into testing grounds for it. “Is it possible to retain Islam as an ethical ideal and to reject it as a polity in favor of national politics in which religious attitude is not permitted to play any part?” He asked his listeners, and explained that the separation of the Church and the state in Europe had led to exploitative political systems. Fortunately, there was no Church in Islam and the Muslims should grasp the freedom and responsibility bestowed upon each individual by this great liberating religious idea.

“I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state,” the words have become well-known since then. “Self-Government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of the North-West India.”

By his own admission he was not the inventor of this idea, which had a long history of its genesis – one British gentleman had suggested a grouping



Above: Chaudhry Rehmat Ali (seated first from left) and a bunch of Indian Muslim students with Iqbal during Iqbal's visit to England in 1932.

Iqbal did not name his proposed Muslim state. The name that was subsequently given to it came from a source ironically hostile to the concept.

Chaudhry Rehmat Ali (1897-1951), a former student of Islamia College Lahore (but not a pupil of Iqbal) and a friend of Chaudhry Muhammad Husain, Iqbal's trusted disciple, published a pamphlet, *Now or Never*, from Cambridge in 1933 and launched what he would later call the 'Pakistan Movement.' A comparison of his pamphlet with Iqbal's Allahabad Address of 1930 reveals Rehmat Ali's debt to the poet-philosopher. Rehmat Ali's idea was to divide India into several smaller states and secure as many geographical units for the Muslims as possible. One of them was to be called 'Pakstan' – an acronym comprising the initials of Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Sindh, and the last three letters of Baluchistan. Iqbal and other Muslim leaders quickly announced their indifference to the scheme, which was militant rather than parliamentary in spirit.

The Lahore Resolution of 1940, which affirmed the Muslim League's support to Iqbal's proposed state, did not use the word Pakistan. However, the name was soon tagged – mainly by the media – to the homeland it demanded.

Rehmat Ali opposed the partition of India in 1947 on the grounds that it did not give the Muslims all the lands he thought they should have. In 1948 he visited the newborn Pakistan, announcing a movement to annul the partition and start things afresh!

His request for the citizenship of Pakistan was denied for good reason and he went back to Cambridge.

“The proposal was put forward before the Nehru Committee,” Iqbal admitted about the suggestion of a Muslim state in the North-Western India in his Allahabad Address. “They rejected it on the ground that, if carried into effect, it would give a very unwieldy state.”

The Pakistani historian K.K. Aziz presents at least forty-four other people who suggested the idea of Muslim separatism between 1858 and 1930.

The earliest name in the list is the British colonialist John Bright, who suggested in 1858 (and again in 1877), five or six presidencies with complete autonomy ultimately becoming independent states.

It is not surprising to see also included in this list Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Jamaluddin Afghani, the Aligarh principals Theodore Beck and Theodore Morison, Abdul Halim Sharar, Akbar Allahabadi, Chaudhry Rehmat Ali, Hasrat Mohani, Kheiri Brothers and His Highness the Aga Khan.

Muhammad Ali (Jauhar) recognized the separate ‘national’ identity of the Muslim community as early as 1911 and 1912, but at that time he was still speaking in such terms as “A united India does not exist, but we have to create it.” By 1925 he too was justifying separation on “economic, strategic, religious and cultural grounds.”

The most unexpected entries in the list are, the Russian dictator Joseph Stalin, the staunch Indian patriot Lala Lajpat Rai and the palmist Cheiro.

Stalin is quoted from as early as 1912 (many years before he came to power) to be stating that “India will, with the further course of bourgeois development, split up into innumerable nationalities,” and again reiterating similar beliefs in 1924.

Lajpat Rai was the famous patriot from Punjab, for the inauguration of whose Young Men’s Indian Association in 1904 Iqbal is reported to have originally written *Saray jahan say achha*. His death from a beating by the police while protesting against the Simon Commission was avenged by Bhagat Singh (leading to Singh’s own execution). Lajpat Rai proposed in 1924 to give the Muslims four states of their own – NWFP, Western Punjab, Sind and Eastern Bengal – in order to get rid of separate electorates without risking a civil war.

Cheiro predicted in 1925 that “one day India will be divided equally between the Muslims and the followers of Buddha.”

of these provinces even in 1877, the year Iqbal was born. Pakistan’s claim to be the brainchild of Iqbal rests on three counts. Firstly, through his writings he had already reinforced the socio-psychological factors needed by the Indian Muslim community for believing in their distinct political identity in the region. Secondly, he gave a larger meaning to the idea, making it something more than what it was before him (and it must be remembered that the Hindu newspapers at once associated it with his name, giving it more attention – although negative – than before). Thirdly, he never ceased to be actively involved in the Muslim communal politics in India from this point.

It is not historically correct to say that he specifically demanded a regrouping of provinces *within* the Indian federation and not without – in his Presidential Address he said within or without. That was a non-issue if the self-determination of the Muslim community was constitutionally guaranteed.

However, it must be acknowledged that he might not have liked the two (or more) resulting states to turn bitter enemies against each other, nor might have approved of an iron curtain between them. Most probably he would have desired some cultural spilling over at least between the two Muslim communities in a divided India, if India had to be divided.

He explained why he wanted this state: “For India it means security and peace resulting from the internal balance of power; for Islam an opportunity to rid itself of the stamp that Arabian Imperialism was forced to give it, to mobilize its law, its education, its culture, and to bring them into closer contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times.”

He did not end his address without one characteristic masterstroke of his bold mind: “One lesson I have learnt from the history of Muslims,” he said, “At critical moments in their history it is Islam that has saved Muslims and not vice versa.” He thus proposed to change the Muslim outlook towards religion. The confidence that Islam could never be ‘in danger’ should give more freedom to the Muslims for choosing their course in life; they should approach religion to solve their problems and not as a fossilized idol of the past to which devotion should be shown through suspension of rational faculties. Religion was a gift, and not a fetter put upon the neck of the humanity by the Almighty. Likewise, it should bring happiness, prosperity and peace.

We cannot say whether Iqbal was aware how his words would affect the course of history in the region or whether he could foresee that the state he prophesied would come into existence soon after his death and then remain alien to the important aspects of his broader vision. Anyone who compares the first fifty-five years of Pakistan with Iqbal’s vision is likely to be dismayed but fifty-five years, or even a century, is a small fraction of time in the life of a great literary monument. His ideal of global human prosperity is alive in his masterpieces. We must remember that *Iliad* and *Odyssey* remain alive long after their civilization is dead and gone, and *The Divine Comedy* is fresh long after its language has died away. The lifeblood of Iqbal, too, is alive in his works that remain eternally fresh. They will come back to life whenever there is a critical mass of people willing to receive guidance.

“Nations are born in the hearts of poets,” he had written in his notebook long ago. “They prosper and die in the hands of politicians.”

## Road to Allahabad

Iqbal presided over the annual session of the All India Muslim League on 29-30 December 1930 at Allahabad. His presidential address, popularly known as 'The Allahabad Address,' became one of the most important documents in the history of India: it became the foundation stone of a new country in the region, Pakistan. 1929 was the watershed year in the history of Congress when that party reached one of the highest points in its history. It was the worst year for the Muslim League. It could not even hold an annual session. A meeting where Jinnah was about to make a most important statement was adjourned after it fell out of order (Jinnah later circulated his statement otherwise and this turned out to be his famous 14 Points). The mid-level administrators of the League took an initiative to pull together some sort of show that could bring the organization back into limelight. There could be none better than Iqbal to grace the occasion: as well as being a legend in his lifetime, he was also a natural crowd-puller. He was also a member of the Punjab Legislative Council at that time and though he claimed that "I lead no party; I follow no leader," he was nevertheless a most seasoned front row observer of nearly every political current in the last twenty years.

He conceded to preside over the session, which was scheduled to be held in Lucknow in August (the month when, incidentally, Iqbal's wife was expecting a baby). The League failed to make the arrangements for the session, which kept on postponing from one city to another month (and the baby did come in August, a girl, Munira).

Most of the important Muslim political leaders left for London to attend the Round Table Conference, which turned out to be the first of three such deliberations – and which the Congress boycotted. The annual session of the League, once shifted to Benaras but finally held at Allahabad at the very end of the year, was a poorly attended indoor affair and would have passed unnoticed but for the presence of Iqbal. The venue had to be shifted from an open ground to the courtyard of a private villa, 'Dwazdeh Manzil' (literally 'The Twelfth House'), and even that place was far from packed when Iqbal started delivering his address in English. A good number of the audience was expecting him to sing his poems and became visibly disappointed when he started something less entertaining. A bunch of college students was the mainstay of Iqbal's moral support as he embarked upon a detailed analysis of the political situation in the light of his well-known philosophical beliefs.



1927

*November 26*, the Secretary of State for India Lord Birkenhead announces the appointment of a Royal Commission to put forward suggestions for the future constitution of India. The Commission is headed by Sir John (later Lord) Simon and no Indian is included.

*December 30*, Jinnah holds meeting of 'his' faction of the Muslim League (which has recently splitted between him and Sir Shafi due to disagreement over the Simon Commission) and announces the decision to join the Congress in boycotting the Simon Commission

1928

*February*, Simon Commission arrives and is popularly boycotted while small minorities and Sir Shafi's Muslim League (including Iqbal) support it. Meanwhile, the Indian politicians hold an All Parties Conference at Delhi but fail to resolve the communal issue

*August*, Nehru Report is published by the Nehru Committee of the All Parties Conference (Delhi). It is the Indian answer to the constitutional issues but leaves out many important Muslim demands such as the separate electorate. Moreover, it calls for a 'Dominion' of India with a strong central government; Muslim leaders, including Jinnah and Sir Shafi, find it unacceptable and start uniting against it

*November*, Congress adapts the Nehru Report in its entirety

*December 31*, in the annual session at Calcutta the Congress demands that complete independence should be given to India within a year or else a non-cooperation movement will be started again

1929

*March*, Jinnah consolidates the Muslim demands presented over the last two years into Fourteen Points but due to disturbance at the joint session of his and Shafi's Leagues at Delhi these could not be presented there (Iqbal was among the delegates). Presently published, the Fourteen Points soon become the focal point of Muslim politics

*October 29*, Viceroy Lord Irwin announces that after the publication of the Simon Commission's Report the Indian politicians will be invited to round table conferences in London for giving recommendations for the future constitution of India

*December 31*, In its historic annual session at Lahore, the Congress waves the tricolor flag as the non-cooperation movement for complete independence of India commences at midnight. The Muslim League has been unable to hold an annual session this year due to internal strife and financial difficulties

1930

*April 6*, Gandhi's famous march to Dandi ends in picking up sand from the beach in defiance of the British taxation on salt. Non-cooperation movement spreads wide over the country, including the Frontier Province

*May*, the Muslim League patches up

*July*, Iqbal agrees to preside over the League's annual session being held at Lucknow on August 16-17

*August 12*, the annual session is postponed

*December*, after another postponement in Benaras the annual session of the League is finally held in Allahabad on December 29-30

## Nehru Report

The Committee Appointed by the All Parties Conference 1928

To Dr. M.A. Ansari,  
President All Parties Conference 1928

Dear Mr. President,

I have the honor to present to you the report of the Committee appointed by the All Parties Conference in Bombay on May 19th, 1928 to consider and determine the principles of the Constitution for India. I regret the delay in presenting this report. You have already been informed of the reasons for this delay and you were good enough to extend the presentation of this report.

Yours Sincerely  
Motilal Nehru  
*Chairman*

Allahabad  
August 10th, 1928

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## The Fourteen Points of M. A. Jinnah, March 30, 1929

Whereas the basic idea on which the All-Parties Conference was called in being and a Convention summoned at Calcutta during the Christmas week 1928, was that a scheme of reforms should be formulated and accepted and ratified by the foremost political organization in the country as a National Pact; and whereas the Report was adopted by the Indian National Congress only constitutionally for one year ending 31st December 1929, and in the event of the British Parliament not accepting it within the time limit, the Congress stands committed to the policy and programme of complete independence by resort to civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes; and whereas the attitude taken up by the Hindu Mahasabha from the commencement through their representatives at the Convention was nothing short of an ultimatum that, if a single word in the Nehru Report in respect of the communal settlement was changed they would immediately withdraw their support to it; and whereas the National Liberal Federation delegates at the Convention took up an attitude of benevolent neutrality and subsequently, at their open session at Allahabad, adopted a non-committal policy, the Non-Brahmin and depressed classes are entirely opposed to it; and whereas the reasonable and moderate proposals put forward by the delegates of the All-India Muslim League at the Convention in modification were not accepted, the Muslim League is unable to accept the Nehru Report.

The League, after anxious and careful consideration, most earnestly and emphatically lays down that no scheme for the future constitution of the Government of India will be acceptable to Mussalmans of India until and unless the following basic principles are given effect to and provisions are embodied therein to safeguard their rights and interests:

1. The form of future constitution should be federal, with the residuary power vested in the provinces.
2. A uniform measure of autonomy shall be granted to all provinces.
3. All legislatures in the country and other elected bodies shall be constituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province without reducing the majority in any province to a minority or even equality.
4. In the Central Legislature Muslim representation shall not be less than one third.
5. Representation of communal groups shall continue to be by separate electorates: provided that it shall be open to any community, at any time, to abandon its separate electorate in favor of joint electorate.
6. Any territorial redistribution that might at any time be necessary shall not in any way affect the Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and the North-West Frontier Province.
7. Full religious liberty, that is, liberty of belief, worship, and observance, propaganda, association, and education, shall be guaranteed to all communities.
8. No bill or resolution or any part thereof shall be passed in any legislature or any other elected body if three-fourths of the members of any community in that particular body oppose it as being injurious to the interests of that community or in the alternative, such other method is devised as may be found feasible and practicable to deal with such cases.
9. Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency.
10. Reforms should be introduced in the North-West Frontier Province and Balochistan on the same footing as in other provinces.
11. Provision should be made in the constitution giving Muslims an adequate share along with the other Indians in all the services of the State and in local self-governing bodies having due regard to the requirements of efficiency.
12. The constitution should embody adequate safeguards for the protection of Muslim culture and for the protection and promotion of Muslim education, language, religion, personal laws, and Muslim charitable institutions and for their due share in the grants-in-aid given by the State and by self-governing bodies.
13. No cabinet, either Central or Provincial, should be formed without there being at least one-third of Muslim ministers.
14. No change shall be made in the constitution by the Central Legislature except with the concurrence of the States constituting the Indian Federation.

## Presidential Address

*Delivered by Dr. Mohammad Iqbal at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League, held at Allahabad in 1930*

Gentlemen,

I am deeply grateful to you for the honour you have conferred upon me in inviting me to preside over the deliberations of the All-India Muslim League at one of the most critical moments in the history of Muslim political thought and activity in India.<sup>1</sup> I have no doubt that in this great assembly there are men whose political experience is far more extensive than mine, and for whose knowledge of affairs I have the highest respect. It will, therefore, be presumptuous on my part to claim to guide an assembly of such men in the political decisions which they are called upon to make today. I lead no party; I follow no leader. I have given the best part of my life to a careful study of Islam, its law and polity, its culture, its history and its literature. This constant contact with the spirit of Islam, as it unfolds itself in time, has, I think, given me a kind of insight into its significance as a world-fact.<sup>2</sup> It is in the light of this insight, whatever its value, that, while assuming that the Muslims of India are determined to remain true to the spirit of Islam, I propose, not to guide you in your decisions, but to attempt the humbler task of bringing clearly to your consciousness the main principle which, in my opinion, should determine the general character of these decisions.

### Islam and nationalism

It cannot be denied that Islam, regarded as an ethical ideal plus a certain kind of polity<sup>3</sup> – by which expression I mean a social structure, regulated by a legal system and animated by a specific ethical ideal – has been the chief formative factor in the life-history of the Muslims of India. It has furnished those basic emotions and loyalties which gradually unify scattered individuals and groups, and finally transform them into a well-defined people, possessing a moral consciousness of their own. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say that India is perhaps the only country in the world where Islam, as a people-building force, has worked at its best. In India, as elsewhere, the structure of Islam as a society is almost entirely due to the working of Islam as a culture inspired by a specific ethical ideal. What I mean to say is that Muslim society, with its remarkable homogeneity and inner unity,<sup>4</sup> has grown to be what it is, under the pressure of the laws and institutions associated with the culture of Islam. The ideas set free by European political thinking, however, are now rapidly changing the outlook of the present generation of Muslims both in India and outside India. Our younger men inspired by these ideas, are anxious to see them as living forces in their own countries, without any critical appreciation of the facts which have determined their evolution in Europe. In Europe, Christianity was understood to be a purely monastic order which gradually developed into a vast Church-organisation. The protest of Luther<sup>5</sup> was directed against this Church-organisation, not against any system of polity of a secular nature, for the obvious reason that there was no such polity associated with Christianity. And Luther was perfectly justified in rising in revolt against this organisation; though, I think, he did not realize that in the peculiar conditions which obtained in Europe his revolt would eventually mean the complete displacement of universal ethics of Jesus by the growth of a plurality of national and hence narrower systems of ethics. Thus the upshot of the intellectual movement initiated by such men as Rousseau<sup>6</sup> and Luther was the break-up of the one into a mutually ill-adjusted many, the transformation of a human into a national outlook, requiring a more realistic foundation, such as the notion of country, and finding expression through varying systems of

### Notes

1. This was a critical moment since new constitutional reforms were in the making and were likely to finalize the distribution of power in the country for a long time to come. Muslim leadership was non-existent and the Hindu majority was adamantly refusing the cultural identity of the Muslim community.
2. Apparently this is coming out of his long held conviction that some ideals of Islam were undiscovered so far. In *Javidnama*, which was being written around the same time, Jamaluddin Afghani is presented to interpret the Quran as a source of alternate worlds, any of which may be picked up and materialized.  
The phrase "world-fact" is apparently rooted in the idea that Islam was not a monopoly of one community: even a non-Muslim with keen insight would reach upon the principles generously revealed to the Muslims through the Quran.
3. 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal' was the title of a lecture he delivered in 1909 and the pet phrase would reappear below. "A strong will in a strong body" was described in that lecture as the moral ideal of Islam while democracy was the political ideal, resting on the supremacy of the Divine law and equality of all human beings.
4. The "remarkable homogeneity" and "inner unity" of the Muslim community are pointers to Iqbal's perception of a community as an ego.
5. Martin Luther (1483-1546), the German monk who founded Protestantism by challenging the absolute authority of the Church.
6. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1788), French philosopher and one of the inspirations for the French Revolution. His discourse *Social Contract* opens with the famous line, "Men were born free but they are in chains everywhere."

7. The idea finds its best expression through the imaginary civilization on Mars presented in *Javidhama*. Tyranny, oppression and poverty are unknown in that world where people are capable of experiencing matter and spirit as one.
8. A similar concept was attributed to Al-Jili in Iqbal's first research paper thirty years ago. There, the universe was described as the crystalized thought of God. In the more recent *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1930/1934), Iqbal defined nature as "only a fleeting moment in the life of God... [it] is to the Divine Self as character is to human self. In the picturesque phrase of the Quran it is the habit of Allah."
9. The thought of the Persian heretic Mani (215-277) was discussed by Iqbal at length in *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (1908): "Mani was the first to venture the suggestion that the Universe is due to the activity of the Devil, and hence essentially evil—a proposition which seems to me to be the only logical justification of a system which preaches renunciation as a guiding principle of life."
10. According to Iqbal the finality of the Prophet implies an end to priesthood as well: "The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Quran, and the emphasis that it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality." (*Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*)
11. He means to say that the Muslim society is a "universal polity" but is now lacking in power because its legal system hasn't been kept up to date. The idea found more elaboration fifteen months later in the presidential address to the Muslim Conference in Lahore, where he emphasized the need to "protect, expand and, if necessary, to reinterpret the law of Islam in the light of modern conditions while keeping close to the spirit embodied in its fundamental principles..."
12. Wensinck (1882-1939) was a Dutch Orientalist supervising the *Encyclopedia of Islam* since 1908.
13. This should have occurred to him as a blow at the very roots of Islam since he had always described this religion as the best safeguard against racism in the modern world. For instance, while addressing Leslie Dickinson through a letter to Nicholson in 1922 he referred to Islam as a society that had "so far proved itself a more successful opponent of the race-idea, which is probably the hardest barrier in the way of the humanitarian ideal." The true function of the Muslims in the "evolution of mankind" was, according to him, the creation of such conditions which could help the humanity rise above physical or geographical impediments. "Tribal or national organizations on the lines of race or territory are only temporary phases in the unfoldment and upbringing of collective life, and as such I have no quarrel with them; but I condemn them in the strongest possible terms when they are regarded as the ultimate expression of the life of mankind."

polity evolved on national lines, i.e., on lines which recognize territory as the only principle of political solidarity. If you begin with the conception of religion as complete other-worldliness, then what has happened to Christianity in Europe is perfectly natural. The universal ethics of Jesus is displaced by national systems of ethics and polity. The conclusion to which Europe is consequently driven is that religion is a private affair of the individual, and has nothing to do with what is called man's temporal life. Islam does not bifurcate the unity of man into an irreconcilable duality of spirit and matter.<sup>7</sup> In Islam God and the universe, spirit and matter, church and state, are organic to each other. Man is not the citizen of a profane world to be renounced in the interest of a world of spirit situated elsewhere. To Islam matter is spirit realizing itself in space and time.<sup>8</sup> Europe uncritically accepted the duality of spirit and matter probably from Mannichean<sup>9</sup> thought. Her best thinkers are realizing this initial mistake to-day, but her statesmen are indirectly forcing the world to accept it as an unquestionable dogma. It is, then, this mistaken separation of spiritual and temporal which has largely influenced European religious and political thought, and has resulted practically in the total exclusion of Christianity from the life of European states. The result is a set of mutually ill-adjusted states dominated by interests, not human but national. And these mutually ill-adjusted states, after trampling over the moral and religious convictions of Christianity, are to-day feeling the need of a federated Europe, i.e. the need of a unity which the Christian Church-organisation originally gave them, but which, instead of reconstructing in the light of Christ's vision of human brotherhood, they considered it fit to destroy under the inspiration of Luther. A Luther in the world of Islam, however, is an impossible phenomenon; for here there is no Church-organisation,<sup>10</sup> similar to that of Christianity in the middle ages, inviting a destroyer. In the world of Islam we have a universal polity whose fundamentals are believed to have been revealed, but whose structure, owing to our legists' want of contact with the modern world, stands today in need of renewed power by fresh adjustments.<sup>11</sup> I do not know what will be the final fate of the national idea in the world of Islam, whether Islam will assimilate and transform it, as it has assimilated and transformed before many ideas expressive of a different spirit, or allow a radical transformation of its own structure by the force of this idea, is hard to predict. Professor Wensinck of Leiden (Holland)<sup>12</sup> wrote to me the other day: "It seems to me that Islam is entering upon a crisis through which Christianity has been passing for more than a century. The great difficulty is how to save the foundations of religion when many antiquated notions have to be given up. It seems to me scarcely possible to state what the outcome will be for Christianity, still less what it will be for Islam." At the present moment the national idea is racialising the outlook of Muslims, and thus materially counteracting the humanising work of Islam. And the growth of racial consciousness may mean the growth of standards different and even opposed to the standards of Islam.<sup>13</sup>

I hope you will pardon me for this apparently academic discussion. To address this session of the All-India Muslim League you have selected a man who is not despaired of Islam as a living force for freeing the outlook of man from its geographical limitations, who believes that religion is a power of the utmost importance in the life of individuals as well as states, and finally who believes that *Islam is itself Destiny and will not suffer a destiny!* Such a man cannot but look at matters from his own point of view. Do not think that the problem I am indicating is a purely theoretical one. It is a very living and practical problem calculated to affect the very fabric of Islam as a system of life and conduct. On a proper solution of it alone depends your future as a distinct cultural unit in India. Never in our history Islam has had to stand a greater trial than the one which confronts it today. It is open to a people to modify, reinterpret or reject the foundational principles of their social structure; but it is absolutely necessary for them to see clearly what they are doing before they undertake to try a fresh experiment. Nor should the way in

which I am approaching this important problem lead anybody to think that I intend to quarrel with those who happen to think differently. You are a Muslim assembly and, I suppose, anxious to remain true to the spirit and ideals of Islam. My sole desire, therefore, is to tell you frankly what I honestly believe to be the truth about the present situation. In this way alone it is possible for me to illuminate, according to my light, the avenues of your political action.

### The unity of an Indian nation

What, then, is the problem and its implications? Is religion a private affair? Would you like to see Islam, as a moral and political ideal,<sup>14</sup> meeting the same fate in the world of Islam as Christianity has already met in Europe? Is it possible to retain Islam as an ethical ideal and to reject it as a polity in favour of national polities in which religious attitude is not permitted to play any part? This question becomes of special importance in India where the Muslims happen to be in a minority. The proposition that religion is a private individual experience is not surprising on the lips of a European. In Europe the conception of Christianity as a monastic order, renouncing the world of matter and fixing its gaze entirely on the world of spirit, led, by a logical process of thought, to the view embodied in this proposition.<sup>15</sup> The nature of the Prophet's religious experience, as disclosed in the Quran, however, is wholly different. It is not mere experience in the sense of a purely biological event, happening inside the experient and necessitating no reactions on its social environment. It is individual experience creative of a social order. Its immediate outcome is the fundamentals of a polity with implicit legal concepts whose civic significance cannot be belittled merely because their origin is revelational.<sup>16</sup> The religious ideal of Islam, therefore, is organically related to the social order which it has created. The rejection of the one will eventually involve the rejection of the other. Therefore, the construction of a polity on national lines, if it means a displacement of the Islamic principle of solidarity, is simply unthinkable to a Muslim. This is a matter which at the present moment directly concerns the Muslims of India. "Man," says Renan,<sup>17</sup> "is enslaved neither by his race nor by his religion, nor by the course of rivers, nor by the direction of mountain ranges. A great aggregation of men, sane of mind and warm of heart, creates a moral consciousness which is called a nation." Such a formation is quite possible, though it involves the long and arduous process of practically re-making men and furnishing them with a fresh emotional equipment. It might have been a fact in India if the teachings of Kabir<sup>18</sup> and the Divine Faith of Akbar<sup>19</sup> had seized the imagination of the masses of this country.<sup>20</sup> Experience, however, shows that the various caste units and religious units in India have shown no inclination to sink their respective individualities in a larger whole. Each group is intensely jealous of its collective existence. The formation of the kind of moral consciousness which constitutes the essence of a nation in Renan's sense demands a price which the peoples of India are not prepared to pay. The unity of an Indian nation, therefore, must be sought, not in the negation, but in the mutual harmony and cooperation of the many.<sup>21</sup> True statesmanship cannot ignore facts, however unpleasant they may be. The only practical course is not to assume the existence of a state of things which does not exist, but to recognise facts as they are, and to exploit them to our greatest advantage. And it is on the discovery of Indian unity in this direction that the fate of India as well as of Asia really depends. India is Asia in miniature. Part of her people have cultural affinities with nations in the East, and part with nations in the middle and west of Asia. If an effective principle of cooperation is discovered in India it will bring peace and mutual goodwill to this ancient land which has suffered so long, more because of her situation in historic space than because of any inherent incapacity of her people.<sup>22</sup> And it will at the same time

14. See note 3

15. i.e. the proposition that religion is a private individual experience. The Nehru Report approached the "communal" issue in this light, for instance: "The only methods of giving a feeling of security are safeguards and guarantees and the grant, as far as possible, of cultural autonomy. The clumsy methods of separate electorates and reservation of seats do not give this security. They only keep up an armed truce... If the fullest religious liberty is given, and cultural autonomy provided for, the communal problem is in effect solved, although people may not realize it." (Chapter 2: The Communal Aspect)

16. In the six lectures of the *Reconstruction* series already delivered (and published from Lahore in the first edition earlier that year) he attempted to show that intellectual test of revelation is possible. The statement here, that the civic significance of legal concepts should not be overlooked due to their revelational origin, seems to be a link between those six lectures and the one he would deliver two years later "Is Religion Possible?" There, he would say: "Judging from the various types of activity that emanated from the movement initiated by the Prophet of Islam, his spiritual tension and the kind of behavior which issued from it, cannot be regarded as a response to a mere fantasy inside his brain. It is impossible to understand it except as a response to an objective situation generative of new enthusiasms, new organizations, new starting-points."

17. Joseph Ernst Renan (1823-1892), French royalist and social philosopher

18. Bhagat Kabir (1440-1518), Indian mystic and poet claimed by both the Hindus and the Muslims as belonging to their faith was an exponent of the Bhagti Movement that aimed at the fusion of religions.

19. Jalaluddin Akbar, the third Mughal Emperor of India from 1556 to 1605 is both admired and deplored for his spiritual eclecticism. However, the famous assumption that he invented a new religion finds no evidence in the primary sources and neither his court historian Abul Fazl nor the antagonistic Abdul Qadir Badauni ever mentioned 'Din-i-Ilahi' – a phrase that first appears in this context in *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, a late 17th Century anonymous text. Orientalist Blochman perpetuated the myth by erroneously introducing it in his translation of Fazl's history in the late 19th Century.

20. At this point someone from among the audience raised a shout of Allahu Akbar (*nara-i-takbeer*) that was obviously uncalled for and Iqbal paused for a while with a frown on his forehead.

21. "The unity of an Indian nation... cooperation of the many." This could be the key concept on which this entire address is based. Nearly every Pakistani historian insists that the need for the partition of India arose out of the short-sighted arrogance of the Congress. The present sentence provides a succinct picture of what Iqbal and the Muslim leaders who thought like him may have accepted a decent alternative.

22. India's situation "in historic space" was that it was lagging behind in medievalism when the Europe entered the modern period. India could receive the gift of modern civilization at the condition of passing through a period of political enslavement by the British. "A disinterested foreign rule is an impossibility," Iqbal wrote in his private notebook in 1910. "Yet the tutelage of nations is a necessity. The fee paid for this tuition is sometimes a nation's daily bread."

The debate about the potential of the Indian people can be dated back in Iqbal's writings at least to his first published book, *Ilmul Iqtisad* (1904). His thesis was that political freedom enhances the moral and economic capabilities of a people since the whip cannot provide the same motivation as free ambition does.

23. Apparently, this is a reference to a part of a verse in the Quran (22:40), which states: "...For had it not been for Allah's repelling some men by means of others, cloisters and churches and oratories and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down. Verily Allah helpeth one who helpeth Him..."

24. For Nehru Report, see the text box on p.134

25. Iqbal explained this as 'imperium in imperio' to his audience at Allahabad, and the educated ones applauded his familiarity with Latin. Reportedly, his face lit up on thus finding some response from an otherwise dull gathering.

26. The outcasts, who formed a large portion of the Hindu constituency were demanding separate political identity. A resolution to support this demand was already on the agenda and was passed the next day.

27. This is the most oft-quoted passage on the basis of which this address is regarded as the foundation stone of Pakistan.

solve the entire political problem of Asia.

It is, however, painful to observe that our attempts to discover such a principle of internal harmony have so far failed. Why have they failed? Perhaps, we suspect each other's intentions, and inwardly aim at dominating each other. Perhaps, in the higher interests of mutual cooperation, we cannot afford to part with monopolies which circumstances have placed in our hands, and conceal our egoism under the cloak of a nationalism, outwardly simulating a large-hearted patriotism, but inwardly as narrow-minded as a caste or a tribe. Perhaps, we are unwilling to recognize that each group has a right to free development according to its own cultural traditions. But whatever may be the causes of our failure, I still feel hopeful. Events seem to be tending in the direction of some sort of internal harmony. And as far as I have been able to read the Muslim mind, I have no hesitation in declaring that, if the principle that the Indian Muslim is entitled to full and free development on the lines of his own culture and tradition in his own Indian homelands is recognized as the basis of a permanent communal settlement, he will be ready to stake his all for the freedom of India. The principle that each group is entitled to free development on its own lines is not inspired by any feeling of narrow communalism. There are communalisms and communalisms. A community which is inspired by feeling of ill-will towards other communities is low and ignoble. I entertain the highest respect for the customs, laws, religious and social institutions of other communities. Nay, it is my duty, according to the teachings of the Quran, even to defend their places of worship if need be.<sup>23</sup> *Yet I love the communal group which is source of my life and behaviour,\* and which has formed me what I am by giving me its religion, its literature, its thought, its culture, and thereby recreating its whole past, as a living operative factor, in my present consciousness.* Even the authors of the Nehru Report<sup>24</sup> recognise the value of this higher aspect of communalism. While discussing the separation of Sind they say: "To say from the larger view-point of nationalism that no communal provinces should be created is, in a way, equivalent to saying from the still wider international viewpoint that there should be no separate nations. Both these statements have a measure of truth in them. But the staunchest internationalist recognises that without the fullest national autonomy it is extraordinarily difficult to create the international state. *So also without the fullest cultural autonomy, and communalism in its better aspect is culture, it will be difficult to create a harmonious nation.*"

### Muslim India within India<sup>25</sup>

Communalism, in its higher aspect, then, is indispensable to the formation of a harmonious whole in a country like India. The units of Indian society are not territorial as in European countries. India is a continent of human groups belonging to different races, speaking different languages and professing different religions. Their behaviour is not at all determined by a common race consciousness. Even the Hindus do not form a homogeneous group.<sup>26</sup> The principle of European democracy cannot be applied to India without recognising the fact of communal groups. The Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India is, therefore, perfectly justified. The resolution of the All-Parties Muslim Conference at Delhi is, to my mind, wholly inspired by this noble ideal of a harmonious whole which, instead of stifling the respective individualities of its component wholes, affords them chances of fully working out the possibilities that may be latent in them. And I have no doubt that this house will emphatically endorse the Muslim demands embodied in this resolution. Personally I would go further than the demands embodied in it. *I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state.*<sup>27</sup> *Self-Government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian*

*Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of the North-West India.* The proposal was put forward before the Nehru Committee. They rejected it on the ground that, if carried into effect, it would give a very unwieldy state.<sup>28</sup> This is true in so far as the area is concerned; in point of population the state contemplated by the proposal would be much less than some of the present Indian provinces. The exclusion of Ambala Division and perhaps of some districts where non-Muslims predominate, will make it less extensive and more Muslim in population – so that the exclusion suggested will enable this consolidated state to give a more effective protection to non-Muslim minorities within its area.<sup>29</sup> The idea need not alarm the Hindus or the British. India is the greatest Muslim country in the world. The life of Islam as a cultural force in this country very largely depends on its centralisation in a specified territory. This centralisation of the most living portion of the Muslims of India whose military and police service has, notwithstanding unfair treatment from the British, made the British rule possible in this country, will eventually solve the problem of India as well as of Asia. It will intensify their sense of responsibility and deepen their patriotic feelings. Thus, possessing full opportunity of development within the body-politic of India, the North-West Indian Muslims will prove the best defenders of India against a foreign invasion, be that invasion the one of ideas or of bayonets. The Punjab with fifty-six per cent Muslim population supplies fifty-four per cent of the total combatant troops in the Indian Army, and if the nineteen thousand Gurkhas recruited from the independent state of Nepal are excluded, the Punjab contingent amounts to sixty two per cent of the whole Indian Army. This percentage does not take into account nearly six thousand combatants supplied to the Indian Army by the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. From this you can easily calculate the possibilities of the North-West Indian Muslims in regard to the defence of India against foreign aggression. The Right Hon'ble Mr. Srinivasa Sastri<sup>30</sup> thinks that the Muslim demand for the creation of autonomous Muslim states along with North-West border is actuated by a desire "to acquire means of exerting pressure in emergencies on the Government of India." I may frankly tell him that the Muslim demand is not actuated by the kind of motive he imputes to us; it is actuated by a genuine desire for free development which is practically impossible under the type of unitary government contemplated by the nationalist Hindu politicians with a view to secure permanent communal dominance in the whole of India.

Nor should the Hindus fear that the creation of autonomous Muslim states will mean the introduction of a kind of religious rule in such states. I have already indicated to you the meaning of the word religion, as applied to Islam. The truth is that Islam is not a church. It is state, conceived as a contractual organism long before Rousseau ever thought of such a thing, and animated by an ethical ideal which regards man not as an earth-rooted creature, defined by this or that portion of the earth, but as a spiritual being understood in terms of a social mechanism, and possessing rights and duties as a living factor in that mechanism. The character of a Muslim state can be judged from what the *Times of India* pointed out sometime ago in a leader on the Indian Banking Inquiry Committee. "In ancient India," the paper points out, "the state framed laws regulating the rates of interest; but in Muslim times, although Islam clearly forbids the realization of interest on money loaned, Indian Muslim states imposed no restrictions on such rates." I therefore demand the formation of a consolidated Muslim state in the best interests of India and Islam. For India it means security and peace resulting from the internal balance of power; for Islam an opportunity to rid itself of the stamp that Arabian Imperialism was forced to give it, to mobilize its law, its education, its culture, and to bring them into closer contact with its own original spirit and with the spirit of modern times.<sup>31</sup>

28 Two proposals of amalgamation were mentioned in the 3rd Chapter of the Nehru Report. The first was to combine Punjab and the NWFP, about which the Nehru Committee held no objection as long as it were acceptable to all concerned parties. As it was unacceptable even to one of the Hindu members of the Committee, no recommendation was made in that regard.

The second proposal, to which Iqbal is referring here, was mentioned in the Report in these words: "A similar but more far reaching proposal was made to us, recommending that the Punjab, the NWFP province, Baluchistan and Sind should all be amalgamated together, and that there should be no reservation of seats, unless the minority desires it, in the area. We were unable to entertain this proposal. It would mean the creation of an unwieldy province sprawling all over the north and north-west."

29. Iqbal seemed to firmly believe that a Muslim majority freed from its fears would extend fair and generous treatment towards the minorities. In his much talked about statement 'Qadianism and Orthodox Muslims' (1935) he stated that once the Ahmedis were recognized as a separate community, "the Indian Muslim will tolerate them just as he tolerates the other religions."

30. Srinivasa Sastri (1869-1946), a moderate Hindu leader, parliamentarian and biographer of Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

31. "For India... the spirit of modern times." This was, then, the principle of policy he recommended for the proposed Muslim state.

32. Muslim demand for separate electorates was an old one; it was accepted by the British in 1909 through the Minto-Morley Reforms and by the Congress in 1916 through the Lucknow Pact with the Muslim League (see note 46). The nationalists, however, remained averse to the idea of separate electorates and by 1927 the Muslims adapted a new position. This proposition, which was basically a brainchild of Jinnah, is reiterated here, i.e. the Muslims would drop their demand if certain other constitutional safeguards are provided.

33. Political idealism of the Indian nationalist "has practically killed his sense for fact," Iqbal would complain again in 'Islam and Ahmedism' (1935).

34. This is one of the many passages from this address that echoed in Jinnah's presidential address to the annual session of the Muslim League ten years later in Lahore where the resolution for a separate homeland was eventually passed. Jinnah said: "Musalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation and they must have their homelands, their territory and their state."

35. It was Iqbal's major contention that the real problem in India was not a conflict between the Indians and the British but the efforts of the Hindu majority to impose its rule over the minorities, especially the Muslims. In the presidential address to the Muslim Conference in Lahore fifteen months later he said: "the real parties to the present struggle in India are not England and India, but the majority community and the minorities of India which can ill-afford to accept the principle of Western democracy until it is properly modified to suit the actual conditions of life in India."

36. More flippantly he had stated in 'A Word to England' in *Payam-i-Mashriq* (1923):

O saki, do not be displeased if drinkers of  
Your wine are clamoring for more of it. Be  
fair.  
Think who it was who taught them to want  
and demand.

## Federal states

Thus it is clear that in view of India's infinite variety in climates, races, languages, creeds and social systems, the creation of autonomous states, based on the unity of language, race, history, religion and identity of economic interests, is the only possible way to secure a stable constitutional structure in India. The conception of federation underlying the Simon Report necessitates the abolition of the Central Legislative Assembly as a popular assembly, and makes it an assembly of the representatives of federal states. It further demands a redistribution of territory on the lines which I have indicated. And the Report does recommend both. I give my whole-hearted support to this view of the matter, and venture to suggest that the redistribution recommended in the Simon Report must fulfil two conditions. It must precede the introduction of the new constitution, and must be so devised as to finally solve the communal problem. Proper redistribution will make the question of joint and separate electorates<sup>32</sup> automatically disappear from the constitutional controversy of India. It is the present structure of the provinces that is largely responsible for this controversy. The Hindu thinks that separate electorates are contrary to the spirit of true nationalism, because he understands the word nation to mean a kind of universal amalgamation in which no communal entity ought to retain its private individuality. Such a state of things, however does not exist.<sup>33</sup> Nor is it desirable that it should exist. India is the land of racial and religious variety. And to this, the general economic inferiority of the Muslims, their enormous debt, especially in the Punjab, and their insufficient majorities in some of the provinces as at present constituted, and you will begin to see clearly the meaning of our anxiety to retain separate electorates. In such a country and in such circumstances, territorial electorates cannot secure adequate representation of all interests, and must inevitably lead to the creation of an oligarchy. The Muslims of India can have no objection to purely territorial electorates if provinces are demarcated so as to secure comparatively homogeneous communities possessing linguistic, racial, cultural and religious unity.<sup>34</sup>

## Federation as understood in the Simon Report

But in so far as the question of the powers of the Central Federal States is concerned, there is a subtle difference of motive in the constitutions proposed by the Pandits of India and the Pandits of England. The Pandits of India do not disturb the central authority as it stands at present. All that they desire is that this authority should become fully responsible to the Central Legislature which they maintain intact, and where their majority will become further reinforced on the nominated element ceasing to exist.<sup>35</sup> The Pandits of England, on the other hand, realizing that democracy in the centre tends to work contrary to their interests, and is likely to absorb the whole power now in their hands, in case a further advance is made towards responsible government, have shifted the experiment of democracy from the centre to the provinces. No doubt, they introduce the principle of federation and appear to have made a beginning by making certain proposals, yet their evaluation of this principle is determined by considerations wholly different to those which determine its value in the eyes of Muslim India. The Muslims demand federation because it is pre-eminently a solution of India's most difficult problem i.e. the communal problem. The Royal Commissioners' view of federation, though sound in principle, does not seem to aim at responsible government for federal states. Indeed it does not go beyond providing means of escape from the situation which the introduction of democracy in India has created for the British,<sup>36</sup> and wholly disregards the communal problem by leaving it where it was.

Thus it is clear that, in so far as real federation is concerned, the Simon Report

virtually negatives the principle of federation in its true significance. The Nehru Report realizing Hindu majority in the Central Assembly reaches a unitary form of government because such an institution secures Hindu dominance throughout India; the Simon Report retains the present British dominance behind the thin veneer of an unreal federation, partly because the British are naturally unwilling to part with the power they have so long wielded, and partly because it is possible for them, in the absence of an inter-communal understanding in India, to make out a plausible case for the retention of that power in their own hands. To my mind a unitary form of Government is simply unthinkable in a self-governing India. What is called 'residuary powers'<sup>37</sup> must be left entirely to self-governing states, the Central Federal State exercising only those powers which are expressly vested in it by the free consent of federal states. I would never advise the Muslims of India to agree to a system, whether of British or of Indian origin, which virtually negatives the principle of true federation, or fails to recognize them as a distinct political entity.

37. Residuary powers were demanded to be with provinces in February 1928.

### Federal scheme as discussed in the Round Table Conference

The necessity for a structural change in the Central Government was seen probably long before the British discovered the most effective means for introducing this change. That is why at a rather late stage it was announced that the participation of the Indian Princes in the Round Table Conference was essential. It was a kind of surprise to the people of India, particularly the minorities, to see the Indian Princes dramatically expressing their willingness at the Round Table Conference to join an All-India Federation and, as a result of their declaration, Hindu delegates - uncompromising advocates of a unitary form of government - quietly agreeing to the evolution of a federal scheme. Even Mr. Sastri who, only a few days before, had severely criticised Sir John Simon for recommending a federal scheme for India, suddenly became a convert and admitted his conversion in the plenary session of the Conference - thus offering the Prime Minister of England an occasion for one of his wittiest observations in his concluding speech. All this has a meaning both for the British who have sought the participation of the Indian Princes, and the Hindus who have unhesitatingly accepted the evolution of an All-India Federation. The truth is that the participation of the Indian Princes - among whom only a few are Muslims - in a federation scheme serves a double purpose. On the one hand it serves as an all-important factor in maintaining the British power in India practically as it is, on the other hand it gives overwhelming majority to the Hindus in an All-India Federal Assembly. It appears to me that the Hindu-Muslim differences regarding the ultimate form of the Central Government are being cleverly exploited by British politicians through the agency of the Princes who see in the scheme prospects of better security for their despotic rule. If the Muslims silently agree to any such scheme it will simply hasten their end as a political entity in India. The policy of the Indian Federation, thus created, will be practically controlled by Hindu Princes forming the largest group in the Central Federal Assembly. They will always lend their support to the Crown in matters of Imperial concern; and in so far as internal administration of the country is concerned they will help in maintaining and strengthening the supremacy of the Hindus. In other words the scheme appears to be aiming at a kind of understanding between Hindu India and the British Imperialism - you perpetuate me in India, and I in return give you a Hindu oligarchy to keep all other Indian communities in perpetual subjection. If therefore the British Indian provinces are not transformed into really autonomous states, the Princes' participation in a scheme of Indian federation will be interpreted only as a dexterous move on the part of British politicians to satisfy, without parting with any real power, all parties concerned - Muslims with the word federation, Hindus with a

38. i.e., the Conservative and Labour parties of Britain. The Labour Party was usually perceived as more considerate to the Indian demand for freedom (and a Labour Government eventually passed the Independence of India Act, 1947).
39. Nawab Hamidullah Khan (1894-1960), a benevolent ruler of Bhopal who was much respected by the Muslims for his political awareness. Later, he was the only prince from whom Iqbal ever accepted a stipend.
40. Sir Akbar Hyderi (1869-1942), the finance secretary and sometime Prime Minister to the Nizam of Hyderabad. He was a personal friend of Iqbal although their relationship strained in the 1930's.
41. i.e. the members of the Simon Commission
42. A famous declaration by the British Minister for Indian affairs. The statement promised complete independence to India, and was apparently inspired by the necessity to enlist Indian support for the British cause during World War I (1914-18). The spirit was not very diligently observed in the reforms later introduced by the British in India but Lord Birkenhead still referred to it in 1927 while announcing his Conservative Party's decision to appoint a royal commission (Simon Commission).

majority in the centre, and British Imperialists – whether Tory or Labourite<sup>38</sup> – with the substance of real power.

The number of Hindu States in India is far greater than Muslim states; and it remains to be seen how the Muslim demand for 33 per cent seats in the Central Federal Assembly is to be met within a House or Houses constituted of representatives taken from British India as well as Indian states. I hope the Muslim delegates are fully aware of the implications of the federal scheme as discussed in the Round Table Conference. The question of Muslim representation in the proposed All-India Federation has not yet been discussed. “The interim report,” says Renter’s summary, “contemplates two chambers in the Federal Legislature – each containing representatives both of British India and States, the proportion of which will be a matter of subsequent consideration under the heads which have not yet been referred to the Sub-Committee.” In my opinion the question of proportion is of the utmost importance, and ought to have been considered simultaneously with the main question of the structure of the Assembly.

The best course, I think, would have been to start with a British Indian Federation only. A federal scheme born of an unholy union between democracy and despotism cannot but keep British India in the same vicious circle of a unitary Central Government. Such a unitary form may be of the greatest advantage to the British, to the majority community in British India and to the Indian Princes; it can be of no advantage to the Muslims unless they get majority rights in five out of eleven Indian Provinces with full residuary powers, and one-third share of seats in the total House of the Federal Assembly. In so far as the attainment of sovereign powers by the British Indian Provinces is concerned the position of H.H. the Ruler of Bhopal,<sup>39</sup> Sir Akbar Hydari<sup>40</sup> and Mr. Jinnah is unassailable. In view, however, of the participation of the Princes in the Indian Federation we must now see our demand for representation in the British Indian Assembly in a new light. The question is not one of Muslim share in a British Indian Assembly, but one which relates to representation of British Indian Muslims in an All-India Federal Assembly. Our demand for 33 per cent must now be taken as a demand for the same proportion in the All-India Federal Assembly exclusive of the share allotted to the Muslim states entering the Federation.

### The problem of defence

The other difficult problem which confronts the successful working of a federal system in India is the problem of India’s defence. In their discussion of this problem the Royal Commissioners<sup>41</sup> have marshalled all the deficiencies of India in order to make out a case for Imperial administration of the army. “India and Britain,” say the Commissioners, “are so related that India’s defence cannot *now or in any future which is within sight*, be regarded as a matter of purely Indian concern. The control and direction of such an army must rest in the hands of agents of the Imperial Government. Now, does it necessarily follow from this that further progress towards the realization of responsible Government in British India is barred until the work of defence can be adequately discharged without the help of British officers and British troops? *As things are, there is a block on the line of constitutional advance.* All hopes of evolution in the Central Government towards the ultimate goal described in the declaration of 20th August 1917<sup>42</sup> are in danger of being indefinitely frustrated if the attitude illustrated by the Nehru Report is maintained that any future change involves the putting of the administration of the army under the authority of an elected Indian Legislature.” Further to fortify their argument they emphasise the fact of competing religions and rival races of widely different capacity, and try to make the problem look insoluble by remarking that “the obvious fact, that India is not, in the ordinary and natural sense, a single nation is nowhere made

more plain than in considering the difference between the martial races of India and the rest.” These features of the question have been emphasised in order to demonstrate that the British are not only keeping India secure from foreign menace but are also the “neutral guardians of internal security.” However, in federated India, as I understand federation, the problem will have only one aspect, i.e. external defence. Apart from provincial armies necessary for maintaining internal peace, the Indian Federal Congress can maintain, on the North-West Frontier, a strong Indian Frontier Army, composed of units recruited from all provinces and officered by efficient and experienced military men taken from all communities. I know that India is not in possession of efficient military officers, and this fact is exploited by the Royal Commissioners in the interest of an argument for Imperial administration. On this point I cannot but quote another passage from the Report which, to my mind, furnishes the best argument against the position taken up by the Commissioners. “At the present moment,” says the Report, “no Indian holding the King’s Commission is of higher army rank than a captain. There are, we believe, 39 captains of whom 25 are in ordinary regimental employ. Some of them are of an age which would prevent their attaining much higher rank, even if they passed the necessary examination before retirement. Most of these have not been through Sandhurst,<sup>43</sup> but got their Commissions during the Great War.<sup>44</sup> Now, however genuine may be the desire, and however earnest the endeavour to work for this transformation the overriding conditions so forcibly expressed by the Skeen Committee<sup>45</sup> (whose members, apart from the Chairman and the Army Secretary, were Indian gentlemen) in the words, “Progress... must be contingent upon success being ‘secured at each stage and upon military efficiency being maintained throughout must in any case render such development measured and slow. A higher command cannot be evolved at short notice out of existing cadres of Indian officers, all of junior ranks and limited experience. Not until the slender trickle of suitable Indian recruits for the officer class – and we earnestly desire an increase in their numbers – flows in much greater volume, not until sufficient Indians have attained the experience and training requisite to provide all the officers for, at any rate, some Indian regiments, not until such units have stood the only test which can possibly determine their efficiency, and not until Indian officers have qualified by a successful army career for high command, will it be possible to develop the policy of Indianisation to a point which will bring a completely Indianised army within sight. Even then years must elapse before the process could be completed.”

Now I venture to ask who is responsible for the present state of things? Is it due to some inherent incapacity of our martial races or to the slowness of the process of military training? The military capacity of our martial races is undeniable. The process of military training may be slow as compared to other processes of human training. I am no military expert to judge this matter. But as a layman I feel that the argument, as stated, assumes the process to be practically endless. This means perpetual bondage for India, and makes it all the more necessary that the Frontier Army, as suggested by the Nehru Report, be entrusted to the charge of a committee of defence the personnel of which may be settled by mutual understanding.

Again it is significant that the Simon Report has given extraordinary importance to the question of India’s land frontier, but has made only passing references to its naval position. India has doubtless had to face invasions from her land frontier; but it is obvious that her present masters took possession of her on account of her defenceless sea coast. A self-governing and free India, will, in these days have to take greater care of her sea coast than her land frontiers.

I have no doubt that if a Federal Government is established, Muslim federal states will willingly agree, for purposes of India’s defence, to the creation of neutral Indian military and naval forces. Such a neutral military force for the defence of India was a reality in the days of Mughal Rule. Indeed in the time of Akbar the Indian frontier was, on the whole, defended by armies officered by Hindu generals. I am perfectly

43. Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst(UK)

44. i.e. World War I (1914-18)

45. In 1925 a committee was assigned to look into the possibilities of increasing the number of Indian commissioned officers in the forces. It was headed by Sir Andrew Skeen, the Chief of Staff of the British forces in India.

46. The pact was made between the Congress and the Muslim League in 1916 through the efforts of Jinnah (hence winning him the epithet of 'the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity'). It secured separate electorates for the Muslims but bartered away their dominance in the majority provinces for a slight increase in the number of reserved seats in the minority provinces.
47. The interests of the rural Muslims in Punjab gained a special focus since 1910–Zafar Ali Khan's famous newspaper was named *Zamindar* (Landlord) as an emblem of the newspaper's initial focus on this issue. Iqbal's college friend Sir Fazli Husain turned this cause almost into a political philosophy with his Unionist Party, which came under severe criticism from Iqbal some time after this Presidential Address.
48. Lord Irwin (1881-1959) was the Viceroy of India from 1925 to 1931.
49. Separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency and introduction of political reforms in the NWFP were popular Muslim demands and were even accepted in the Nehru Report.
50. Abul Hasan Mas'udi (d.956), Muslim historian and geographer
51. Muawiyah, who ruled from 661 to 680

sure that the scheme of a neutral Indian army, based on a federated India, will intensify Muslim patriotic feeling, and finally set at rest the suspicion, if any, of Indian Muslims joining Muslims from beyond the frontier in the event of any invasion.

### The alternative

I have thus tried briefly to indicate the way in which the Muslims of India ought, in my opinion, to look at the two most important constitutional problems of India. A redistribution of British India, calculated to secure a permanent solution of the communal problem, is the main demand of the Muslims of India. If, however, the Muslim demand of a territorial solution of the communal problem is ignored, then I support, as emphatically as possible, the Muslim demands repeatedly urged by the All-India Muslim League and the All-India Muslim Conference. The Muslims of India cannot agree to any constitutional changes which affect their majority rights, to be secured by separate electorates, in the Punjab and Bengal, or fail to guarantee them 33 per cent representation in any Central Legislature. There were two pitfalls into which Muslim political leaders fell. The first was the repudiated Lucknow Pact<sup>46</sup> which originated in a false view of Indian nationalism, and deprived the Muslims of India from chances of acquiring any political power in India. The second is the narrow-visioned sacrifice of Islamic solidarity in the interest of what may be called Punjab Ruralism<sup>47</sup> resulting in a proposal which virtually reduces the Punjab Muslims to a position of minority. It is the duty of the League to condemn both the Pact and the proposal.

The Simon Report does great injustice to the Muslims in not recommending a statutory majority for the Punjab and Bengal. It would either make the Muslims stick to the Lucknow Pact or agree to a scheme of joint electorates. Despatch of the Government of India on the Simon Report admits that since the publication of that document the Muslim community has not expressed its willingness to accept any of the alternatives proposed by the Report. The despatch recognizes that it may be a legitimate grievance to deprive the Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal of representation in the councils in proportion to their population merely because of weightage allowed to Muslim minorities elsewhere. But the despatch of the Government of India fails to correct the injustice of the Simon Report. In so far as the Punjab is concerned – and this is the most crucial point – it endorses the so-called 'carefully balanced scheme' worked out by the official members of the Punjab Government which gives the Punjab Muslims a majority of two over the Hindus and Sikhs combined, and a proportion of 49 per cent of the Houses as a whole. It is obvious that the Punjab Muslims cannot be satisfied with less than a clear majority in the total House. However, Lord Irwin<sup>48</sup> and his Government do recognize that the justification for communal electorates for majority communities would not cease unless a two-third majority of the Muslim members in a provincial council unanimously agree to surrender the right of separate representation. I cannot however understand why the Government of India, having recognized the legitimacy of Muslim grievance, have not had the courage to recommend a statutory majority for the Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal.

Nor can the Muslims of India agree to any such changes which fail to create at least Sind as a separate province and treat the North-West Frontier Province as a province of inferior political status.<sup>49</sup> I see no reason why Sind should not be united with Baluchistan and turned into a separate province. It has nothing in common with the Bombay Presidency. In point and civilization the Royal Commissioners find it more akin to Mesopotamia and Arabia than India. The Muslim geographer Mas'udi<sup>50</sup> noticed this kinship long ago when he said, "Sind is a country nearer to the dominions of Islam." The first Omayyad ruler<sup>51</sup> is reported to have said of Egypt: "Egypt

has her back towards Africa and face towards Arabia.” With necessary alterations the same remark describes the exact situation of Sind. She has her back towards India and face towards Central Asia. Considering further the nature of her agricultural problems which can invoke no sympathy from the Bombay Government, and her infinite commercial possibilities, dependent on the inevitable growth of Karachi into a second metropolis of India,<sup>52</sup> it is unwise to keep her attached to a Presidency which, though friendly to-day, is likely to become a rival at no distant period. Financial difficulties, we are told, stand in the way of separation. I do not know of any definite authoritative pronouncement on the matter. But, assuming there are any such difficulties, I see no reason why the Government of India should not give temporary financial help to a promising province in her struggle for independent progress.

As to the North-West Frontier Province, it is painful to note that the Royal Commissioners have practically denied that the people of this province have any right to. Reform. They fall far short of the Bray Committee,<sup>53</sup> and the council recommended by them is merely a screen to hide the autocracy of the Chief Commissioner. The inherent right of the Afghan to light a cigarette is curtailed merely because he happens to be living in a powder house.<sup>54</sup> The Royal Commissioners’ epigrammatic argument is pleasant enough, but far from convincing. Political reform is light, not fire; and to light every human being is entitled whether he happens to live in a powder house or a coal mine. Brave, shrewd and determined to suffer for his legitimate aspirations, the Afghan is sure to resent any attempt to deprive him of opportunities of full self-development. To keep such a people contented is in the best interest of both England and India. What has recently happened<sup>55</sup> in that unfortunate province is the result of a step-motherly treatment shown to the people since the introduction of the principle of self-government in the rest of India. I only hope that the British statesmanship will not obscure its view of the situation by hoodwinking itself into the belief that the present unrest in the province is due to any extraneous causes.

The recommendation for the introduction of a measure of reform in the N.W.F.P. made in the Government of India’s despatch is also unsatisfactory. No doubt the despatch goes further than the Simon Report in recommending a sort of representative Council and a semi-representative cabinet, but it fails to treat this important Muslim province on an equal footing with the other Indian Provinces. Indeed the Afghan is, by instinct, more fitted for democratic institutions than any other people in India.<sup>56</sup>

### Round Table Conference

I think I am now called upon to make a few observations on the Round Table Conference.<sup>57</sup> Personally, I do not feel optimistic as to the results of this conference. It was hoped that away from the actual scene of the communal strife, and in a changed atmosphere, better councils would prevail; and a genuine settlement of the differences between the two major communities of India would bring India’s freedom within sight.<sup>58</sup> Actual events, however, tell a different tale. Indeed the discussion of the communal question in London has demonstrated, more clearly than ever, the essential disparity between the two great cultural units of India. Yet the Prime Minister of England apparently refuses to see that the problem of India is international and not national. He is reported to have said that “his Government would find it difficult to submit to Parliament proposals for the maintenance of separate electorates, since joint electorate were much more in accordance with British democratic sentiments.” Obviously he did not see that the model of British democracy cannot be of any use in a land of many nations; and that a system of separate electorates is only a poor substitute for a territorial solution of the problem. Nor is

52. The first metropolis being Bombay

53. Sir Denis Bray, Secretary Foreign Affairs, headed a committee set up by the British Government in 1924 to consider constitutional reforms for the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). The committee’s recommendations, published in March 1924, supported the establishment of a legislative assembly in the province.

54. Apparently this analogy was used in the Simon Commission’s Report to explain that the NWFP could not be granted substantial political reforms due to security concerns (the perceived Russian threat and the history of periodical wars between the British and the Afghans)

55. High-handed treatment was extended by the British keepers of the law against the agitators in the NWFP. Incidentally, one of the army personnel who claimed credit for the action against the Pathans was Iskander Mirza, a later Governor-General of Pakistan (1955-56) and the first President (1956-58).

56. Apparently this is a reference to the tribal customs that recognize few barriers between the chief and his people (see the ‘Nostalgia’ page on Iqbal’s trip to Afghanistan in Chapter 5)

57. The First Round Table Conference had already started on November 12. The Congress did not participate due to its overall non-cooperation with the British. Iqbal participated in the second (1931) and the third (1932) conferences.

58. “...would bring India’s freedom within sight.” This phrase is starkly reminiscent of a line from Jinnah’s speech in the plenary of the Round Table Conference on November 12. He had electrified most listeners by implying that in the Conference itself “the Dominion Prime Ministers and their representatives” will “witness the birth of a new Dominion of India...” Iqbal must have read that statement in the newspapers.

59. One of the sub-committees at the Round Table Conference.

60. In an open letter to Sir Francis Younghusband some months later (published in *The Civil and Military Gazette*, July 30, 1931), Iqbal wrote: "Any attempt on the part of Great Britain at the next Round Table Conference [i.e., the Second] to take an undue advantage of communal split will ultimately prove disastrous to both countries. If you transfer political authority to the Hindu and keep him in power for any material benefit to Great Britain, you will drive the Indian Muslim to use the same weapon against the Swaraj or Anglo-Swaraj Government as Gandhi did against the British Government."

The subsequent Constitution of India introduced in 1935 did not prevent this conflict, according to Iqbal. On June 21, 1937 he wrote to Jinnah, "I tell you that we are actually living in a state of civil war which, but for the police and military, would become universal in no time."

61. 'People of the Book' refers to the followers of other divine religions. Most widely among the Muslim jurists the religions that were divinely originated, include, Judaism and Christianity. Zoroastrianism was also granted that status after the conquest of Persia.

Buddhists and Hindus in India were regarded as 'people of the Book' for the purpose of taxation by the Muslim rulers (*jizya* could only be levied upon the people of the Book, since a complete non-believer could not be a citizen of a Muslim state according to a strict interpretation of the law). In other spheres of life the mainstream Muslim tendency was to regard Hinduism as a pagan religion although many Sufi currents appealed for a deeper understanding of comparative religions. Such interfaith views consistently find place in Iqbal's poetry and serious prose, hence it seems more likely that his reference to the Hindus as non-believers (i.e. not 'people of the Book') here is an indication of ground reality rather than his own philosophical position on the issue.

62. Quran (3:64)

63. Resolution passed at the All India Muslim Conference, Delhi.

64. In March 1932 he announced in his presidential address to the All India Muslim Conference that such a time had come: "Do your duty or cease to exist."

the Minorities Sub-Committee<sup>59</sup> likely to reach a satisfactory settlement. The whole question will have to go before the British Parliament; and we can only hope that the keen sighted representatives of the British nation, unlike most of our Indian politicians will be able to pierce through the surface of things and see clearly the true fundamentals of peace and security in a country like India. To base a constitution on the concept of a homogenous India, or to apply to India principles dictated by British democratic sentiments, is unwittingly to prepare her for a civil war.<sup>60</sup> As far as I can see, there will be no peace in the country until the various people that constitute India are given opportunities of free self-development on modern lines without abruptly breaking with their past.

I am glad to be able to say that our Muslim delegates fully realize the importance of a proper solution of what I call India's international problem. They are perfectly justified in pressing for a solution of the communal question before the question of responsibility in the Central Government is finally settled. No Muslim politician should be sensitive to the taunt embodied in that propaganda word – communalism – expressively devised to exploit what the Prime Minister calls the British democratic sentiment, and to mislead England into assuming a state of things which does not really exist in India. Great interests are at stake. We are seventy million, and far more homogenous than any other people in India. Indeed, the Muslims of India are the only Indian people who can fitly be described as a nation in the modern sense of the word. The Hindus, though ahead of us in almost all respects, have not yet been able to achieve the kind of homogeneity which is necessary for a nation and which Islam has given you as a free gift. No doubt they are anxious to become a nation but the process of becoming a nation is a kind of travail, and in the case of Hindu India, involves a complete overhauling of her social structure. Nor should the Muslim leaders and politicians allow themselves to be carried away by the subtle but fallacious argument that Turkey and Persia and other Muslim countries are progressing on national i.e. territorial lines. The Muslims of India are differently situated. The countries of Islam outside India are practically wholly Muslim in population. The minorities there belong, in the language of the Quran, to the 'people of the Book.'<sup>61</sup> There are no social barriers between Muslims and the 'people of the Book.' A Jew or Christian or a Zoroastrian does not pollute the food of a Muslim by touching it, and the Law of Islam allows intermarriage with the 'people of the Book.' Indeed the first practical step that Islam took towards the realization of a final combination of humanity was to call upon peoples possessing practically the same ethical ideal to come forward and combine. The Quran declares, "O people of the Book! Come let us join together on the 'word' (Unity of God), that is common to us all."<sup>62</sup> The wars of Islam and Christianity, and, later, European aggression in its various forms, could not allow the infinite meaning of this verse to work itself out in the world of Islam. Today it is being gradually being realized in the countries of Islam in the shape of what is called Muslim Nationalism.

It is hardly necessary for me to add that the soul test of the success of our delegates is the extent to which they are able to get the non-Muslim delegates of the Conference to agree to our demands as embodied in the Delhi Resolution.<sup>63</sup> If these demands are not agreed to, then a question of a very great and far-reaching importance will arise for the community. Then will arrive the moment for an independent and concerted political action by the Muslims of India.<sup>64</sup> If you are at all serious about your ideals and aspirations you must be ready for such an action. Our leading men have done a good deal of political thinking, and their thought has certainly made us, more or less, sensitive to the forces which are now shaping the destinies of peoples in India and outside India. But I ask, has this thinking prepared us for the kind of action demanded by the situation which may arise in the near future? Let me tell you frankly that, at the present moment, the Muslims of India are suffering from two evils. The first is the want of personalities. Sir Malcolm

Hailey<sup>65</sup> and Lord Irvin were perfectly correct in their diagnosis when they told the Aligarh University that the community had failed to produce leaders. By leaders I mean men who, by Divine gift or experience, possess a keen perception of the spirit and destiny of Islam, along with an equally keen perception of the trend of modern history. Such men are really the driving forces of a people, but they are God's gift and cannot be made to order.<sup>66</sup> The second evil from which the Muslims of India are suffering is that the community is fast losing what is called the herd-instinct.<sup>67</sup> This makes it possible for individuals and groups to start independent careers without contributing to the general thought and activity of the community. We are doing today in the domain of politics what we have been doing for centuries in the domain of religion. But sectional bickerings in religion do not much harm to our solidarity. They at least indicate an interest in what makes the sole principle of our structure as a people. Moreover, this principle is so broadly conceived that it is almost impossible for a group to become rebellious to the extent of wholly detaching itself from the general body of Islam. But diversity in political action, at a moment when concerted action is needed in the best interest of the very life of our people, may prove fatal. How shall we, then, remedy these two evils? The remedy of the first evil is not in our hands. As to the second evil I think it is possible to discover a remedy. I have got definite views on the subject; but I think it is proper to postpone their expression till the apprehended situation actually arises. In case it does arise leading Muslims of all shades of opinion will have to meet together, not to pass resolutions, but finally to determine the Muslim attitude and to show the path to tangible achievement. In this address I mentioned this alternative only because I wish that you may keep it in mind, and give some serious thought to it in the meantime.

### The conclusion

Gentlemen, I have finished. In conclusion I cannot but impress upon you that the present crisis in the history of India demands complete organisation and unity of will and purpose in the Muslim community, both in your own interest as a community, and in the interest of India as a whole. The political bondage of India has been and is a source of infinite misery to the whole of Asia. It has suppressed the spirit of the East, and wholly deprived her of that joy of self-expression which once made her the creator of a great and glorious culture. We have a duty towards India where we are destined to live and die. We have a duty towards Asia, especially Muslim Asia. And since 70 millions of Muslims in a single country constitute a far more valuable asset to Islam than all the countries of Muslim Asia put together, we must look at the Indian problem not only from the Muslim point of view but also from the standpoint of the Indian Muslim as such. Our duty towards Asia and India cannot be loyally performed without an organised will fixed on a definite purpose. In your own interest, as a political entity among other political entities of India, such an equipment is an absolute necessity. Our disorganized condition has already confused political issues vital to the life of the community. I am not hopeless of an intercommunal understanding but I cannot conceal from you the feeling that in the near future our community may be called upon to adopt an independent line of action to cope with the present crisis and an independent line of political action, in such a crisis, is possible only to a determined people, possessing a will focalised by a single purpose. Is it possible for you to achieve the organic wholeness of a unified will? Yes, it is. Rise above sectional interests and private ambitions, and learn to determine the value of your individual and collective action, however directed on material ends, in the light of the ideal which you are supposed to represent. Pass from matter to spirit. Matter is diversity; spirit is light, life and unity. One lesson I have learnt from the history of Muslims. At critical moments in their history it is

65. Sir Malcolm Hailey (1872-1962) was the Governor of UP, 1928-34

66. In his 1908 lecture 'Islam As a Moral and Political Ideal,' he had said: "The ethical training of humanity is really the work of great personalities, who appear time to time during the course of human history. Unfortunately our present social environment is not favorable to the birth and growth of such personalities of ethical magnetism. An attempt to discover the reason of this dearth of personalities among us will necessitate a subtle analysis of all the visible and invisible forces which are now determining the course of our social evolution..."

Some of these "forces" were at least hinted upon in the lecture 'The Muslim Community' (1910): "When the continuity of the stream of individual consciousness is disturbed there results psychical ill health which may, in course of time, lead on to a final dissolution of vital forces. The same is the case with the life of the social mind whose continuity is dependent on the orderly transmission of its continuity experience from generation to generation."

67. The term is used here in a positive sense.

68. Among other incidents he might have in his mind could be the conversion of a grandson of Genghis Khan in the 13th Century. The Tartar convert prevented his cousin Hulagu from annihilating the Muslim kingdoms of Egypt and Arabia.

Islam that has saved Muslims and not vice versa.<sup>68</sup> If today you focus your vision on Islam and seek inspiration from the ever-vitalising idea embodied in it, you will be only reassembling your scattered forces, regaining your lost integrity, and thereby saving yourself from total destruction. One of the profoundest verses in the Holy Quran teaches us that the birth and rebirth of the whole of humanity is like the birth and rebirth of a single individual. Why cannot you who, as a people, can well claim to be the first practical exponent of this superb conception of humanity, live and move and have your being as a single individual? I do not mystify anybody when I say that things in India are not what they appear to be. The meaning of this, however, will dawn upon you only when you have achieved a real collective ego to look at them.\* In the words of the Quran, “Hold fast to yourself; no one who erreth can hurt you, provided you are well-guided.” (5:104)

CHAPTER  
5  
FIVE



**WHAT LIES  
BEYOND**

1931  
to 1938



Above: A portrait of Iqbal in the ceremonial dress he used to wear on special occasions, such as Eid. This copy is signed February 16, 1931 for sending to Muarif, apparently a compilation being published from Tehran (Iran).

Picture used on p. 149 was based on this photograph. The painter is unknown.

Around the time when Iqbal was writing his *Presidential Address* proposing the birth of a consolidated Muslim state within or without the British Empire he was also working on his greatest masterpiece, *Javidnama* (or *The Book of Eternity*), which was completed between 1927 and 1931. The book itself was an exceptionally ambitious undertaking from a poet of such towering stature, for it aimed at drawing out the spiritual landscape of the universe and culminate in an interview with God Himself.

The significance of *Javidnama* is manifold. Iqbal himself called it 'the sum total' of his life and indeed its narrative holds together all various pieces of his thought as well as showcasing the full range of his poetic moods and expressions. His passion for landscape is well utilized here in depicting scenery of metaphysical nature and true to the genre of epic he makes his work entertaining with powerful characterization. Zurvan, the Zoroastrian spirit of Time and Space, straddles across the horizons and always flutters his wings in some new dimension of time while Satan appears as an impressive old entity to whom the soul is visible inside a body.

A most interesting chapter is about a spiritual breed on Mars. The evil spirit tried to tempt their progenitor, just like Adam, but he refused. Consequently his children were spared the restricting duality of matter and spirit, and live a life without scarcity, poverty, needfulness or tyranny. This prosperous colony is Iqbal's ideal world and only the demons within us prevent us from achieving it on this earth – fatalistic interpretation of religion and lack of self-esteem are among the major causes.

The real significance of the book lies elsewhere and has not yet been realized. W. B. Yeats once described Homer's poem *Iliad* as the epic that ushered in the millenium of Hellenistic civilization and Dante's *Divine Comedy* as the epitome of the Christian civilization spanning over two millenia. In the same vein we can say that *Javidnama* is a candidate to be regarded as a true representative of the millenium that was about to start when it was written and which has just started now. The East meets the West here. All major world religions find passionate representation in this book. No one in this spiritual universe of Iqbal is condemned or rewarded on the basis of religious beliefs alone – Buddha and Zarathustra dwell among the prophets and a Hindu poet is lodged in Paradise while a pair of traitors (incidentally Muslims) suffers everlasting torture.

It is true that this is a universe seen from the perspective of a Muslim – "the Quran has many worlds, seen and unseen, and you should take out of it the kind that suites you," says Jamaluddin Afghani in the firmament of Mercury. However, the universal appeal of this book lies in three quarters. Firstly, the sincere and committed attempt at interfaith dialogue – which marks the difference between our world and the world of Dante where bigotry rules triumphant over the poetic talent. Secondly, the very texture of this poem reflects the cultural fusion that is a hallmark of our millenium. For instance the concept of Heavenly Prologue (reminiscent of *Faust*) and the 'Lament of Abu Jahl,' which is starkly reminiscent of Milton's celebrated poem on the nativity of the Christ. This seamless blending of the Eastern literary tradition with the Western is in itself symbolic of the fabric of the world current(s) in the new millenium – we are one!

However, the most notable feature of the poem that supports its claim for universality is its stark realism towards the state of things. God is not only

Beauty, He is also Majesty and He is also *qabbar*, the Irresistible. When the poet requests the Divine Creator to reveal the fate of the world he doesn't see a rose garden but a sheet of blood sweeping over the horizon of the Earth. Nowhere does the religious devotion of the poet and his partiality to spiritualism carry him away into forgetting that in this world the human beings are thrown back on their own resources. Beliefs and spirituality count only by transforming your ego into something greater but they are not a currency valid on their own merit. End of the day, destiny has no favorites and nature doesn't bend except on its own terms.

It should be attributed to the power of this poem that lines from it have become proverbial although written in Persian at a time when that language was losing its domain in India (and ironically, this *magnum opus* remains the least printed poem of Iqbal). '*Din-i-mullah fi sabil Allah fasad*' (the religion of a Mullah is to create trouble in the name of God), and '*Jaffar ez Bengal-o-Sadiq ez Deccan/Nang-i-Adam, nang-i-deen, nang-i-watan*' (Jaffar of Bengal, and Sadiq of Deccan – disgrace to humanity, religion and country) are just two examples of phrases widely known and used by people who don't even understand Persian.



Iqbal's cosmology forms an important part of his poetic imagination but has received little attention especially in his own country.

*Javidnama* had a long history in Iqbal's own thought and it might be said that it was in the making ever since he wrote his first masterpiece 'The Himalaya,' since even in that poem there was an attempt to present more than what meets the eye in the elements of nature. Other poems, such as 'Sky Walk' (1910) with its imaginative concept of hell and 'In the Presence of the Holy Prophet' (1912) with its heavenly theme could be considered complete *Javidnamas* in miniatures. Even the dialogue with God, which formed the climax of *Javidnama* had been practised many times before, most notably in 'The Complaint' (1911), 'The Answer' (1912), and 'A Dialogue Between God and Man' (c.1923).

The poetic retelling of the creation of the universe, which formed the first prologue, had also been a favorite theme since the earliest days and explored in such poems as 'Love and Death' (incidentally adapted from Tennyson), 'Love' (1906), and 'Conquest of Nature' (c.1923).

It is therefore safe to assume that he had been developing his own cosmology all this while. The literary challenge of *Javidnama* merely forced him to put the pieces in order and present a complete map of the universe as it existed in his mind.

He mapped the afterworld as a vast universe with patches of good and bad places, corresponding to reward and punishment. Moon, Mercury, Jupiter and Paradise appear as the pleasant pastures but none of these is suited for all kind of blessed souls – the individualist in him would abhor uniformity even in the afterlife. Moon presents a blissful atmosphere suitable for meditation and hence chosen by the Hindu sage Vishvamitra. It is here that a poet



Above: *The Spirits of Mirza Ghalib, Mansur Hallaj and Quratul'Ain Tahira roam around in the vicinity of Jupiter during Iqbal's celestial journey in Javidnama (1932) – an illustration by Tabassum Khalid for the abridged edition published by Iqbal Academy Pakistan.*

The cosmology of *Javidnama* is a reference point for many later poems, especially in *Baal-i-Gabriel*, such as the following. Ironically, the poem that aims to draw the readers' attention to the spiritual nature of reality and calls upon them to transcend the material world is often unthoughtfully interpreted as a celebration of space travel and astronomy.

This mistake is a classic example of that fragmentary approach from which the poetry of Iqbal has thoroughly suffered at the hands of readers and critics alike – in this case many have failed to notice anything beyond such catchwords as "beyond stars" and "worlds," and have not even looked at the complete lines in which these words occur!

The poem can be translated as:

There are other worlds beyond stars,  
yet other trials of love.  
These spheres are not devoid of life,  
for there are several other  
caravans in them.  
Be not content with the world of color  
and smells; there are other  
gardens, other homes.  
Why be grieved if you lose one nest,  
there are other places to sing your  
songs.  
You are a falcon, just concern yourself  
with your flight, for there are so  
many other skies before you.  
Do not be trapped in this day and  
night only. There are other Times  
and other Spaces for you.  
Bygone are the days when I was all  
alone in the society. Now I have  
other confidants here too.



The following translation of 'The Devil and Gabriel' from *Baal-i-Gabriel* is by Mustansir Mir ('Iblis' is the Arabicized form of *diabolos* from which the word 'devil' is derived):

GABRIEL

Old friend, how goes the world of colour and smell?

IBLIS

Burning and suffering, scars and pain, seeking and longing!

GABRIEL

They are all talking about you in the celestial spheres. Could your ripped garment still be mended?

IBLIS

Ah, Gabriel, you do not know this secret:  
When my wine jug broke it turned my head.  
I can never walk this place again!  
How quiet this region is! There are no houses, no streets!  
One whose despair warms the heart of the universe –  
What suits him best, 'Give up hope' or 'Don't give up hope!'

GABRIEL

You gave up exalted positions when you said 'No'  
The angels lost face with God what a disgrace that was!

IBLIS

With my boldness I make this handful of dust rise up.  
My mischief weaves the garment that reason wears.  
From the shore you watch the clash of good and evil.  
Which of us suffers the buffets of the storms you or I?  
Both Khizr and Ilyas feel helpless:  
The storms I have stirred up rage in oceans, rivers, and streams.  
If you are ever alone with God, ask Him:  
Whose blood coloured the story of Adam?  
I rankle in God's heart like a thorn.  
But what about you?  
All you do is chant 'He is God' over and over!

may listen to the song of Sarosh (Persian equivalent of a heavenly Muse) and the metaphysical history of the humankind is also recorded here in the elemental tablets of the various prophets. Quite possibly, it is here that Iqbal himself would like to be when he is dead – as he would later pray to God in the 16th poem of the first sequence in *Baal-i-Gabriel* (1935).

Mercurial reformers like Afghani could find solace, of course, in Mercury – and we can safely assume that Iqbal's Lenin too, after his fiery chit chat with God in *Baal-i-Gabriel*, should have been sent away to this corner.

Then there are spirits who would always like to move on. In his political ideology Iqbal seems to be a collectivist in many regards but in his cosmology he seems to accept the magnificence of some who wish to have a life of their own apart from their concern for the others – Hallaj, Tahira and Ghalib are seen wandering around the fast moving and ever expanding Jupiter after they refused even to accept Paradise.

The Paradise itself is an abode for just rulers, saints and pious maidens – basically all the good conformists. Of course, the proverbial *houris* are there too, but at least Iqbal would rather move on to bask in the reflection of the Divine Beauty itself rather than waste time with these heavenly dames – and in this parable of *Javidnama* we find a full corroboration of his earlier poem 'The Inconstant Lover' (1909). There, the poet admitted that the female beauty was like lightening to him, although his "love was indifferent too," and argued that he was in fact looking for the Divine and that is why his search didn't seem to end with any woman. True to these words, when the poet is implored upon by the *houris* just a step away from the station of God Himself, he doesn't pay heed to them and moves on – even the *ghazal* he recites to them out of mere courtesy is not quite romantic.

The unpleasant patches include the Venus, the Saturn, and the Hell proper (which stays off screen in *Javidnama* but we had a cameo description of it in the earlier poem 'A Walk in the Sky'). The cold and lifeless Venus is the abode of the false gods of the ancient peoples, and quite aptly, the tyrants and the evil imperialists rot here in the bottom of a lightless sea. The Saturn, with its terrifying storms, lightening and the ocean of blood, is suited to those who betray their fellow humans – the traitors, refused even by the hell.

Thus apportioning the heavens in this manner between the good and bad souls, he kept at least one planet to create a world of his ultimate fantasy. Of course, this was Mars, which was quite hot with the science fiction writers in those days and in the utopian civilization of Marghdeen we do have the seeds of Iqbal's very own science fiction – something rather anticipatory of a Tolkien in substituting spirituality for the gadgetry common with the writers of science fiction.

Interestingly, this cosmology keeps recurring in his later poetry, especially in Urdu. More aspects are explored in various poems of *Baal-i-Gabriel*, *Zarbi-Kaleem*, and *Armaghan-i-Hijaz* where we are treated with conversations from purgatory, repeat appearances of Satan, dialogue between God, Lenin, angels, and – of course – more glimpses of Iqbal's version of the Genesis.

The meanings of his later Urdu poems adopt more dimensions if studied with reference to this cosmology. How else can one explain such lines, for instance from *Baal-i-Gabriel*: "My thought has been wandering in the skies for so long, now confine it in the caves of the Moon"!



Iqbal's politics from 1931 to the end of his life was dominated by one basic aim, i.e., to unite the Muslim community in India. In that bleak year when Muhammad Ali (Jauhar) had died in the wake of the First Round Table Conference and Jinnah had decided not to return, Iqbal did a great service to his community by publishing an open letter in *The Statesman*, Calcutta, in July that must have jolted up many readers. Picking up on a certain theory of Sir Francis Young Husband whereby the British author had invited his people to save the world, Iqbal wrote that the Indians would be willing to help. Hard feelings between India and Britain would pass, provided that the two peoples kept their sense of humor. These were "normal and inevitable accompaniments of an age of readjustment," he assumed an almost condescending position over his British readers. "The periods of readjustment are the common-places of history. They have been going on ever since time began," (as if he was himself a firsthand witness to the whole process), and then adding without a warning: "The history of Europe deals with little else." Next he came to his main point, "It is true that we in this country need readjustment between ourselves..."

The matter was immediately elaborated: if the British didn't recognize the Muslims of India as a political entity and transferred all power to the Indian National Congress then the Muslims of India would be forced to use Gandhi's tactics of non-cooperation against Gandhi himself when he came into power.

Iqbal called upon the British not to use their divisionary politics to this end. This masterstroke in argumentation was an evidence that his training at Lincoln's Inn had not been rusted after all these years. So far it were the mainstream Muslims of the Aligarh school of thought who were accused of being a product of the colonial strategems. Iqbal was now turning the entire argument on its head. However, that was not enough, since the Poet of the East was in a mind to give some real jitters to his white rulers. Keeping the Indian Muslims away from a share in power "may result in the whole of Muslim Asia being driven into the lap of Russian communism which would serve as a *coup de grace* to the British supremacy in the East," he added and then went on to declare, "Since Bolshevism plus God is almost identical with Islam, I should not be surprised if, in the course of time, either Islam would devour Russia or

All India Muslim Conference was formed by Sir Fazli Husain with financial support from Aga Khan III as a coalition of four Muslim political parties. Iqbal presided over its annual session in Lahore on March 21, 1932. His address focuses on provincial autonomy, the Congress movement for civil disobedience, the British Government's attitude, and the cruel administrative measures against the Muslims of the Frontier Province and the princely state of Kashmir.

Iqbal proposed that the Muslim policy should be founded on an "enlightened self-interest," keeping in view that (1) the unrest in India was not a revolt against the West but the struggle of the majority community (the Hindus) to impose Western democratic measures on the unwilling minorities; (2) an impending storm over India and possibly the whole of Asia was the inevitable outcome of the Western capitalism that treated the people as 'things' to be exploited rather than 'personalities' to be developed and enlarged by purely cultural forces.

Suggestions include: (1) the Indian Muslims should have only one political organization with accommodations for various political schools of thought, which should start with (2) a national fund of at least 50 lakhs of rupees, and also have (3) youth leagues and well-equipped volunteer corps for cultural and economic awareness among the peasants with a futuristic approach. Also, there should be (4) male and female cultural institutes throughout the country "to mobilize the spiritual energy of the younger generation" keeping close touch with the old and new education institutions; and (5) an assembly of ulema and modern Muslim lawyers to scrutinize all bills on Muslim personal law and hence explore the undiscovered possibilities of the Islamic law in solving the economic problems of the world.



Left: A picture of Iqbal from the 1930's

'McTaggart's Philosophy' was Iqbal's review of Leslie Dickinson's memoirs and published in *Indian Arts and Letters*, London, in its first issue for 1932. The first section places McTaggart in mainstream British philosophy from where Dickinson had displaced him on the grounds his philosophy originated in his emotions and not in his intellect. According to Iqbal, McTaggart accepted individual egos as self-existent and mystical intuition as a source of knowledge but was an accidental confirmation of what he reached through pure reason – a result of direct revelation and what McTaggart called 'an actual perfection of the senses,' which had nothing to do with what psychology calls emotion.

The second section shows that McTaggart reached the Absolute through Hegelian methods but instead of returning to the empiricism after dismissing the Hegelian Absolute he conceived a world of inter-related egos (which doesn't strike off science at one stroke). Iqbal, despite his difference with McTaggart's elemental immortality of the ego, acknowledges McTaggart's apostolic role at a time when the European was about to face death on an enormous scale due to decay of this belief; a role like that of Hallaj in the medieval Muslim world.

The third section considers McTaggart's atheism, which stemmed out of a dislike for the transcendent God of Christian theology while the alternatives provided by the Neo-Hegelians and Green were insufficient. Love was the Absolute Reality to McTaggart (at one time he seemed to oppose love in support of action, but love is not passivity).

*Facing page: Iqbal during his visit to Europe, 1931 (the picture is sometimes mistakenly dated to his student days).*

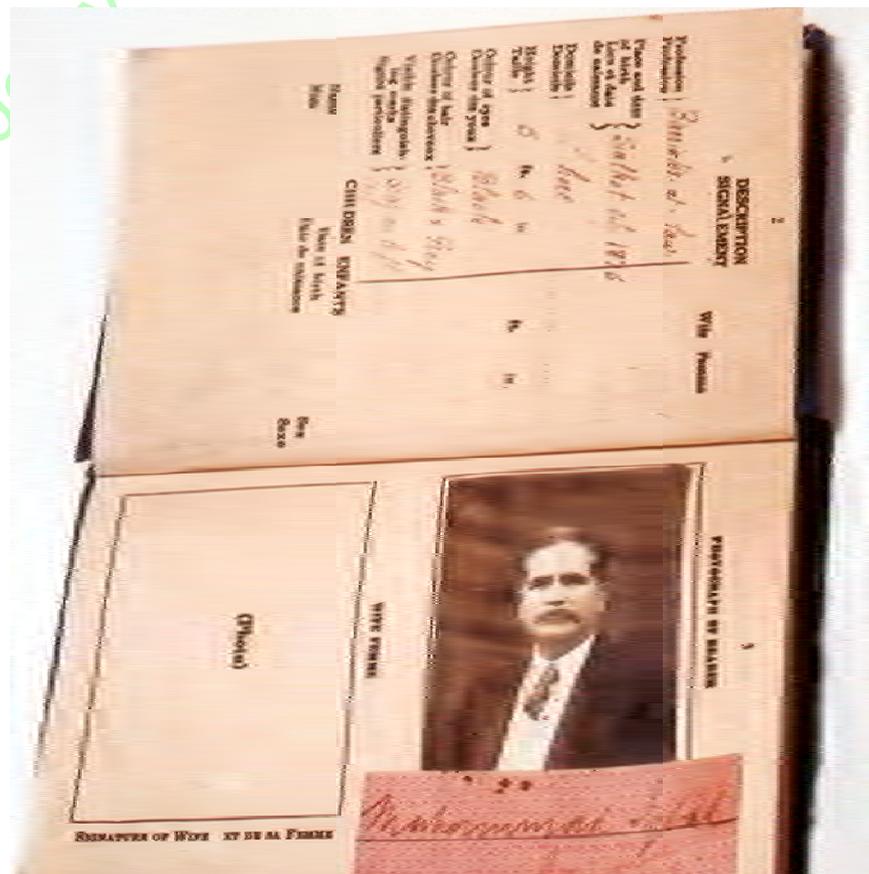
*Right: Iqbal's passport and (below) a close-up of his passport picture.*

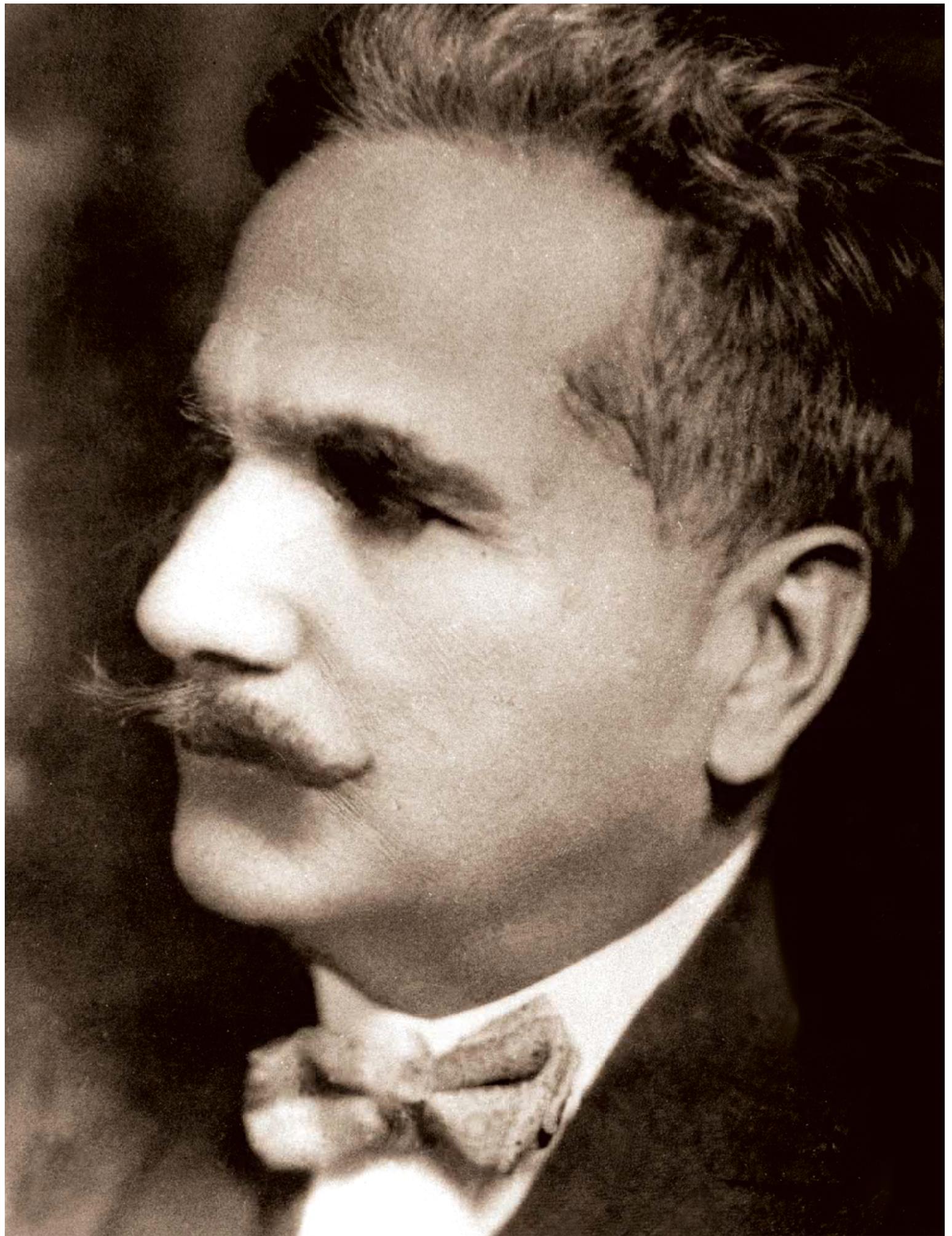
Russia Islam. The result will depend, I think, to a considerable extent on the position which is given to the Indian Muslims under the new constitution."

Obviously, this was a political move. This entire letter was a political statement and not one of his *Reconstruction* lectures, but unfortunately it didn't only confuse those on whom Iqbal was using his trick but also misled many of his ardent admirers who use this quotation as a statement of Iqbal's opinion on Bolshevism. By the principles of Iqbal's own philosophy it can be argued that religious ideas grow organically rather than mechanically – the concept of God cannot be added to a political system like a new room to an existing old building; it needs to be cultivated in the heart and all other realities of one's existence should then grow out of this divine seed.

This was not the only instance of shrewd wordplay in that statement of Iqbal. He would not mind to be ruled by the Hindu "if the Hindu had the tact and ability to govern," he stated. "But I cannot worship two gods. It must be either him alone or the British alone, but not the two together." The subtle implication was that just as the British were ruling India against the will of its people, Gandhi too, by asking the foreign rulers to transfer their power to him without solving the communal question first was in fact engineering a Hindu imperialism over the Muslims. Let it not hide its true nature under a sanctimonious face of freedom or democracy, was what Iqbal actually demanded.

He was invited to both the next round table conferences – the second and the third. The journeys took place in 1931 and 1932-33 and in addition to his political mandate Iqbal also delivered his seventh and the last lecture in the *Reconstruction* series, visited many places on his way to and from London in each trip and commemorated almost every stop with some memorable poem.





## NOSTALGIA

Iqbal participated in the Second Round Table Conference in London at the end of 1931 as a Muslim delegate of the Minorities Sub-Committee. Gandhi, the sole representative of the Indian National Congress, insisted that the Muslims should drop their demand of separate electorates and should not support a similar stand from any other minority except the Sikhs—this was in view of the fact that the outcasts of the Untouchable community (later called Dalits), comprising of large numbers, were demanding official exclusion from the Hindu community. Iqbal dissociated himself from the Conference on grounds of principles.

While in London he resumed correspondence with Emma Wegenast after many years and wished to travel via Germany on the return trip. However, an invitation from the Royale Academy, Rome (Italy), diverted him that way. He also visited Egypt and participated in the *Mutamar al 'Alam al Islami* (The World Muslim Conference) in Jerusalem (Palestine).

*Top right: with friends in Bombay, where he stopped on the way to London.*

*Middle right: at a reception given by the National League London during the Second Round Table Conference, 1931. Iqbal, Syed Amjad Ali Khan and Lady Simon are standing in the middle.*

*Bottom right: during the Second Round Table Conference, 1931. From right to left: Dr. Shajqat A. Khan, Hidayat Husain, Iqbal, His Highness Aga Khan III, Chaudhry Zafarullah Khan, A.H. Ghażnavi and Syed Amjad Ali.*



*Left: Iqbal at Bombay Railway Station during his journey to Europe.*



In Rome, Iqbal delivered a lecture at Royal Academy, visited archaeological remains, had an audience with Mussolini and a three-hour long meeting with Amanullah Khan, the exiled king of Afghanistan to whom Iqbal had dedicated *Payam-i-Masbriq* in 1923.

King Amanullah had tried to modernize Afghanistan, much as Ataturk had tried to do in Turkey, but he did not succeed. "I abdicated when I saw that the arms I had collected to fight the enemy were being used by factions of my own people against each other," he told Iqbal during their meeting.

*Top: A formal session of the Round Table Conference in London.*

*Middle: A dinner in London. Iqbal is heading the table while Maulana Shaukat Ali is sitting first in the left row.*

*Bottom: A general banquet from the days of the Second Round Table Conference in London.*

*Iqbal met Mussolini (right) in Rome. The Il Deuce inspired him to write a poem about the impact of a powerful personality on a people. Mussolini's annexation of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935, however, turned admiration into ambivalence.*



## Notes of lecture delivered in Rome and Egypt

*From the original in Iqbal's own hand*

A – The most remarkable event of Modern History: movement of Islam towards the West and movement of Russia towards the East. On a proper understanding of these movements depends our understanding of: (i) the likely fate of modern civilization; (ii) the relation of England with the world of Islam on its moral and political and economic aspect.

B – Let us try to understand them. There are three forces that are shaping the world of today:

- (1) Western civilization. Its formation: (a) Scientific method and mastery over nature – Islam and Scientific method (Briffault); (b) Separation of Church and State; development of the Ethical tone of Western civilization and development of territorial nationalism ending in 1914.
- (2) Communism. Karl Marx and Hegel; Negation of Church; Ascendency of materialism as Philosophy of life.
- (3) Islam. [*There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger*]. Its present decay and various views; germs of greatness. Its method of personal illumination on the one hand and social experiment on the other hand. As a method of personal illumination: revolves round the ego. Mysticism. Not proximity but Power: [*Truly he succeeds that purifies it (soul); and he falls that corrupts it*]. As a social experiment. Last Sermon. Idea of humanity: (i) the abolition of blood relationship as a principle of social solidarity; man not earth-rooted; the movement of prophets; (ii) congregational prayer and institutions; (iii) socialism

C – But there can be no denying that Islam has lost its hold on matter. It is moving towards the West. It is not decay but reawakening; it is search for power. The first realization of it came in 1799. Tipu and Navarino. Since then various movements appeared: Wahabism, Babism, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. The movement of Islam towards the West means regaining of that hold. England and Islam. Atheistic Materialism and Islam.

D – England and Islam. Political and Economic aspect. Islam suspicious; letter from Morocco. In order to win Islam she must be trusted.

1. India, N.W. India; the organization of Islam
2. Palestine, Arabia, etc. The Arab world. Kashmir.

E – The friendship of Islam worth having.

*Note: Arabic portions have been substituted with their translations in parenthesis. 'Navarino' in 'C' refers to the Battle of Navarino (1827) between Turks and Europeans. Iqbal erred about the date.*

From Rome, Iqbal sailed to Egypt and stayed there for a few days. Indian journalist Ghulam Rasul Meher was his constant companion while others, including Maulana Shaukat Ali, joined him here. They met several people, including some connected with liberation movements in Egypt and the Middle East. The people were generally found to be sympathetic to the Indian National Congress and unaware of the positions of the Indian Muslims on the constitutional issues of the British India. Iqbal's fame, however, had preceded him and he found many admirers among the Arabic speaking scholars.

While in Egypt, Iqbal also visited the pyramids with his friends and came back with a lasting impression that later inspired a small poem on the superiority of art over nature.

The next stop in the journey was Jerusalem (Palestine) to attend the World Muslim Congress. This was the third Muslim conference of an international nature (and all three were unrelated). The meeting had been called mainly by the leaders of the resistent movement in Palestine, who feared dispossession as a result of the European intentions of establishing a Jewish state in the country. Among the issues discussed at the *Mutamar* were the Hijaz Railway, Grand Mosque of Jerusalem, a dictionary of modern Arabic, finances, propaganda and the holy places.

### Iqbal's Statement on impressions of World Muslim Congress

*Published on 1st January, 1932*

I approached some of the holy places common to Islam, Christianity and Judaism with a rather sceptic mind as to the authenticity of the traditions centred round them. But in spite of this feeling I was very much affected by them, particularly by the birth-place of Christ.

I discovered, however, that the altar of the church at Bethlehem was divided into three parts which were allotted to the Armenian, Greek and Catholic churches respectively. These sects continuously fight among themselves, sometimes indulging in bloodshed and defiling one another's altars and contrary to the state of affairs in India, it is two Muslim policemen who have to keep the peace among them.

I was a member of the various sub-committees formed to discuss distinct proposals, but unfortunately was not able to take part in all of them. In one

sub-committee I strongly opposed the idea of establishing at Jerusalem a university on the old and antiquated lines of Jamia Azhar in Cairo and insisted on the proposed university being of a thoroughly modern type.

I do not know how the misunderstanding arose which caused the rumour that I was opposed to the establishment of any kind of university of Jerusalem. Reuter sent out a wire to that effect. Actually I am a strong advocate of Arabic-speaking countries setting up not one but several universities for the purpose of transferring modern knowledge to Arabic which is the only non-European language that has kept pace with the progress of thought in modern times.

*Below: Iqbal and the Persian scholar Ziauddin Shakeeb in Jerusalem (Meher in the background puffing at his cigarette).*



*Below: Iqbal (seated extreme right) during a session of the Mutamar al Alam al Islami in Jerusalem, 1931. Ghulam Rasul Meher is seated next.*





# MAKING

## The making of Javidnama

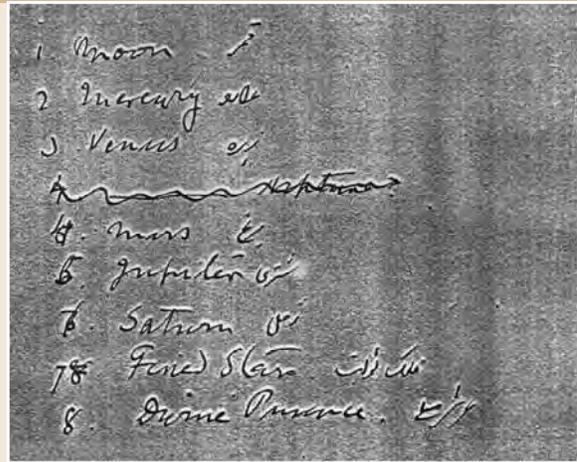
In the summer of 1927, Iqbal opened his notebook and recited some verses to Syed Nazeer Niazi, the nephew of his Sialkot teacher Mir Hasan and a frequent visitor. The verses, as Iqbal himself would later describe them, “came from another world” and the book in which they were meant to go would be proclaimed as “descended from another heaven.” It was going to be *Javidnama*, apparently named after his favorite son but also meaning, with a pun on the name, “The Book of Immortality.”

The major inspiration was *m'iraj*, or the ascension of the Holy Prophet to the heavens. “Professor Bevan has given us valuable historical discussion of the story of the *m'iraj*,” he mentioned in his Presidential Address to the Indian Oriental Conference in 1928, a year after he started *Javidnama*. What was more important to him than the historical discussion was the intense appeal of the story to the average Muslim mind, “and the manner in which the Muslim thought and imagination have worked on it.” He mentioned the impact it had on Ibn ‘Arabi, and through him on the mind of Dante. “The historian may rest satisfied with the conclusion that the Muslim belief in the Prophet’s Ascension finds no justification in the Quran; yet the psychologist who aims at a deeper view of Islamic culture cannot ignore the fact that the outlook

given by the Quran to its followers does demand the story as a formative element in the world-picture of Islam.”

In that speech he did not mention the book *Divine Comedy and Islam*, published in Spanish in 1919 and by then available in English translation. However, its author Miguel Asin was mentioned as the pioneer of this discussion in an essay appearing soon after the publication of *Javidnama* in 1932. The essay was by Iqbal’s devoted friend Chaudhry Muhammad Husain, in all probability supervised by Iqbal himself.

In that same essay we also find that he was planning to write a thesis on *m'iraj* by the time he finished his previous book *Zuboor-i-Ajam*. When he discovered through some European writings that Dante’s *Divine Comedy* was also inspired by the same story he decided to turn his thesis into narration, an Eastern *Divine Comedy* of sorts. We cannot be sure which Ori-

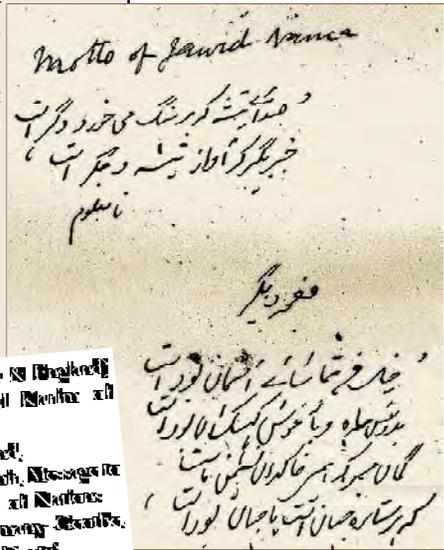
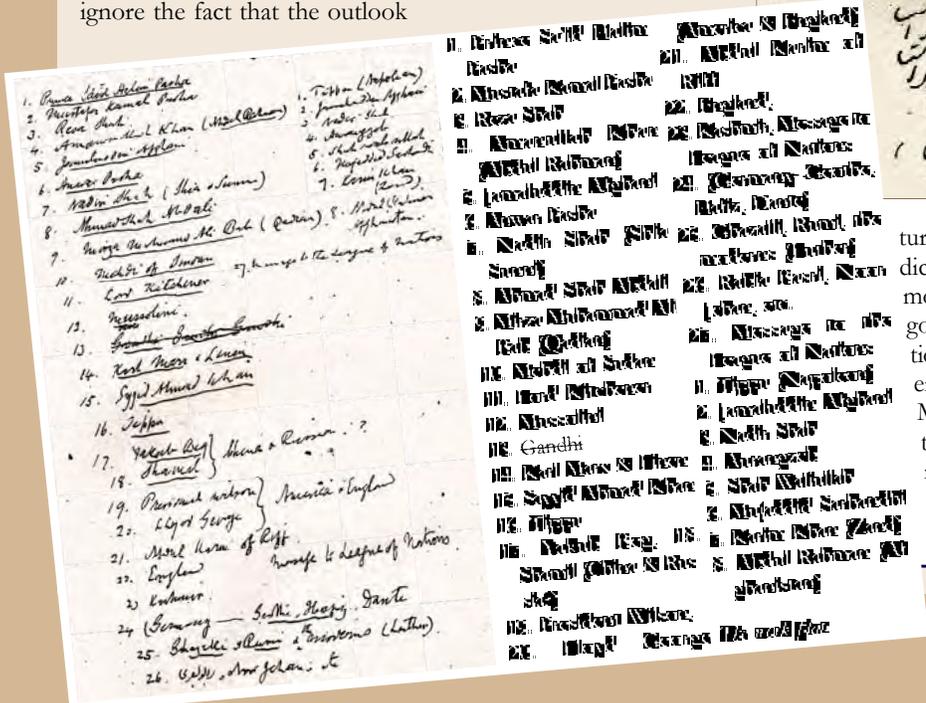


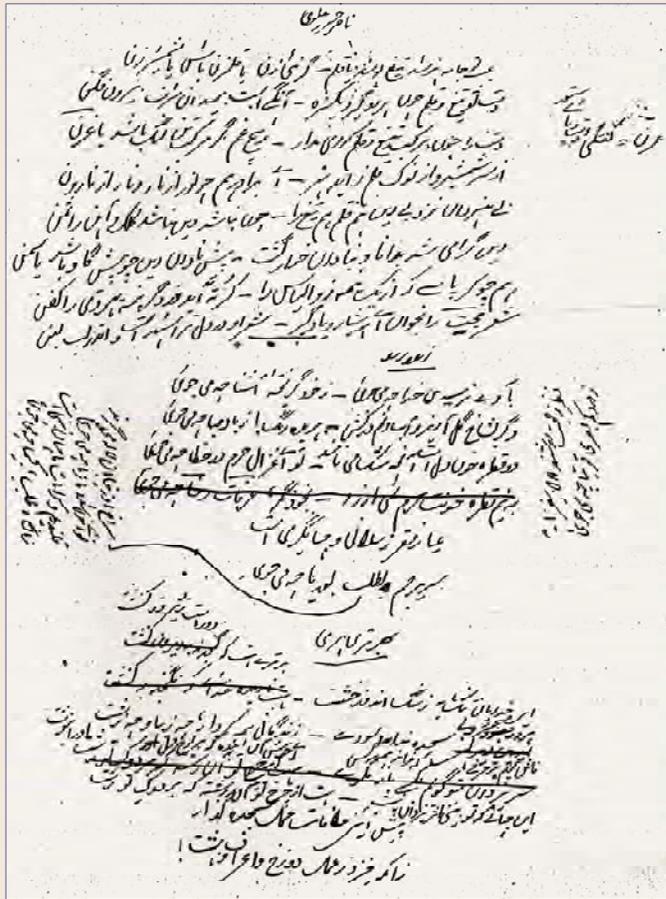
The draft notebook (now preserved in the Iqbal Museum) helps us trace the making of the epic. The first page lists the celestial itinerary: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Fixed Stars, Divine Presence. The Fixed Stars were later dropped, bringing the total number of chapters to a lucky seven and Iqbal being a master of chronograms (and hence always attentive to the play of numbers in his words), even refrained from numbering the two added

prologues of the finished book. Maybe he liked the magic of seven.

The next page of the notebook contains a list—mostly historical personalities whose souls would feature

in the book. Some, like the Turkish dictator Mustafa Kemal and the Persian monarch Reza Shah, were still alive and in good health so they could only be mentioned in conversations by others in heaven if the book were to be written soon. More omissions included, quite regrettably, the Queen Noor Jehan. Iqbal was never too adept at portraying women in his poems.





EXCERPT FROM  
‘BEYOND THE  
FIRMAMENTS’  
Translated by A.J.  
Arberry

*The Divine  
Presence*

I passed on  
from all the  
hours and  
palaces  
and hazarded  
the soul's  
skiff on the  
sea of light.

I was drowned in the contemplation of Beauty,  
which is constantly in eternal revolution;  
I became lost in the heart of creation  
till life appeared to me like a rebeck  
whose every string was another lute,  
each melody more blood drenched than the  
other.

We are all one family of fire and light,  
man, sun and moon, Gabriel and houri.  
Before the soul a mirror has been hung,  
bewilderment mingled with certainty;  
today's dawn, whose light is manifest,  
in His Presence is yesterday and tomorrow ever  
present.

God, revealed in all His mysteries,  
with my eyes makes vision of Himself.  
To see Him is to wax ever without waning,  
to see Him is to rise from the body's tomb;  
servant and Master lying in wait on one another,  
each impatiently yearning to behold the other.  
Life, wherever it may be, is a restless search;  
unresolved is this riddle: am I the quarry, or is  
He?

entalist first caught his attention but in any case he benefited from Asin's book either before or while writing *Javidnama* and it seems a happy coincidence that a year after publishing it he also met the professor in Spain.

If Dante actually took his inspiration from the *mi'raj* – and he almost certainly did, despite his hostility towards the Prophet – then he was neither the first nor the last of such writers. *M'rajnama* was an established genre of Muslim literature and was not restricted to the retelling of the Prophet's Ascension only. Ibn 'Arabi included, Sufis also wrote about their own mini-ascensions.

The homework included extensive research. The characters would speak what Iqbal wanted to say through them but they must also sound like themselves. Hallaj, for instance, was given one of Iqbal's own *ghazals* from *Payami-Mashriq* to sing, but the dialogue between him and Zindah Rud (Iqbal's nickname in the epic) closely followed the mystic's own mindset as depicted

in his writings – edited and published from Paris some time ago.

The poet could not follow the rules of science while depicting the planets in a spiritual epic but the expanding boundaries of astronomy were indeed a stimulus. Jupiter, it had then become known, moved in a fast and interesting manner and hence it was chosen as the favorite haunt of those souls that did not wish to stop at anything, even regarding the Paradise as a limitation.

And yet, *Javidnama* was not the only thing he was doing those days. He was also reconstructing the religious thought in Islam through a series of lectures, preparing the case for a Muslim homeland in India through a presidential address, and last but not least, making his livelihood through legal practice and checking examination papers for universities. "I have drained myself," is what

he said at the end of four years during which he completed his 'life's work.'

*Above left: A page from the MSS of Javidnama in Iqbal's hand.*

## SYNOPSIS

### Javidnama (1932)

The ancient theme of human quest for immortality, blended together with Gnosis and human supremacy over creation, produces the greatest masterpiece of Iqbal in *Javidnama* (approximately meaning The Epic of Eternity).

#### Invocation

Iqbal opens the book with a prayer to God. He complains that the human race has forgotten its greatness, and he prays that this book – a message of human greatness – should be made easy to the younger readers.

#### Prologue (Heavenly)

On the first day of creation when Life brought forth the world out of its yearning for the presence and absence, the star-studded Sky taunted the Earth for being dark and lightless. The Earth complained to God and a voice from across the heavens predicted the glory that will spring from the Earth's dust: the human being, who will surpass the Sky. Angels offered a song.

#### Prologue (Terrestrial)

Iqbal sings a ghazal of Rumi on a riverbank at sunset, and the spirit of the great sage appears to answer his questions about existence, God and humanity. Rumi's answers invoke Zurvan, the ancient angel of Time, who now appears to unveil his mystery: he is the master of all, and yet a man who is blessed with the grace of



Prophet can break away from the prison of Time. Stars offer a song.

#### Firmament of the Moon

Rumi becomes Iqbal's guide and they set out on their heavenly journey. The Moon – the first stage in their journey – is a lifeless planet but Iqbal is able to see its inhabitants when Rumi tells him to look with his inward eyes. Hence they meet Vishwamitr (an ancient Hindu sage) who resides in a cave on that planet. Rumi bestows the title of Zindah Rud (The Living Stream) on his ardent follower while introducing him to the Hindu sage. They also hear the song of Sarosh (the ancient angel of the Unseen), and pay a visit to the *Tawasin* of four great prophets in the Valley of Yarghamid. These four prophets are Buddha, whose *Tasin* contains a dialogue between the sage and a repentant woman; Zarathustra, whose *Tasin* contains a dialogue between Ahraman – the spirit of darkness – and the founder of Zoroastrianism; Christ, whose *Tasin* is occupied by Leo Tolstoy complaining against the perversions of the Church; and Muhammad, whose *Tasin* contains

Above: Illustration by Tabassum Khalid for the abridged edition of *Javidnama* published by Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

the spirit of Abu Jahl wailing before the ancient gods of Arabia in the shrine of Ka'bah.

#### Firmament of Mercury

Iqbal now wonders if these heavenly bodies are contained within his own soul, but he nevertheless follows his guide to yet another world where no human life is seen and yet the voice of the Muslim call for prayer can be heard in the air. Rumi explains that this is the station of saints. Here, they meet Afghani and Saeed Haleem Pasha. Afghani discourses on religion and patriotism, socialism and monarchy, the teachings of the Quran regarding the vice regency of Adam over the Earth, divine government, divine ownership of land, and the abounding graces of wisdom. His discourses are punctuated with Saeed Haleem Pasha's brief reflections on the East and the West. The visit to mercurial sky is concluded with Afghani's message to the Russian nation and Iqbal's recital of a ghazal on Rumi's request.

#### Firmament of Venus

The celestial domain of the planet Venus appears as beautified veils hanging between the Moon and the light of the Sun. Rumi explains to Iqbal that this is the station of false gods. They must be surpassed in the journey towards Truth. Murdock, one of the ancient gods, is breaking the news to his fellow gods that the human beings are turning their backs on the

جاویدنامہ

اقبال

*Javidnama* was first published in February 1932. It was scribed by Pir Abdul Hameed, and lithographed by Ghulam Mohiyuddin. It was printed at Kareemi Press, Lahore, by arrangement with Mir Quadratullah and the size was 20x16 cm (246+8 pages). It was to be soled at Rs.3 from Shiekh Tabiruddin, Aranarkali, Lahore.

Church and the Ka'bah, and Baal gets so excited that he sings a merry song forecasting a revival of paganism. However, the entire conference of the ancient gods falls down in prostration when Rumi celebrates the Divine Truth by reciting one of his ghazals. Iqbal and Rumi then descend into a river to witness the sorry state of the Pharaoh and Lord Kitchener. The laments of these condemned spirits are interrupted by the appearance of the Sudanese Mahdi, whose grave was desecrated by Lord Kitchener. Mahdi calls for the revival of the Arab world.

#### *Firmament of Mars*

Iqbal awakens to yet another world and Rumi tells him that the heart governs the body in that planet (unlike the Earth, where the body rules over the heart). The people here do not bifurcate body and soul, and death is merely absorption of the body by the soul. This was a land of wonders – there was no trace of oppression, poverty or sorrow. Iqbal and Rumi were greeted by a Martian astrologer, who narrated a brief history of Mars and answering Iqbal's objection that eradicating tyranny and poverty amounts to a rebellion against Destiny, he says that destinies are innumerable; if one doesn't bring happiness, you have every right to ask for another; you can change your destiny by changing yourself; a religion that preaches acceptance of sorrow is poison and opium. In Mars, Iqbal also witnessed a prophetess whose teaching of female emancipation was based on a negation of love between men and women. The Martian astrologer informed them that this lady is a disciple of Framurz (the devil), who has brought her here from Europe to misguide the Martians.

#### *Firmament of Jupiter*

Iqbal now moves towards Jupiter, the grand planet circled by many moons but containing only unfinished landscape. This is the world chosen by three souls who refused paradise as rather restricting to their inherent freedom. The souls are Hallaj, Ghalib and Quratul Ain Tahira. Apparently, Iblis also loves this spot because he appears soon after Iqbal and Rumi have had their discourse with the three lofty spirits. Iblis is complaining that the hu-

man beings don't give him a tough time anymore, and prays to God to create at least one specimen who could be a match for his powers of persuasion.

#### *Firmament of Saturn*

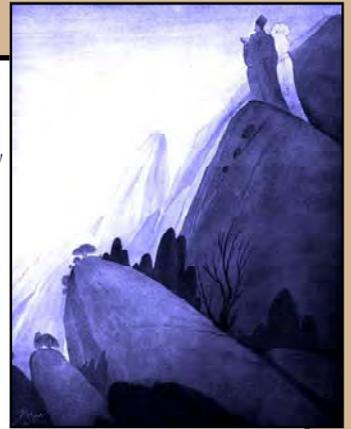
Rumi points at Saturn as a planet that has wrapped the stolen tail of a comet around its waist. In this dreadful and cursed place were two souls whom hell had refused to burn. They are Mir Jafar and Mir Sadiq – two 18<sup>th</sup> Century nobles whose treason facilitated the British occupation of India – now frolicking in a boat across a dreadful ocean of blood. India herself appears before the visitors as a beautiful houri tied up in chains, lamenting the lack of character in its people. Another lament, this one coming from one of the traitors stating their pitiful state, follows this before it is cut short by a dreadful storm.

#### *Beyond the firmaments*

Nietzsche is found wandering beyond the firmaments while the palace of Sharfunisa (daughter of a medieval governor of Lahore) is seen on the way to the paradise. Further on, the visitors meet the spirits of Syed Ali Hamdani (a sufi saint from Kashmir), and Ghani Kashmiri (a famous Kashmiri poet) and the sorry plight of Kashmir is discussed. Seated among the houris in the paradise is a Hindu poet Bhartari Hari and further on are the palaces of three oriental sultans: Nadir of Persia, Ahmed Shah Abdali of Afghanistan and Sultan Tipu of Decan. Iqbal moves on from the paradise after listening to a discourse on the meaning of death and martyrdom from Tipu, and the houris beg him to stay or at least sing a ghazal before he leaves. This latter request he honors.

EXCERPT FROM  
'PRELUDE ON EARTH'  
*Translated by A. J. Arberry*

Tumultous love  
indifferent to the  
city—  
for in the city's clamour  
its flame dies –  
seeks solitude in desert  
and mountain range  
or on the shore of an  
unbounded sea.



I, who saw among my friends none to confide in,  
rested a moment on the shore of the sea: the sea  
and the hour of the setting sun –  
the blue water was a liquid ruby in the gloaming.  
Sunset gives to the blind man the joy of sight,  
sunset gives to evening the hue of dawn.  
I held conversation with my heart;  
I had many desires, many requests  
a thing of the moment, unsharing immortality,  
a thing living, unsharing life itself,  
thirsty, and yet far from the rim or the fountain,  
involuntarily I chanted this song:

*Open your lips, for abundant sugar candy is my desire;  
show your cheek, for the garden and rosebed are my desire.  
In one hand a flask of wine, in the other the beloved's dress—  
such a dance in the midst of the maidan is my desire...*

The restless wave slept on the grey water,  
the sun vanished, dark grew the horizon –  
evening stole a portion of its capital  
and a star stood like a witness above the roof.  
The spirit of Rumi rent the veils asunder;  
from behind a mountain mass he became visible,  
his face shining like the sun in splendour,  
his white hair radiant as the season of youth  
a figure bright in a light immortal,  
robed from head to foot in everlasting joy.

*Painting by A. R. Chughtai (tones have been changed).*

The journey comes to a close with an interview with God – first a conversation with “the Voice of Beauty”, and then a vision of the primordial Majesty – which provokes such a moving insight about the nature of the universe that Iqbal can't hold it and falls unconscious.

#### *Address to Javid (A few words for the younger generation)*

The poem is followed by an address to the poet's son Javid and the youth of the nation.

## NOSTALGIA

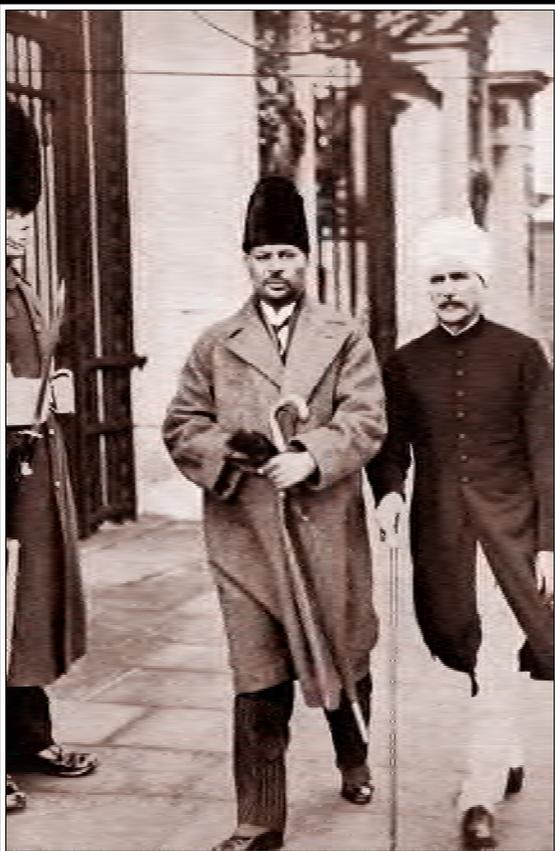
Iqbal participated in the Third Round Table Conference in November–December, 1932. The Congress was not represented and Iqbal also dissociated soon. He delivered a lecture to Aristotelean Society, 'Is Religion Possible?' (later included in *Reconstruction*) and then left for Paris and Spain.

Iqbal had been to Paris on his way to London, hoping to meet Bergson, but he was not in town. They met now and discussed Berkley and, among other topics, the concept of Time. Bergson was quite impressed by the *hadith* Iqbal narrated to him, "Do not villify time, for God says, 'I am Time.'"

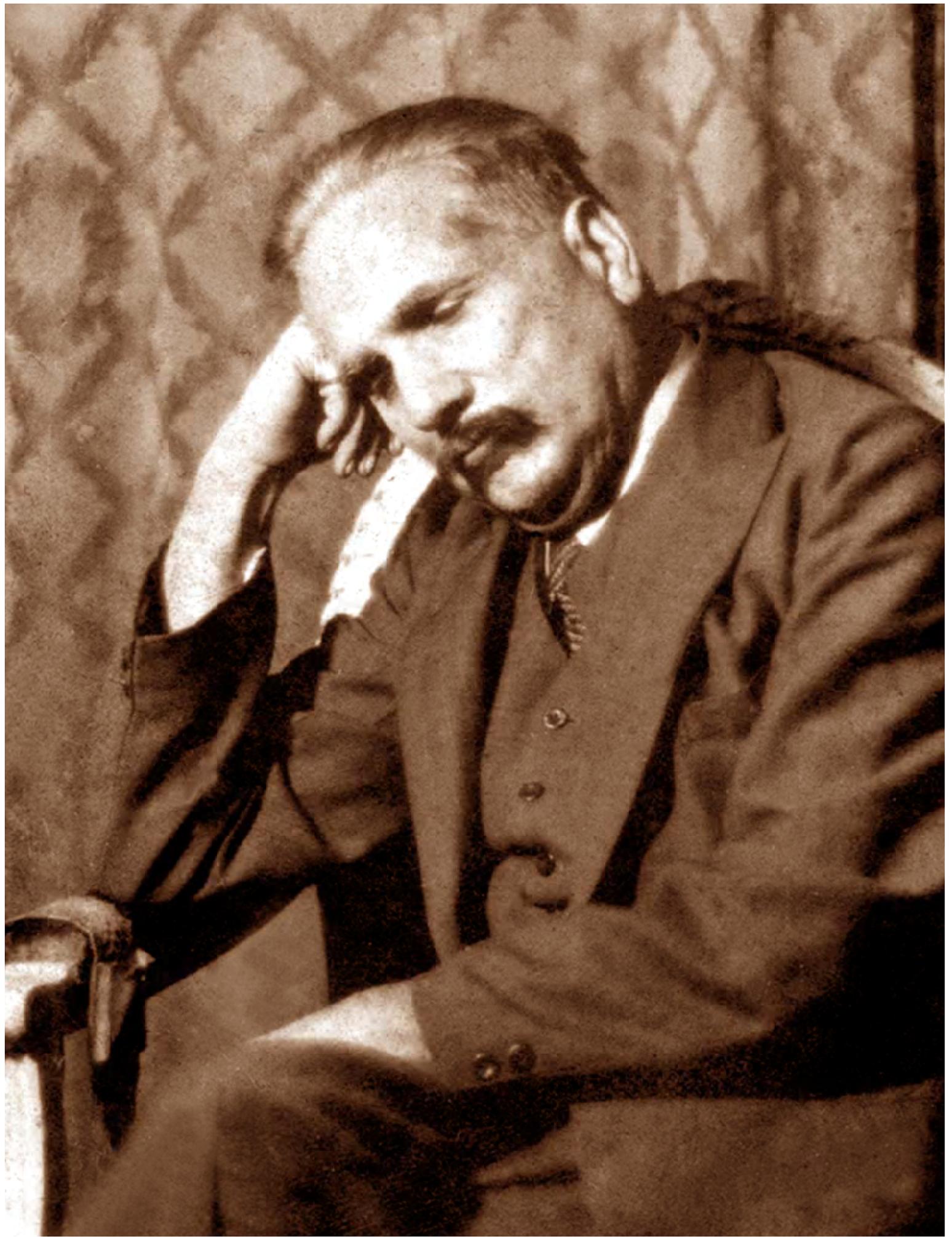
Iqbal's host in Paris, old friend from Lahore days Umrao Singh Shergil (father of renowned painter Amrita) took notes of the meeting but could not decipher them later.

*Facing page: Picture taken by Sirdar Umrao Singh in Paris, 1933, while Iqbal was resting after a severe attack of cold and fatigue from walking.*

*Below: Iqbal with Chaubdry Zafarullah Khan (later Sir) in London.*



*Top: An official banquet during the Third Round Table Conference (Iqbal is fourth in the right row); Middle: Iqbal with his friend Umrao Singh Shergil at Shergil's residence in Paris; Bottom: Another banquet during the Third Round Table Conference.*





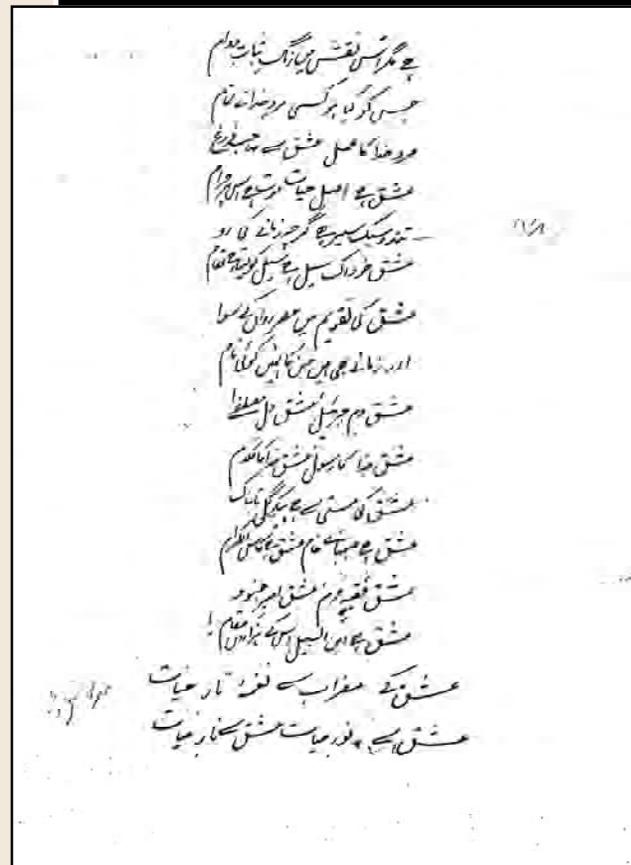
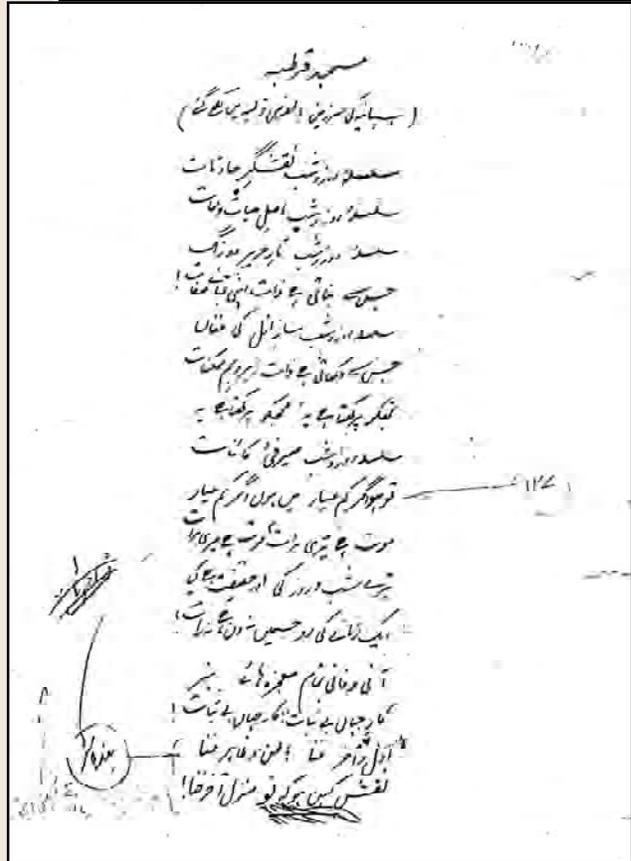
# THE MOSQUE OF CORDOBA

Translated by V.G. Kiernan

Day succeeding to night – molder of all time's works  
 Day succeeding to night – fountain of life and of death  
 Chain of the days and nights – two-colored thread of silk  
 Woven by Him that is, into His being's robe!  
 Chain of the days and nights – sigh of eternity's harp,  
 Height and depth of all things possible, God-revealed.  
 You are brought to their test; I am brought to their test  
 Day revolving with night, touchstone of all this world;  
 Weighed in their scales you and I, weighed and found  
 wanting, shall both  
 Find in death our reward, find in extinction our wage  
 What other sense have your nights, what have your days,  
 but one  
 Long blank current of time empty of sunset, or dawn?  
 All Art's wonders arise only to vanish once more;  
 All things built on this earth sink as if built on sand.  
 Inward and outward things, first things and last, must die  
 Things from of old or new-born find their last pal in  
 death.

Yet, in this frame of things, gleams of immortal life  
 Show where some servant of God wrought into some  
 high shape  
 Work whose perfection is still bright with the splendor of  
 Love;  
 Love, the well-spring of life; Love, on which death has no  
 claim.  
 Swiftly its tyrannous flood time's long current may roll  
 Love itself is a tide, stemming all opposite waves.  
 Other ages in Love's calendar are set down,  
 Ages as yet unnamed, far from this now-flowing hour.  
 Love is Gabriel's breath, Love is Mahomed's strong heart,  
 Love is the envoy of God, Love the utterance of God.  
 Even our mortal clay, touched by Love's ecstasy, glows  
 Love is a new-pressed wine, Love is the goblet of kings,  
 Love the priest of the shrine, Love the commander of  
 hosts,  
 Love the son of the road, counting a thousand homes.  
 Love's is the plectrum that draws music from life's taut  
 strings –  
 Love's is the warmth of life, Love's is the radiance of life.

Right: "Shrine of Cordoba!  
 From Love, ab,  
 your existence is  
 sprung..."







مہرِ اہم میں ہے تیرا نور  
 آہ! ازمینوں سے تیرے نغمے ازل  
 نور کی وادی میں ہے تیرا نور  
 عشقِ باختر کا مائدہ سمیٹ لیا  
 دیکھو چکا الہی شکر میں اعلیٰ ہے  
 جس نے شہرِ جہیز سے لکھنا کر لکھا  
 عرفِ مہذب میں کئی عصمت و کبر کشت  
 اندر پر کئی نغموں کی کشتی ازل میں  
 چشمِ فردوس میں دیکھو ہر اللہ  
 حیرت سے دیکھو وہاں ہر اللہ  
 عفتِ اہلِ سواد کہن پر کئی کبر  
 لذتِ قدر سے وہ بھی پر کئی کبر  
 مریخِ مہذب میں ہے تیرا نور  
 مارِ عدلیٰ ہے یہ کہ تیرا نور  
 دیکھو اس بھری تیرے اچھلتا ہے لیا  
 گنبدِ سبز میں رنگِ بولتا ہے لیا!

۱۲۵

Under the stars your realm lies Eke a heaven; alas  
 Ages are fled since your courts heard their last prayer-call  
 sound.  
 What new halting-place now, what far valley, has Love's  
 Dauntless caravan reached, treading its stormy road?  
 Germany saw, long since, Reformation's rough winds  
 Blotting the old ways out, sweeping away every trace,  
 Vicars of Christ and their pomp dwindling to lying words,  
 Reason's fragile bark launched once more on its course  
 Under the eyes of France, Revolution long since  
 Fashioned anew the whole world known to the men of  
 the West;  
 Rome's chief daughter, grown old worshipping ancient  
 things,  
 Led by desire of Rebirth found, she too, second youth.  
 Now in the soul of Islam tumults like those are astir,  
 Working God's secret will: tongue cannot tell what they  
 mean.  
 Watch! from that ocean-depth what comes surging at last!  
 See how those colors change, there in that azure vault!  
  
 Drowned in twilight, a cloud hangs over vale and hill,  
 Heaped by this sunset with red rubies of Badakhshan.  
 Simple, poignant, a girl singing her peasant song;  
 Youth is the current that bears lightly the boat of the  
 heart.

واہی ہوا میں تیرے شوق سے سہا  
 فعل پر جلال کے دھیرے چھوڑ گئے آج  
 سان پر کون ہے دفترِ سہا کی گیت  
 کشتیِ دل کے لیے سہل ہے میرے سہا  
 آج وہاں کبیر! تیرے نغمے کون  
 دیکھو کہ ہے کسی اور زمانے کا خواب  
 عالم لڑے اہلِ ہر وہ تقدیر میں  
 مری لگا ہوں میرے کس کس کو ہے سہا  
 پردہ افغانوں اور چہرہ افکار  
 لہ لہ سیدھا فرات مری ماؤں کا آب  
 جس میں ہے ہر اللہ پرستہ ہر اللہ  
 بیخِ اہم کی حیات کشتیِ اللہ  
 صورتِ شکر ہے دستِ تقاریرِ اہم  
 گونہ ہے جو ہر ماں اپنے عمل کا سہا  
 لغتیں ہیں سب باخام خونِ جگر کے بیزر  
 نغمے ہیں سوئے باخام خونِ جگر کے بیزر

۱۳۶

Flowing Guadalquivir! Here on your bank is one  
 Gazing at things gone by, dreams of another day.  
 Destiny's curtain till now muffles the world to be,  
 Yet, already, its dawn stands before me unveiled;  
 Were I to lift this mask, hiding the face of my thoughts,  
 Europe could never endure songs as burning as mine.  
 Death, not life, is the life no revolutions stir:  
 Change, upheaval, the air breathed by the nations' souls.  
 Keen as a sword that Fate holds in its hand is a folk  
 Mindful to reckon its deeds, casting their sum in each age.  
 Warmed by no blood from the heart, aft man's creations  
 arc botched;  
 Warmed by no blood from the heart, poetry's rapture  
 grows faint.

Outside margins on pp. 167-170: 'The Mosque of Cordoba' from  
 the MSS of Baal-i-Gibriel in Iqbal's hand (for an earlier draft see  
 pp.171-2).

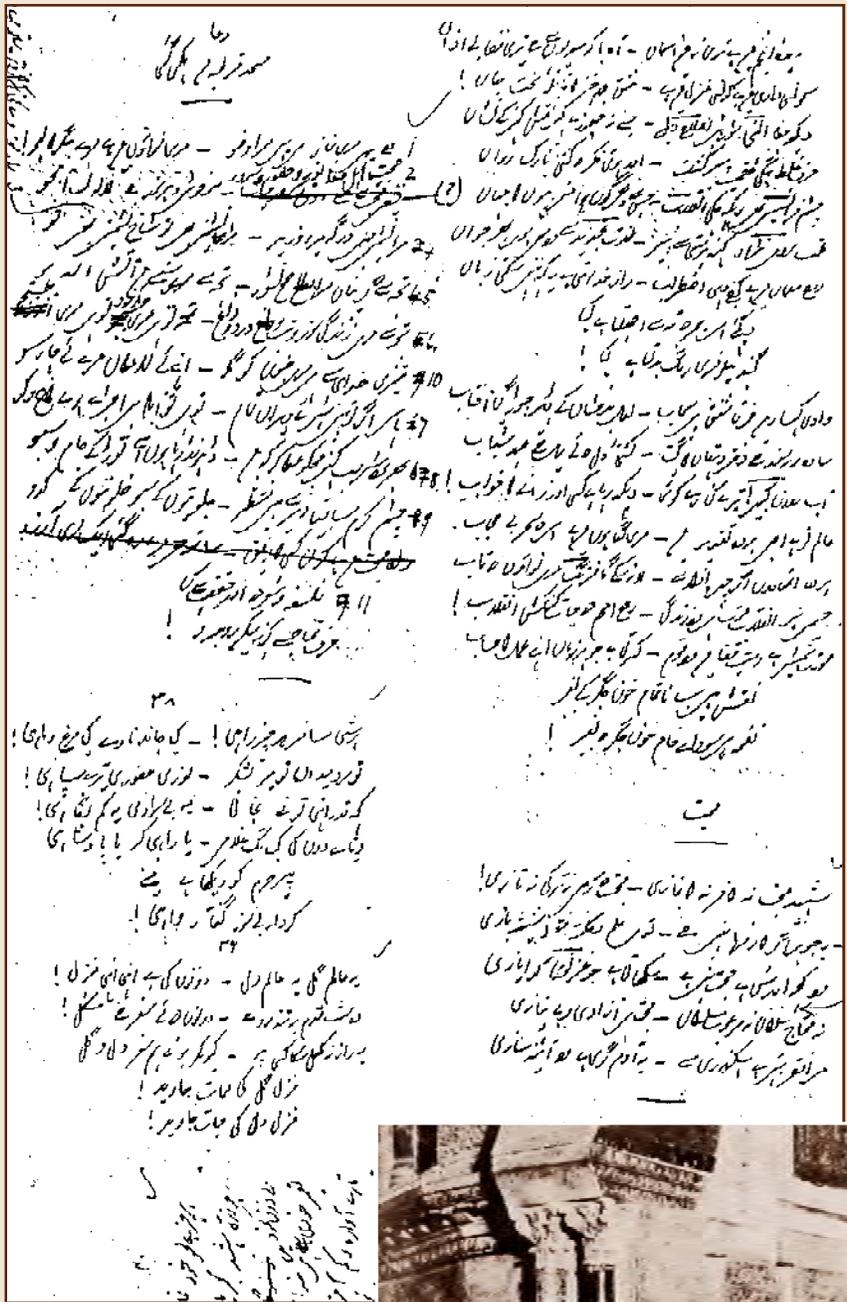


ture by the dissident Turkish patriot Rauf Bay in Jamia Millia College, Delhi. This was the last stanza comprising of poetical musings about the future of the world order and the position of Islam in it – apparently chosen to suite the occasion. No other public recital of the poem by Iqbal is on record, nor was the poem offered for print separately. It first appeared in *Baal-i-Gabriel* in 1936. There, it is the second of the six poems that constitute a kind of Spanish sequence in the book and the poems should be read together for best effect.

‘The Mosque of Cordoba’ has remained quite popular with the general public also (at least three musical renderings of selected portions are available in Pakistan). This despite the masterful display of words and phrases in the poem that are charged with complex mystical and philosophical connotations. Expressions such as *silsila-i-ruz-o-shab*, *zat* and *sifat* can be unravelled to the content of a philosopher’s heart but – and it must be remembered – they need not always be subjected to that treatment if an enjoyment of the poem is intended. The literary aim of any poem is to create an emotional impact and in the case of this poem it seeks to recreate through language the same impact that the Grand Mosque itself creates through stone and architecture. The former is a larger than life edifice seemingly built from immovable blocks of stone; the latter uses blocks of words loaded with heavy meanings, and holds them together by a powerful rhythm in order to present a seamless edifice of language whose impact can hardly be lost on the listeners, regardless of their level of comprehension.

Right: Iqbal offers prayer in the Mosque of Cordoba, January 1931.

Next page: Another picture from the same occasion.







## NOSTALGIA

Whenever I think of Afghanistan, as I do quite often, my mind conjures up before me a picture of the country as I saw it last autumn. I sit in a simply furnished study, which overlooks a garden. Beyond the garden, a broad stretch of land rises in a gentle slope to meet the hills, which lie in ever-ascending waves one behind the other till they culminate in the towering range of the Hindukush...

In the calm of that twilight, the valley, the trees, the distant villages and the mountains floating in a sea of hazy mist present a scene of dream-like beauty. Suddenly the hush of the evening is broken by the call to prayer. One by one all my companions leave their seats; transported beyond myself by the swelling chant of the *Muezzin*, I am the last to reach the prayer-room, where my fellow-guests are already gathered along with our Royal host and the humblest of his retainers!

This little episode reveals three of the most striking qualities of the Afghans – their deep religious spirit, their complete freedom from distinctions of birth and rank, and the perfect balance with which they have always maintained their religious and national ideals... Their conservative wisdom makes them cherish their traditions; but the weight of these traditions does not in any way kill the forward movement of the soul within.

Only the other day, I met in Lahore a remarkable old Afghan druggist, who had spent more than half a century in the West and had finally settled in Australia. He could not read and write, but spoke good Australian English. "Do you still remember your Pashto?" I said. My question went straight to his heart. His slightly bedewed eyes became brighter. The memories of the youth seemed to be crowding in his mind, until they found unrestrained expression in an old Pashto love-song which, for the moment, transported this hoary Afghan from the scorching heat of Lahore to the cool valleys of his fatherland. The Afghan conservatism is a miracle; it is adamant yet fully sensitive to and assimilative of new cultural forces. And this is the secret of the eternal organic health of the Afghan type.

*Extract from Iqbal's foreword to Afghanistan – A Brief Survey by Jamaluddin Ahmed and Mohammed Abdul Aziz. The book was published by Dar-ul-Taleef, Kabul, in 1934*

Nadir Shah, an uncle of the deposed King Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan succeeded in 1929 not only to restore the sceptre of his family but also to resume the modernization process initiated by the other visionary. He was assassinated in 1933 and succeeded by his son Zahir Shah.

Iqbal was his supporter and raised funds for him in Lahore in 1929. Along with Syed Sulieman Nadvi and Sir Ross Masud he was invited through the Afghan Counsel in Delhi to visit Afghanistan and offer advice on educational reforms in 1933. "Each country has its own needs and its educational problems must be discussed and solved in the light of those needs," Iqbal told the press on the eve of his departure. He welcomed the idea of a new university at Kabul – "an educated Afghanistan will be the best friend of India."

While in Kabul, the visitors had a long interview with the King. Especially significant to Iqbal were visits to the tombs of the conqueror Mahmood of Ghazna, the poet Sinai and the Mughal Emperor Babur. Sana'i was among the pioneers of the tradition of mystic poetry in Persian and influenced such later masters as Attar and Rumi – who took pride in coming after him. The visit to his mausoleum inspired a *ghazal*-like Urdu poem that now opens the second sequence in *Baal-i-Gibriel*.

A versified travelogue of the journey in Persian, *Musafir* was published in 1934 and later appended to *Pas Cheh Bayad Kerd*.



*Top: Iqbal, Syed Sulaiman Nadvi and Sir Ross in Afghanistan; Above: Another group picture taken during the tour; Below: A reception in the honor of the guests (Iqbal is seated third from the left).*







Meanwhile his old classfellow Sir Fazli Husain had formed a combined platform of four Muslim political parties with financial backing from the Aga Khan. All India Muslim Conference, as it was called, received some sincere input from Iqbal and he even presided over its annual session in March 1932.

“He who desires to change an unfavorable environment must undergo a complete transformation of his inner being,” he told his listeners after deploring the fact that the Indian Muslims had long ceased to explore the depth of their own inner life. “Our ideal is well defined. It is to win in the coming constitution a position for Islam which may bring her opportunities to fulfill her destiny in this country. It is necessary in the light of this ideal to rouse the progressive forces of the community and to organize their hitherto dormant energies. The flame of life cannot be borrowed from others; it must be kindled in the temple of one’s own soul.”

He then proposed a “partly political, partly cultural” program apparently based on the model he had witnessed in Mussolini’s Italy during his recent journey and also taking inspiration from the peasant’s leagues that played a role in China’s cultural evolution in the 1920’s.

It took him less than two years to come to the conclusion that neither his old friend Sir Fazli Husain nor His Highness the Aga Khan were suitable to lead the Muslim community in India. His attention then fixed upon Muhammad Ali Jinnah, whom he soon described as the only man capable of leading the Muslims of the region.



“Neither the technique of medieval mysticism, nor nationalism, nor atheistic socialism can cure the ills of a despairing humanity,” Iqbal stated in his lecture ‘Is Religion Possible,’ organized by the Aristotelian Society, London in 1932. “And religion, which in its higher manifestation is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter.” The lecture was mainly a recap of the previous six ones in the *Reconstruction* (and was added by him as the seventh chapter when the Oxford University Press brought out an edition of the book two years later). Iqbal was now ready to move on, and that is what he did.

“I have spent the last 35 years of my life contemplating ways of adjusting Islam to the present culture and civilization, and that has been the focus of my life all this while,” he said early next year in a reception held on the occasion of his return. “To some extent my recent travels have convinced me that this is not the right way of presenting this issue as it implies the inferiority of

‘Corporeal Resurrection’ was an article published in *Muslim Revival*, Lahore, in September 1932, in which Iqbal casually discussed two recent readings. The author of a book *The Emergence of Life* had advanced the theory of monads in support of the Christian doctrine of corporeal resurrection but the Quranic argument calling upon the everyday observation of regeneration in nature was even closer to the author’s scientific statement that the same “time and tune” that brought together the atoms the first time can re-arrange them to resurrect the same person. However, the Quran sees life as “a forward movement” and not a cycle of rebirth.

A note is also included on *Emotion As the Basis of Civilization*, whose author had cited prayers, alms giving and pilgrimage to Makkah as the unifying factors in Islam.

Page 176 and below: pictures of Iqbal from the 1930’s.



'Position of Women in the East' was an article by Iqbal in *The Liverpool Post* printed sometime in 1932 (apparently during his visit to London). It observes that men in the West have stopped showing courtesy to women – such as surrendering their seats to ladies in the underground or letting them out of the coach first – but “the women themselves have brought it about” since they demanded emancipation and equal rights.

In the East, especially the Muslim East, “woman has remained the recipient of the same honors as before.” The customs of veil, harem and polygamy are defended in the article.

A woman is so sacred that a stranger's gaze should not fall on her; she is predominantly the creative element in life and all creative forces in nature are hidden although it might be conceded that “the veil is really the name of a specific attitude of the mind” and the outward practice may be abolished in an ideal environment. Harems are not common, since only kings used to have them whereas polygamy was only a method of evading public prostitution by absorbing surplus women; monogamy was the real ideal in Islam otherwise.

A Muslim woman does not lose her legal entity after marriage and may even secure equality of divorce with her husband if she chooses to.

*Below : The marriage contract of M.D. Taseer and his British bride Ms. George (both seen below) was drafted by Iqbal in accordance with what he believed to be truly Islamic lines: the wife had the right to divorce on her own, the husband pledged to monogamy and any other conditions were open to mutual negotiation. The same model was used in the marriage of the bride's sister Alice with the other poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and eventually trickled down into the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance (1961) that now stands in force in Pakistan.*



Islam before the modern culture. In my opinion the correct approach is the other way round.”

It was indeed brave of him to discard a philosophical position in which he had invested nearly his entire life but still it was only a partial renunciation of the apologetic approach. An anxiety to prove superiority usually betrays fear and feelings of inferiority, no matter what course is taken to drive the point. The significance of Iqbal's statement does not lie in the solution he suggested here but in his awareness of the problem and in his sincere desire to arrive at an intellectual position lying above and beyond the clash of civilizations.

The first topic he chose with this new approach was ‘Time and Space in the Muslim Thought,’ and this he suggested to the Oxford University, which had invited him to make a presentation in the Rhodes Lectures series. He immediately busied himself collecting material on the theme but eventually the topic was dropped as the University found it too complex.

In a way that was his farewell to metaphysics and the next choice was reinterpretation of the Muslim law. This issue was also close to his heart and once when an admirer called him the *mujaddid*, or the reviver of the age, he replied, “That I am not. The *mujaddid* of the present times would be the one who reinterprets the Muslim law.” Working out the principles on which the Muslim law could be reinterpreted remained his major focus during those last few years of his life along with another project he wanted to take up, i.e. writing down his notes on the Holy Quran. Both ambitions remained unfulfilled due to financial problems and failing health.

One observation might be relevant here. Unlike poetry or philosophy the law has no utility without political power and that was one reason why the Sufis rarely held it in a high priority despite observing the religious precepts in daily life. Iqbal was essentially a Sufi but he was also in touch with the pulse of his times. A fundamental difference between Iqbal's vision of the Islamic law and the various subsequent movements with seemingly similar purposes, is, that his main interest was putting an end to tyranny and poverty through the implementation of the Islamic law. From this position, the implementation of this law in a free country should start with those provisions that liberate the masses and bring them more civil rights as well as a better standard of living. On the other hand, many movements that aimed at implementing the Islamic law have unfortunately begun by putting sanctions on the common person in the name of religion while avoiding the inevitable conflict with the forces of exploitation.



Iqbal's legal practise floundered as a result of his frequent travels in the early 1930's and his subsequent prolonged illness beginning with partial loss of voice in 1934. The disease was finally diagnosed as cardiac asthma and though he also visited Bhopal twice for electrotherapy, its treatment seems by and large irregular from modern standards. His beloved wife Sirdar Begum died in 1935 (a few days within shifting to their own house, Javid Manzil) and

apparently he could never get over the loss. He rarely visited the *zenana* portion of the house, stopped dyeing his hair and started describing himself as an 'invalid.' He would also mention a supernatural bond through which her spirit informed her that she was already judged and was no longer in purgatory.

A stipend of Rs. 500 per month from the Nawab of Bhopal came as a timely assistance at this point. This was the only allowance Iqbal ever accepted from a ruler. In return he dedicated *Zarb-i-Kaleem* to him.

*Baal-i-Gibriel*, which came out in 1935, was separated from *Javidnama* by only a brief versified travelogue of Afghanistan (Iqbal visited that country in 1933 to advise the government on educational policy).

*Baal-i-Gibriel* is an experiment in compilation. The first sixteen pieces, which look like *ghazals* (but many of which are *not* ghazals) are numbered and, without any explanation, the numbering restarts after the sixteenth piece. This is apparently intended to suggest, in a subtle way, that the first sequence is a monologue addressed to God and the second to the humanity. These are followed by quatrains and the later half of the book consists of poems, including some of Iqbal's best. The poems also lead into each other thematically, so that their impact and meaning depends on the number of poems read together. For instance, 'Lenin in the Presence of God' taken on its own is remarkable but if the next two poems 'The Song of the Angels' and 'God's Decree' are also added to it then the trilogy brings new meanings to the whole thing. The poem written on the tomb of Mujaddid Sirhindi is a light-voiced rhetoric if taken in isolation but prelude to an exhaustive study of politics in Punjab if the next few poems are also added to it.

The key to this design of the book and its subtexts is provided, not



through words but through their conspicuous absence: there is no editorial preface and not even a table of contents. That this masterpiece must be seen as a single book rather than an anthology of isolated poems should be evident from the omission of the table of contents to those who pay heed to the two-line prelude of the book – a couplet from the Hindu poet Bhartari Hari to the effect that the heart of a diamond could be cut with a flower petal while the subtleties of discourse are wasted upon the ignorant.

*Baal-i-Gibriel* has a strong affinity with *Javidnama*, which provides the landscape and narrative background for most of its poems although its best poem 'The Mosque of Cordoba' stemmed from the principles about the architecture of free people earlier elucidated in 'The Book of Slaves' in *Zuboor-i-Ajam*.

What did he find so inspiring about the mosque? "I found a significant dif-

Iqbal had a deep interest in Kashmir, not the least due to his own roots. He first visited the valley in 1919 and apart from uncollected verses written in the student days his poems on Kashmir include the Persian 'Sakinama' (included in *Payam-i-Mashriq*), passages in *Javidnama* and a section in the Urdu portion of *Armughan-i-Hijaz*.

He also participated in various social organizations of the Kashmiris of Punjab until 1931 when rebellion against the Maharajah broke out in the heartland itself. An All India Kashmir Committee was formed and Iqbal became an active member. The president was Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood, the leader of the Ahmedi Movement.

The Kashmir Committee provided valuable services to the people of Kashmir and the efforts resulted in the appointment of the Glancy Commission by the British Government, which introduced many useful reforms. The Committee itself faced internal strife over the issue of constitution and Iqbal was nominated acting president after the resignation of Mirza Bashiruddin. The rifts continued and Iqbal resigned from his post, disbanding the Committee. The press statement given on this occasion brings out his resentment against "the members in the Committee who recognise no loyalty except to the head of their particular religious sect" – obviously meaning the Ahmedis.

Iqbal continued to support the people of Kashmir and until as late as the summer of 1937 he was in the list of persons whose entry was banned in the valley.

The whole episode of the Kashmir Committee remains controversial due to contrasting accounts given by the Ahmedi writers and their most volatile opponents, the activists of the Ahrar Party.

*Left: A picture of Iqbal from the 1930's.*

ference in the three buildings I visited [in Spain];” he later said in an informal gathering. “The Palace of Al Zahra seemed to be the creation of giants; the Mosque of Cordoba, of civilized giants while the Palace of Alhamra just that of civilized humans.” Reportedly, Iqbal then smiled and added, “I wandered about in the Palace of Alhamra but wherever I looked I saw ‘*Hu al Ghalib*’ [‘He is the Dominant One’] written on the walls. I said to myself, ‘God dominates everything here. I would rather that man dominated something too!’”

The grand building in Cordoba, then, answered to his taste for magnificence in art. It naturally provided the argument that opens the poem: Time is the enigmatic vanquisher but a masterpiece of art created by a ‘Man of God’ is timeless. Of course, one has to account for natural disasters and Iqbal does not care to tell us how he would make exceptions to his rule in order to fit a case where a theoretically permanent artefact by a Man of God vanishes due to some natural calamity. Yet, the real worth of a poem lies in its beauty and not in its scientific truth, as he had jotted down in his notebook long time ago.

The poem is especially touching as it moves on from the initial highflown idea to draw similarities between the magnificence of the building with things more humane and alive around us – such as the heart of a true believer, or the song sung unthinkingly by the daughter of a peasant in the nearby field, or the prophetic imagination of the poet himself. As one of the critics has rightly pointed out, instead of writing a poem *about* the mosque, the poet sought to create through words an equivalent of its architectural splendor.

Islamic Research Institute was founded in Lahore on Iqbal's suggestion and he was its first president.

*Below: The group photograph from the inauguration of the Institute in April 1933 includes, among others: Iqbal (seated in the middle), Habiburrahman Sherwani (on his right), Sir Abdul Qadir (next to Sherwani) and Abdullah Yusuf Ali (famous translator of the Holy Quran; seated second from right). Khalifah Shujauddin is seated on Iqbal's left.*



The 'Man of God' (*'mard-i-Khuda'*) and the 'Muslim' (*'mard-i-Musalman'*) as used in the poem are not synonymous. The 'Man of God,' whose work receives immortality could be anyone, even a non-Muslim, who is moved by Love – in *Javidnama*, Iqbal had shown Hindu poets as paragons of perfection while *Baal-i-Gabriel* itself attributed remarkable strengths of character even to Lenin. A Muslim is one of the types of 'men of God.'

Never departing from its universal underpinings the poem, however, retains a thoroughly Islamic character in its unrelenting movement from one magnificence of Muslim thought and history to another until the past is transformed into the present and the present is experienced as a foreshadow of the future.

In the overall plan of *Baal-i-Gabriel*, 'The Mosque of Cordoba' is preceded by a 'Prayer' (written in the mosque itself). The powerful grandeur of these poems is contrasted by varying shades of several other prayers – ranging from dramatic monologues of figures from the Moorish Spain and the Russian Lenin to angels in the heaven and, finally a reply from God Himself, the much talked about poem in which God bids the angels to topple the oppressive social and economic systems in the world.



Two books came out the next year. *Zarb-i-Kaleem* in Urdu and *Pas Cheb Bayed Kerd Aye Aqwam-i-Sharq* in Persian.

The first was subtitled 'a declaration of war against the present age' and showcased Iqbal's perspective on religion, education, art, current affairs and 'the woman question.' It is often seen as rather didactic and, as compared to the rest of Iqbal – especially his earlier poetry – its quotations often sound rigid and unrelenting. This is mainly due to selective reading, since the impression does not hold true when the book is studied in its entirety. To begin with, the prefatory poems themselves make it clear that the poet is well aware of the ruggedness of his expression, which is a necessity due to the nature of his task.

Almost sixty and suffering from chronic illnesses, he must have counted this book as possibly the last expression of his vision for a universal social reconstruction, and as such the sense of urgency is well-justified. However, the Islamic poems in this work do not betray to see a world subjugated by the Muslim faith. In fact, one of the poems contains a rather sarcastic criticism of the preaching of Islam in Europe, and proposes that the exploitation of the poorer nations would not end by the conversion of the white man since the Western political system was based on race rather than religion. The implication is that a change in the political structure of the global community, and not a lip service to the faith, is needed. The plea to the Muslim readers is to pay attention to the liberal face of Islam and present a humanitarian model before the world. Just like Sir Syed had done before him, Iqbal too asks



Iqbal never ceased to be an educationist and this second profession gave him a more dependable income especially when his legal practice fizzled out from 1934. Although he never took up teaching after 1910 (except for a brief comeback to the Government College in 1919), he remained associated with the Punjab University as fellow till the 1930's and was also the Dean of the Oriental Faculty at one time.

As examiner and chief examiner he was paid for his services according to the existing rates – which varied according to the level of grades from Rs.15 to Rs.100 for setting a paper and from a few paises to over Rs.2 per answer sheet for checking. At one time he also checked papers for the Aligarh University. His income tax returns show his "income from universities" as usually varying between Rs. 1,400 to over Rs.2,000 annually from 1921 to 1936 and dropping down to less than a thousand in the last two years of his life (by then he was bed-ridden; income from legal practice is nil for the last three years of his life).

Iqbal's method of checking papers was similar to that of his Sialkot teacher Mir Hasan: he checked each question from all papers in a round rather than going paper-wise).

Iqbal was very strict on professional honesty and would get offended if requested to tamper with results.

He also compiled textbooks for Urdu and Persian literature. *Urdu Course* for Classes 6, 7 and 8 was compiled in association with Hakeem Ahmad Shuja and came out in 1924; its extension for Class 5 with the same co-editor in 1926; and *Aina-i-Ajam* for teaching Persian literature to the matric classes in 1927.

*Tarikh-i-Hind*, a history textbook first published in 1913 claimed on the title to be co-authored by Iqbal but that does not seem true in view of the contents.

*Top: Iqbal at the Aligarh University. Not dated.*



Iqbal received four honorary degrees of DLitt (including one posthumously conferred on him). They were from the universities of: (1) Punjab (on the occasion of its Jubilee in 1933); (2) Aligarh (1935); (3) Allahabad (on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee in 1937); and (4) Tokyo (posthumously in 1960).

Apparently the Usmania University (Hyderabad Deccan) also decided to decorate him in the last year of his life but it is not known whether the degree was conferred.

The Governor's citation for Iqbal at the Punjab University was: "In Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the University pays a tribute to a poet and philosopher of wide reputation, and we are glad to think that for many years, he was Dean of the Oriental Faculty of the University."

Nine other dignitaries received honorary degrees on the same occasion. They included Iqbal's old friend Sir Fazli Husain, Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, the Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir and, incidentally, Iqbal's jealous rival Sir Shadi Lal (Chief Justice, Lahore High Court).

Top: Iqbal after receiving the honorary DLitt from Punjab (1933).

Right: Iqbal wearing the doctoral robe.

Facing page: Iqbal at Aligarh University. Not dated.

the Muslim readers to move on from such unproductive ideas as predestination and blind following of religious leaders.

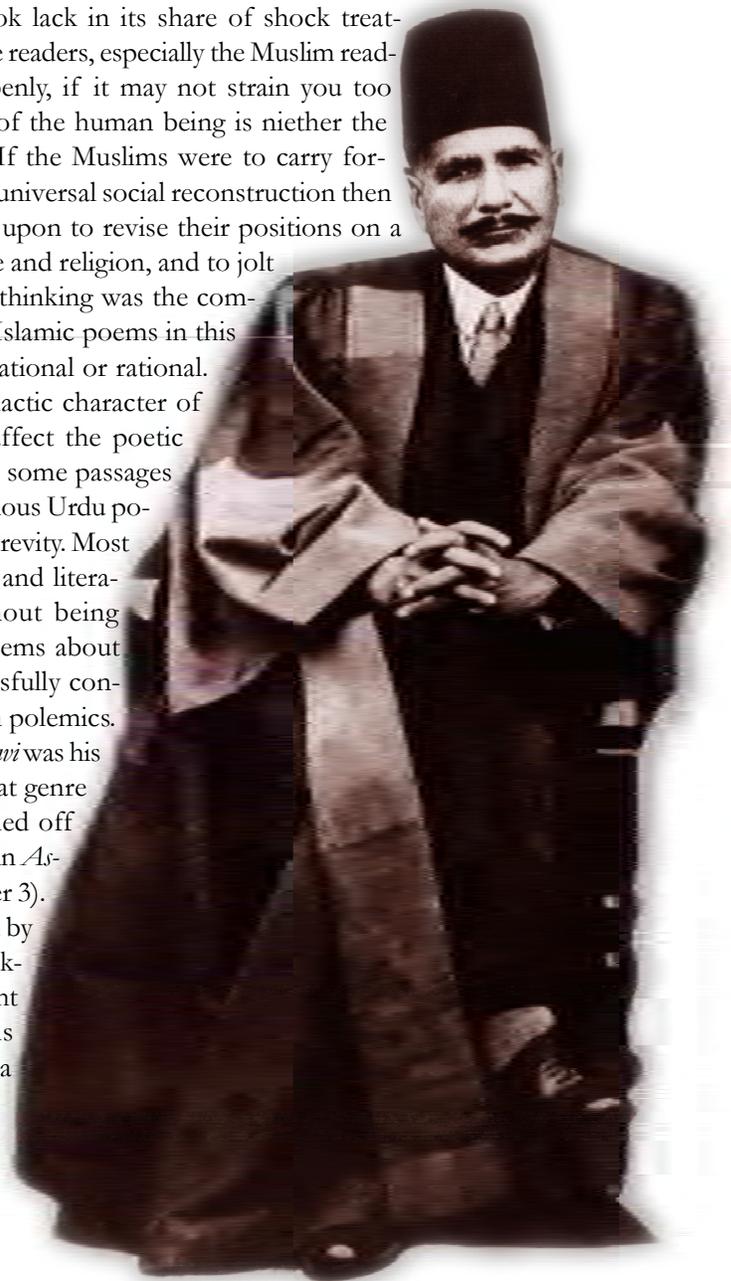
'Makkah and Geneva' is one of the many poems where the aim of Islam is presented as "nothing less than a nation of humanity. Makkah sent this message to the soil of Geneva: a League of Nations, or a League of Humanity?"

Having devoted his life to the reconstruction of the Muslim religious thought for achieving unity of the human race, he reiterated here that faith turns into superstition if divorced from a sense of life: every bough that grows on a plant is a testimony to the fact that even the plants are aware of the expanse of the space, he argued in a poem aptly titled 'Resignation': "Don't bar the path to deeds for Nature's claims/ Submission to Will of God has different aims."

Nor does the book lack in its share of shock treatment for jolting up the readers, especially the Muslim readers: "May I say it openly, if it may not strain you too much: the existence of the human being is neither the soul nor the body!" If the Muslims were to carry forward his mission of a universal social reconstruction then they would be called upon to revise their positions on a lot of issues about life and religion, and to jolt them up into critical thinking was the combined purpose of all Islamic poems in this book, whether motivational or rational.

The avowedly didactic character of the book does not affect the poetic quality too much and some passages even surpass the previous Urdu poems in terseness and brevity. Most of the section on art and literature is colorful without being flowery, while the poems about current affairs successfully conciliate verbal art with polemics.

The Persian *mathnawi* was his last undertaking in that genre and in a way it finished off the discussion started in *Asrar-i-Khudi* (see Chapter 3). Health was failing him by that time and he was taking solace in the thought that his work in this world had come to a decent close.





## SYNOPSIS

### *Baal-i-Gibriel* (1935)

*Baal-i-Gibriel* (Gabriel's Wing) is most favored by critics and mature readers. In Urdu literature it remains virtually unsurpassed as a combination of philosophical subjects, powerful expression and moving melody.

#### *Dedicatory verses*

A solitary couplet on the title page invites the reader to refurbish the luggage for the sun's journey, and refresh the burnt out breath of the days. The dedication page contains just a polite warning, translated from the ancient Hindu poet Bhartari Hari: "The heart of a diamond can be cut with the petal of a flower; words, sweet and soft, are wasted on an ignorant fool."

#### 1-16

Sixteen poems, conspicuously carrying numbers instead of titles (hence mistakenly called *ghazals* by most commentators). These 16 pieces form a dialogue with God.

#### 1-61

The untitled poems are renumbered after 16 – perhaps to signify a shift in the subject, which now comprises of an address to fellow humanity. The tapestry displays the widest range of philosophical subjects ever covered in one place in Urdu poetry. The topics

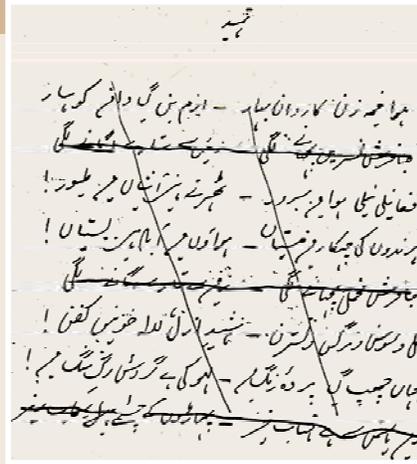
include metaphysics, mysticism, ethics, contemporary history, politics and so on – not to mention exposition of Iqbal's own philosophy of the self, which makes its first appearance here in Urdu – nearly twenty years after its delineation in Persian.

#### *Quatrains*

Urdu quatrains by the poet were included here for the first time. They parallel the discourse presented in the previous sections.

#### *Titled poems*

The later half of the book contains regular poems. It opens with a bunch of hymns, including such masterpieces as 'The Mosque of Cordoba,' and the trilogy of poems beginning with 'Lenin in the Presence of God.' These are followed by poems in praise of the Prophet, leading into poems on nearly every subject fleetingly touched in the previous untitled poems. Elaborations occur in varying details – with a refreshing synthesis of moving lyricism and complex philosophical thought.



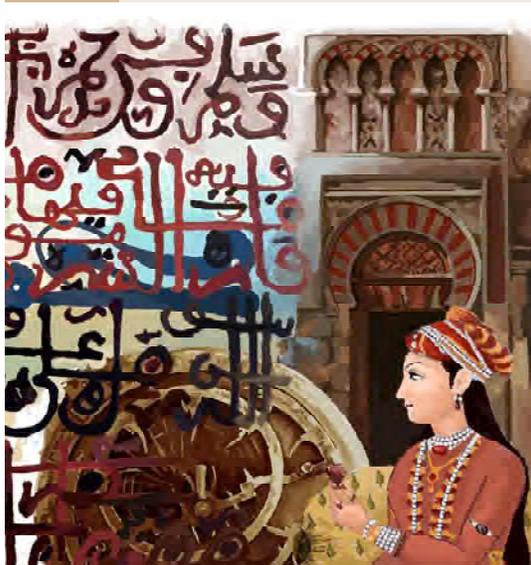
'Sakinamah' was most probably written in 1934. It was included in *Baal-i-Gibriel* early next year.

It follows an established convention of Persian and Urdu poetry whereby the onset of the Spring was celebrated by seeking the winebearer's favor. This convention is transmuted here to explore the spiritual reality of scenic beauty. The wine, traditionally representing

thirst for spiritual knowledge, here unifies the love of God with a pressing urge for positive action in the world.

Seven stanzas cover the following themes: (a) an overview of the natural world and the human affairs; (b) decadence of the Muslim community; (c) Muslim renaissance; (d) life and universe – a metaphysical overview; (e) the secrets of the Self; (f) the way ahead.

The poem is an update of 'The Khizr of the Way' as a capsule summary of Iqbal's philosophical ideas. Its literary function differs, however, from all other longer Urdu poems. On one hand it may be counted as an unidentified tribute to Wordsworth in as much as it blends aesthetic enjoyment with spiritual meaning in the appreciation of nature; on the other hand it gives new lease of life to certain conventions of Eastern literature and to some mystic vocabulary by bringing them face to face with the modern habits of the mind – a little reconstruction of literary thought in the East.

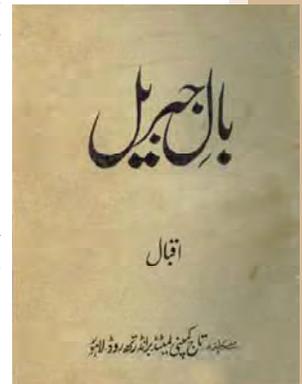


It is possible to read *Baal-i-Gibriel* in more than one way. It can be seen as a metaphysical recollection of human history, a disjointed and more experimental *Javidnama* of sorts, or a book of beautiful poems that may be enjoyed on their own.

A dominant theme in the book is the primordial human struggle against passions within and forces without, and is perhaps best expressed in 'The Spirit of Earth Welcomes Adam.'

The first edition of *Baal-i-Gibriel* came out in January 1935. It was printed at Taj Company (Lahore) in

an unusually high quantity of 10,000 copies at the size of 15x19.5 cm (224 pages). Allegedly, the sole agent took out additional pirated copies from the press.



## ABYSSINIA

(18th August 1935)

Those vultures of the West have yet to learn

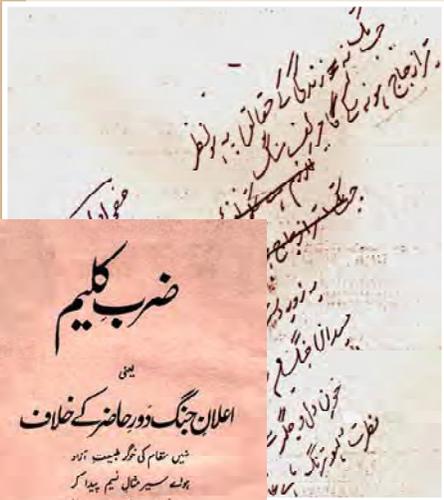
What poisons lurk in Abyssinia's corpse,  
That rotting carcass ready to fall in pieces!

Civilization's zenith, nadir of virtue;  
In our world pillage is the nations' trade,  
Each wolf aprowl for inoffensive lambs.

Woe to the shining honor of the Church,  
For Rome has shivered it in the market place  
Sharp clawed, oh Holy Father, is the truth.

Translated by V.G. Kiernan

Right: Ethiopian King Haile Sellasi. His starved country was invaded by Mussolini to carve an "empire."



Zarb-i-Kaleem was first published in July

1936. The scribe is unknown but seems to be someone other than Abdul Majeed, Iqbal's usual scribe. 5000 copies were printed of 15.5x20 cm (182+8 pages) from Kapoor Art Printing Works, Abbott Rd, Lahore, by arrangement with Lala Goranditta Mull Kapoor to be sold from Kutub Khana Tuloo-i-Islam, Lahore.

## SYNOPSIS

Politics of the East and the West

### Zarb-i-Kaleem (1936)

Zarb-i-Kaleem (The Rod of Moses) is usually seen as didactic and polemical but it is also rich with remarkable fluidity of expression. The book is an important document of poetic expression stooping down to cover polemics without losing the higher graces of the verbal arts.

It is subtitled as "a war cry against the present era," and the concept is explained in two couplets on the frontispiece. The dedication to Sir Hameedullah, the Nawab of Bhopal, is followed by two prefatory poems – which are brief, like everything else in this book.

#### Islam and the Muslim:

The chapter contains 67 poems reflecting on contemporary politics and society from a spiritual point of view, and expounds Iqbal's oft-repeated views about the potential of Islam as a life-giving force. The famous poem, 'La Ilahallal Allah,' – Iqbal's last public recital – also appears here.

#### Education and upbringing

These 28 poems focus on the ideals to be achieved through a desirable education, hence reiterating Iqbal's concept of what a human being ought to be.

#### Woman

It's a brief chapter – a mere handful of 9 poems, most of which stand accused of male chauvinism and eugenic ideas. That most famous of lines, "The woman is the color of the universe" (*wujood-e-zan say hai tasveer-e-kainat mien rang*), also comes from this chapter.

#### Literature, Arts

Iqbal's life-long crusade against literature of despair, sorrow and fear reaches its highest note here – the 43 poems are a direct descendant of the chapter "Concerning the true nature of poetry and the reform of Islamic literature," expounded in his *Asrar-i-Khudi* twenty-one years ago. However, the audience here is not strictly Islamic, and the message has an explicitly universal appeal.

The 35 poems in this chapter remain significant as Iqbal's philosophical musings on the events that were going to lead the world, in about two year's time, to the most devastating Second World War. Iqbal's stand is in principle anti-imperialist and by implication anti-West. Some of the verses have now become proverbial, such as Iqbal's attack on universal franchise – "Democracy is a form of government where people are counted but not weighed."

#### Reflections of Mehrab Gul Afghan

These 20 poems (captioned with numbers instead of titles) are presented as the musings of a fictitious character – Afghanistan is chosen as his abode apparently to signify strong natural instincts assimilated of new cultural forces.

## RESIGNATION

The twigs and boughs this subtle point explain  
That sense of surrounding wide to plants is plain.  
The seed is not content with dwelling dark,  
It has a craze to spire from earth like spark.  
Don't bar the path to deeds for Nature's claims,  
Submission to Will of God has different aims.  
If there is pluck for growth, the suburbs suffice;  
O man, the world is wide, if you are wise.

## THE PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT

The quiet environs of this waste  
Whose intense heat scalds the heart  
In forming only dunes of sand  
Nature has displayed its Art.

The grandeur of these pyramids  
Pious lofty heavens to disgrace  
What hand did build, design and frame,  
They seem attired in lasting grace ?

Set your craftsmanship quite free  
From Nature's chains that bind it tight  
For men endowed with gift of craft  
Aren't prey, of hunters need no fright.

Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah

## FAMILY

*Doris Ahmad (right) was born in Germany and living in Aligarh in 1936 with her sister Lisa, who was married to a Muslim professor there. She was approached to take care of Iqbal's children (Iqbal's wife Sirdar Begum had died a year before; Javid and Munira were twelve-year and six-year old respectively). The following extracts are from Doris Ahmad's candid recollections, Iqbal As I Knew Him (1986).*

I would prepare Bano [Munira] for school in the morning and Ali Baksh would take her in a tonga. When I first arrived she was studying at a nearby school called Muslim Girls High School. I noticed that whenever she came from school her clothes were dirty and splattered with ink; twice her hair became infested with lice. She was not very happy in that school and did not seem to be doing too well in her studies. I suggested to Dr. Sahib [Iqbal] that the school should be changed. He left the decision to me. So I went round to see the Girl schools in the neighborhood.

The Kinnaird School, which was not very far, seemed to be maintaining good standard. The Principal told me that the study of the Bible was compulsory for all the pupils. I mentioned this to Dr. Sahib, who saw no harm in Bano attending these classes. He was of the view that it would increase her knowledge; he had also made a deep study of the Bible himself. He requested that separate arrangements be made at home to teach her the Holy Quran. Chaudhry Muhammad Husain [Iqbal's friend and later a trustee of the children] made this arrangement and Bano began attending the Kinnaird High School...

Dr. Sahib always had lunch with the children in the afternoon and asked both Munira and Javid about their day's activities. In the evening after the children had eaten their dinner we would all go and sit in Dr. Sahib's room for a while. Chaudhry Muhammad Husain was usually there at that time. Bano would chatter and romp around the room for a while and then curl up and fall asleep on Dr. Sahib's bed when she was tired. I would then carry her inside to her own room where we both slept on adjoining cots...

Once Bano mischievously told Dr. Sahib that I had not given her breakfast even though she had already eaten her breakfast. Ali Bakhsh was sent in to inquire from me. I came to Dr. Sahib's room and rebuked her for being naughty and telling a lie. I then took her back to her room and scolded her a bit trying to explain to her that she should not tell even a small lie. Later on Dr. Sahib told me in her absence that I had done the right thing by reprimanding her for telling a falsehood, but requested me to avoid scolding her in his presence, if possible, because it hurts his feelings.

When Bano was seven years old Shiekh Ata Muhammad, Dr. Sahib's brother, sent a *burqa* for Bano from Sialkot with the instructions that she should wear that whenever she went out of the house. I was flabbergasted at that. I immediately took the *burqa* to Dr. Sahib and told him that I would not let Bano wear that under any circumstances. Dr. Sahib agreed with me that she did not need to wear that. Bano found it quite an amusing article of apparel and used it as a plaything. She and her friends would wear it in turn and run around in the garden...

Bano and I became extremely fond of each other and soon she was just like a daughter to me. One day I had gone shopping and instead of Ali Bakhsh fetching her from the school, I picked her up on the way back. She was very excited at this and kept chattering in the tonga. The tonga wallah was rather curious and asked me if she was my daughter. I replied in the negative. Bano heard this but made no remarks at that time. For the next few days her face was clouded and she was unusually quiet. I could not understand the reason for this till one day while I was talking to her I said as usual, "Meri Baiti?" [my daughter']. On this she retorted, "You call me 'Meri Baiti, Meri Baiti' but that day when the tonga wallah asked you, you told him that I was not your daughter." I explained to her with great difficulty that even though I loved her as my own child, her real mother was in heaven and even though she was like a daughter to me, I could not claim to be her mother.



*Below: Javid and Munira with their aunt Karim Bibi (Iqbal's sister) at a later age. Bottom: Mrs. Doris, Munira, her husband Mian Salahuddin and Javid in a family get together in 1956.*



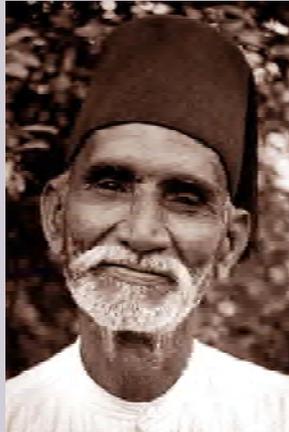
*Ali Bakhsh was Iqbal's household servant from a young age. He died in the 1960's. The following excerpts are from his interview.*

Dr. Sahib [Iqbal] didn't sleep much at night. Visitors stayed with him till late but even afterwards he kept sitting, his head bowed thoughtfully. Sometimes his eyes moistened with tears for no reason or he started weeping until he was in hiccups; then he would raise his hands in prayer and his face would glow with a strange radiance and inward peace.

His sleep was light. Even a rat stirring would wake him up and then he would call, "Ali Bakhsh! What happened?" But he was off into his thoughts before I could answer. I was always around him – even my bed was not far away at night. As soon as he felt an urge to write poetry he would call out, "Ali Bakhsh! Bring me paper and pencil," and I would produce these resources immediately. His face usually became ruddy while he was composing verses and I could see a gleam in his eyes but once he was through he would put his head on the pillow as if a rock was lifted off his chest. At first I could not understand this but then I learnt that Dr. Sahib was a poet and this his usual manner of composing verses...

His life was simple, but I must tell you that his servants were offered the same food as him. There was never a separate meal for us. Once we were given *dal* (pulse) without *ghee* and by some chance it came to his notice. He was very upset and when he went inside he said [to his folks], "You have not given this meal to the servants but it is as if you have given it to me. Our servants are our right hands, they help us soar in the air and all our chores depend on them. It is deplorable that they should be discriminated in food..."

He disliked vanity and didn't approve of his admirers kissing his hands or bowing to him courteously. People swarmed around us when we went to Allahabad (where he delivered his famous Presidential Address) but he got angry when



some came near him and paid homage by showering currency over the crowd. He stopped them at once and kept lamenting over it for quite a while.

*Left: Rehma, another household servant. He was a boy servant in the 1930's.*

Chaudhry Muhammad Husain (1894-1950) became Iqbal's devoted admirer sometime around 1915 while studying at Islamia College, Lahore. He later became a close friend, supervised all his publications from 1923 and was the guardian of Javid and Munira after Iqbal's death. Iqbal's mausoleum was also completed under his supervision. He took up a job in the Punjab Civil Secretariat on Iqbal's insistence in 1926, later serving the Press Branch and the Home Department. In that capacity he was responsible for instigating legal action against many progressive authors, most notably Sadat Hasan Manto and Ismat Chughtai. He regarded their writings as obscene.

After Iqbal's death, Husain's remarkable sense of humor seemed rather subjugated by an unremitting sense of duty towards his late friend and he was often accused of being too possessive – Manto once satirically wrote about an old gentleman who thinks that Iqbal locked away all literary talents in a trunk and handed him the keys before dying. To Iqbal's younger children, however, his guardianship was a Godsent and their comfortable upbringing should be credited to him to a large extent. He wrote about Iqbal during his lifetime but resented the idea of joining the writers who were making a beeline to record their memoirs and views of the great poet after his death.

Syed Nazeer Niazi (1900-82) was the nephew of Iqbal's Sialkot teacher, Syed Mir Hasan. He joined the circle around the 1920's and was responsible for preparing fair manuscripts of Iqbal's poems from 1936, when the poet started losing eyesight. He has left a valuable collection of books and articles on Iqbal, including detailed diaries of the poet's last days *Iqbal Kay Husnoor* (1971).

M. Shafi (d. 1993) was a young activist of the Muslim Students' Federation (the student wing of the Muslim League) and later a renowned journalist by his nom de plum, "Meem Sheen" (initials of his name in Urdu). He was a regular visitor in the last days of Iqbal and took dictation of correspondence at that period.

*Right (top to bottom): Chaudhry Muhammad Husain, Syed Nazeer Niazi and M. Shafi*



## SYNOPSIS

### **Pas Cheh Bayad Kard Aye Aqwam-i-Sharq (1936)**

*Pas Cheh Bayad Kard Aye Aqwam-i-Sharq* (So What Should Now Be Done, O Nations of the East?) originated from a dream in which Sir Syed Ahmed Khan advised Iqbal to seek help from the Prophet regarding his illness. The poem turned out to be the last publication of Iqbal in his own lifetime. A verse travelogue of Afghanistan (the *Mathnawi Musafir*, or Traveler), printed two years ago was appended to the volume, perhaps as an afterthought.

#### *Prefatory*

A prefatory poem appears before the versified prologue, both emphasizing the superiority of love to reason.

#### *An address to the Sun*

Reminiscent of Iqbal's invocation to the Sun in a very early poem (included in *Bang-e-Dara*), Iqbal calls upon the Sun's blessing for the very daunting errand of stirring up fresh life in the decadent East.

#### *Wisdom of Moses*

In contrast to the Pharaohs' Wisdom that follows in the next chapter, the Wisdom of Moses is illuminated by the light of God. It is a liberating factor in the lives of nations.

*Pas Cheh Bayad Kard Aye Aqwam-i-Sharq* was first published in October 1936. The scribe is unknown but seems to be the same who calligraphed *Musafir*. 2000 cop-

ies were printed of 16x20 (71 pages) from Kapoor Art Printing Works, Abbott Rd, Lahore, by arrangement with Lala Goranditta Mull Kapoor to be sold from Kutub Khana Tuloo-i-Islam, Lahore.

The second edition of *Musafir* (1934) was appended to it after a few weeks.

#### *Wisdom of the Pharaohs*

Tyrants too have wisdom and sometimes it can be very enlightening too – such as the modern philosophy of the Western imperialists – but it invokes the supremacy of body over soul and enslaves the people to the will of the tyrant.

#### *No god but God*

The first part of the fundamental Islamic phrase brings out the majestic in the humans by calling upon them to stand against every false idol – material or immaterial – while the second connects them with the primordial Beauty through its unconditional affirmation.

#### *Poverty*

Iqbal reasserts the significance of his favorite theme – *faqr*, or the spiritually inspired poverty a God-fearing person chooses over unlawful luxuries.

#### *The free man*

As everywhere else in his poetry, Iqbal is quick to remind us here that the ideal human personality cannot be fostered without political freedom.

#### *On the secrets of the divine law*

“No one should depend on another in the world,” says Iqbal. “This, and nothing more, is the point of the divine law.”

#### *A few teardrops on India*

This is a lament on the political subjugation of India by the British colonialists, which happened, according to Iqbal, due to lack of unity among the Indians.

#### *Contemporary politics*

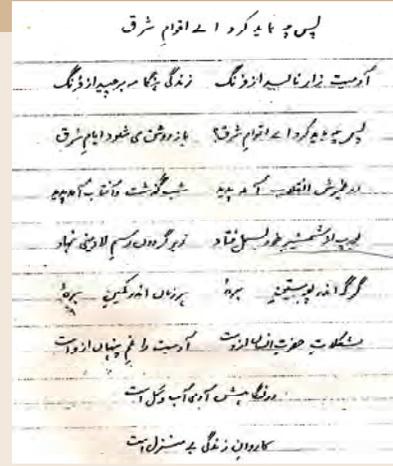
Iqbal criticizes opportunism among local politicians.

#### *To the Arabs*

The Arab nations are warned against the evils of nationalism and reminded of the glorious past: the Arabs liberated the world from ancient imperialism and cultivated rational thought.

#### *What should be done*

Iqbal calls upon the Eastern nations to take a stand against Western imperialism. His suggestions are (a) draw upon healthy traditions and develop self-esteem; and (b) attain for econom-



ic independence. “You know very well,” he says, “Monarchy is about the use of brute force. This brute force, in our own times, is commerce. The shop is now an extension of the throne: they acquire profit through commerce and tax through kingdom.”

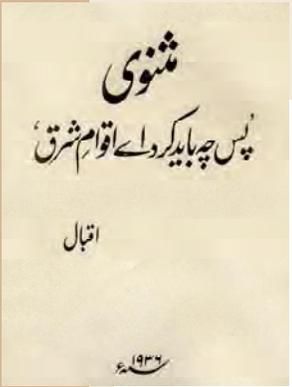
#### *Invocation to the Prophet*

The segment that inspired the whole book now appears as a prayer to the Prophet.

### **The Traveler (1934)**

The poem opens with untitled prefatory verses. The poet received invitation from Nadir Shah, the king of Afghanistan (who had been assassinated by the time the poem was completed). The chapter titles outline

- The journey to Afghanistan
- Addressing the Frontier nations
- The traveler arrives in Kabul and pays a visit to His Majesty, the late King
- On the tomb of Emperor Babur
- Visiting Ghazni and seeing the tomb of the sage Sinai
- The spirit of the sage Sinai answers the poet from the Paradise
- On the tomb of Sultan Mamood (may his soul rest in peace)
- Lament in Ghazni
- Qandhar, and seeing the Prophet's robe
- On the tomb of Ahmed Shah Abdali, the founder of the Afghan nation
- An address to the King of Islam, His Majesty Zahir Shah (may the hand of God be his aid)





It is not known when did Iqbal first meet Jinnah. He might have heard the name around 1911 when Jinnah successfully pleaded the case of an antiquated Muslim law in the Viceroy's Council. Iqbal was skeptical about the whole thing and considered it much ado about nothing – "The Shiekh Sahib used to fight for the Law of Trusteeship," he wrote in a satirical poem, "Ask whether he even has property for turning into a trust!"

Lucknow Pact, the crowning achievement of Jinnah's early political career, was a great pitfall according to Iqbal. He believed that the pact turned the Muslim majority of Punjab into a virtual minority and even wrote some satirical verses about Jinnah descending from the celestial London on to the mount (Simla) like another Jesus Christ. As late as 1929 Iqbal and Jinnah were poised in the opposite camps of the Muslim League, which had bifurcated between Jinnah and Sir Muhammad Shafi. Iqbal went to Delhi that year to attend the meeting in which Jinnah was supposed to present his Fourteen Points and couldn't. They had certainly developed some mutual appreciation by the next year when the League patched up and the invitation to preside over its annual session was sent to Iqbal with due approval of Jinnah.

The sad demise of Sir Muhammad Shafi in 1931 might have pressed upon Iqbal the need as well as the opportunity to look at Jinnah in a new light and it is reported through an oral tradition that Iqbal was a frequent guest at Jinnah's Hampstead residence during the course of the Third Round Table Conference. Iqbal is also usually named as one of the people who urged Jinnah to end his self-imposed exile and return home. Despite a history of political differences Jinnah was the only Muslim leader in India whose personal magnanimity matched Iqbal's lofty imagination.

The two met in the last week of April 1936 at Iqbal's Lahore residence to discuss the setting up of a parliamentary board for the Muslim League in Punjab. Jinnah had still not earned his title of the Quaid-i-Azam, or the Great Leader, but the poet certainly regarded him as one. He told his twelve-year-old son Javid that they were going to receive a very great personality and when Jinnah commented on the shy young boy's hesitation to answer the casual question about what he would like to do when grown up, Iqbal remarked, "He is waiting for you to tell him what he should do."

The parliamentary board was subsequently set up and Iqbal played a major role in bringing the Muslims of Punjab to the folds of Jinnah's Muslim League. The task was difficult and by no means accomplished in the lifetime of Iqbal. At best Jinnah was able to make a so-called pact with Sir Sikander Hayat, the Unionist leader of the province, whom Iqbal didn't trust. However, Iqbal's services went a long way to the eventual popularity of the Muslim League in the province.

"His views were substantially in consonance with my own," Jinnah wrote in his foreword to the collection of Iqbal's letters addressed to him, "And finally led me to the same conclusions as a result of careful examination and study of the constitutional problems facing India."

"The League will have to finally decide whether it will remain a body representing the upper classes of Indian Muslims or Muslim masses who



Above: Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948)

*Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah* was published in 1943 with a foreword by Jinnah. Thirteen letters were included and covered the following topics:

- March 23, 1936. Progress of the parliamentary board
- June 9, 1936. Suggestions for the board's manifesto
- June 25, 1936. Seeking advice on proposals of Unionist leaders Sir Sikander and Ahmad Yar Daultana
- August 23, 1936. Seeking advice on possible compromise with Unionists
- March 20, 1937. Proposing an All India Muslim Convention to refute the claims made by Jawaharlal Nehru in the All Indian National Convention
- April 22, 1937. Pursuing it further
- May 28, 1937. Suggesting that the Muslim League establish credibility with the masses by aiming to solve economic problems through Muslim law – hence needs a state or states
- June 21, 1937. Explaining that self-determination for the Muslims of North-West India and Bengal is the only peaceful way out of the increasing communal hostilities; suggests that the next annual session of the League be held in Lahore
- August 11, 1937. Pursuing it further
- October 7, 1937. Regarding participation of Punjabi representatives in the League's Lucknow session; suggesting issues for Jinnah's address
- October 30, 1937. Discussing a resolution of the Congress Committee; also intentions of the Unionists
- November 1, 1937. Reporting the aftermath of the Jinnah-Sikander Pact and requesting a copy
- November 10, 1937. Complaining that Sir Sikander wants to capture the League and then kill it

'Islam and Ahmedism' (later printed as a pamphlet along with Urdu translation) was published in *Islam*, Lahore, January 1936. Nehru had criticized Iqbal's earlier statements, especially 'Qadyanis and Orthodox Muslims' in *The Statesman*, Calcutta, May 14, 1935.

While appreciating Nehru as the first Nationalist Indian leader to be interested in the current spiritual unrest of Islam, Iqbal is perturbed because Nehru's approach to the issue of Ahmedism betrays resentment to the prospects of Muslim political and religious solidarity in India.

Islam as a social organism needs the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad since it ensures emancipation of humanity from spiritual surrender; hence the Ahmedis should be declared a separate community. Iqbal refutes three arguments of Mirza Ghulam Ahmed Qadiyani, the founder of the Ahmedi movement, but suggests that far better than theological refutation would be a comparative examination of the experiences of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and contemporary non-Muslim mystics (e.g. Rama Krishna of Bengal) in the light of modern psychoanalysis but using the Quran as a criterion.

The answers provided by politicians and allied theologians after the loss of political power of the Muslims were insufficient since "in primitive communities it is not logic but authority that appeals," and hence the emergence of a new prophethood was welcomed by some.

The other course of action was chosen by reformers like Sir Syed, Afghani and Ahmed Jan (possibly all inspired by Abd al Wahab of Najd), who fought against evils in the Muslim world – mullaism, mysticism and Muslim kings. They brought forth a new set of men, such as Zaghlul Pasha (Egypt), Mustafa Kemal (Turkey) and Raza Shah (Iran), in whom "it is not logic but life that struggles restless to solve its problems" and therefore the fundamentals of the solidarity of Islam are not shaken by any mistakes these men might have made.

*Despite difference of opinion Iqbal had a soft corner for Jawaharlal Nehru (right) and his father Motilal, quite possibly due to the common Kashmiri descent. Both Nehrus find favorable mention in Javidnama (1932) as freedom fighters. The only recorded meeting between Iqbal and Jawaharlal took place in early 1938 and was mainly non-political.*

have so far, for good reason, taken no interest in it," Iqbal wrote to him while explaining that the new Constitution of 1935 didn't provide justice to the common people. Pressing the significance of economic problems of the masses he observed, "Happily there is a solution in the enforcement of the Law of Islam and its further development in the light of modern ideas. After a long and careful study of Islamic Law I have come to the conclusion that if this System of Law is properly understood and applied, at least the right to subsistence is secured to everybody." The need for a Muslim state or states was therefore imminent, he pointed out.

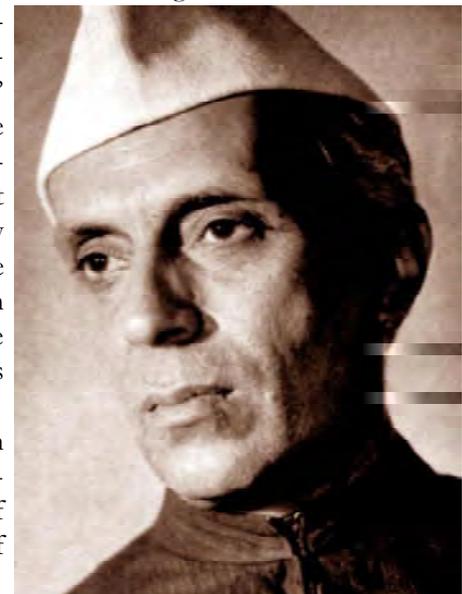
As Jinnah would write in his foreword, these views "found expression in due course in the united will of Muslim India as adumbrated in the Lahore Resolution of All India Muslim League, popularly known as the 'Pakistan Resolution,' passed on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1940." That was nearly two years after Iqbal died.

Iqbal dabbled in two major controversies in his last days.

The first of these started when in 1935 the Governor of Punjab advised the Muslims to overcome the rift between the Ahmedis and non-Ahmedis. Mirza Ghulam Ahmed of Qadiyan, a religious scholar and debator started the Ahmedi Movement in the late 19th Century. He later claimed that he was a prophet and all Muslims must accept him as such. A belief about the second coming of Jesus Christ was current among many schools of Muslim thought, and Mirza Ghulam Ahmed also claimed to be the promised messiah.

Iqbal was at first impressed by the vigor and social spirit of this movement and it found some favorable references in his early prose (but never in his poetry, except for one earliest poem the authorship of which remains doubtful). He could never sympathize with the religious ideas of its founder since it was a refutation of the finality of the Prophet of Islam (according to Iqbal, 'the Promised Messiah' was "a bastard expression" since the concept of waiting for a supernatural redeemer was alien to the spirit of Islam). By 1935 he was openly asking the government to declare the Ahmedis a separate community from the Muslims, just as the Sikhs were declared separate from the Hindus in 1919.

He received severe criticism from the Ahmedis, the British and the Indian National Congress (the last of which was represented by a series of



lectures by Jawaharlal Nehru to which Iqbal responded with an exhaustive article on the subject).

The other argument started with his rather harsh statement against Maulana Husain Ahmed Madni, a renowned scholar from the orthodox seminary of Deoband, who was reported in the newspapers to have said that nations were founded on the basis of territory and not religious ideals. Iqbal's criticism came out as a Persian poem, starting, "The non-Arab world hasn't yet grasped the mystery of religion, or else how could Husain Ahmed from Deoband utter such nonsense!" The ensuing controversy marked the last intellectual battle fought by Iqbal and it was apt that his opponent should represent orthodoxy while defending territorialism – two concepts against whom Iqbal had taken a lifelong stand now combined in one person!



His burning desire was to visit the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. Anticipating this, he titled his forthcoming collection of Persian poems *Armaghan-i-Hijaz (The Arabian Gift)* – his secretaries were therefore shocked when he eventually dictated a table of contents. Was he giving up hope of living to the sacred journey and of finishing his book in the land of the Prophet?

Professor Hameed Ahmad Khan, who visited him with two friends on the evening of November 10, 1937, has left this vivid account:

Dr. Sahib [Iqbal] was lying in his bed. Still reclining on his pillow he replied to our greeting. We three were about to sit down on the chairs near the bed when he asked, 'Who is this?'

We were taken aback, a little. I had been visiting him for seven or eight years now and he had always welcomed me. Although there had been a gap of a few months, I could still not understand why he would ask such a question. Hiding my surprise I answered him, "It's me, Hameed Ahmad Khan – Saeedullah and Abdul Wahid." And we sat down on the chairs.

We asked him how he was doing and then there was a brief silence finally broken by his characteristic long 'Hmmm!' ...I looked at the little table next to his bed. Five or seven books were resting on it while one or two were lying on the floor near it. Fleetingly glancing over the books I asked, 'Dr. Sahib, are you reading more these days or writing too?'

'What reading!' He replied, 'I can't see...'

He was suffering from senile cataract, which could not be operated upon until it was ripe. "Since I cannot read now I spend my time thinking," he told Hameed. "It offers the same pleasure." Then he lifted his head from the pillow and added with a little excitement, "The strange thing is that my memory has improved since the loss of sight."

On February 7, 1938, he dictated what would turn out to be his last Urdu poem (although a few more couplets would follow in Persian). An apt ending to his poetic career, the poem was called 'The Human Being' and was meant for inclusion in his proposed Urdu anthology – though it would be eventually included at the end of *Armaghan-i-Hijaz* alongwith a handful of other Urdu poems, since they were insufficient to make a separate anthology.

Iqbal's statement 'On Islam and Nationalism' in *Ehsan*, Lahore, on March 9, 1938 formed a part of his ongoing debate with Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani.

While love of one's native land is a natural instinct, the idea of nation in the contemporary political literature is "rather a principle of human society" and as such it comes in conflict with Islam, since "Islam also is a law of human society." While religion was national for the Egyptians, Greeks and the Persians, racial for the Jews and a private affair for the Christians, Islam alone saw it as "purely human," whose purpose was to unite and organize humanity despite all its natural distinctions. The post-reformation Europe found in "country" a basis for national life but it only led to irreligiousness, religious skepticism and economic conflict.

The philological "quibbling" of the Maulana is next analyzed and condemned, and so is his statement that no authority supports the view that the *millat* of Islam is founded upon human dignity and brotherhood. If the sentiment of nationalism was important why didn't the Prophet of Islam keep the bond of national affinity in the political affairs of Arabia with his enemies? The humanity *can* have a constitution, "the social life of which is based on peace and security" if the propagation of the Unity of God becomes an ideal for thoughts and actions.

There is a deep inner relation between Qadianism and those who think like Maulana Husain Ahmad, but it can only be demonstrated through an acute historical insight.

The only 'unfinished' work of Iqbal was an Urdu anthology for which he had not written enough and the poems were therefore appended to his Persian collection *Armaghan-i-Hijaz*.

There were other works he had been wanting to write for some time but those cannot be regarded 'unfinished' because they never took off in the first place. Among such plans were:

- (a) a commentary of the Holy Quran, for which the working title was *The Quran As I Understand It* (the amount received from Nawab Hamidullah of Bhopal was *not* an advance royalty for this work – as sometime conjecture – but was a general stipend);
- (b) An analytical history of the Muslim peoples;
- (c) A modern interpretation of the Muslim Law.

There is some mention of a poem he wished to write in the manner of contemporary English poetry by the title 'The Book of a Forgotten Prophet.' No drafts, if he prepared any, are found in his papers.

The rudimentary *Tarikh-i-Tasawwuf (History of Sufism)* is not an 'unfinished works' but one of many fleeting ideas that were not found worth completing – the book was started and abandoned in 1917.

Many drafts, manuscripts and private papers are extant and may be consulted in the Iqbal Museum (Javid Manzil), Lahore. Replicas are available in the library of Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Lahore and may be available on the Internet in the future.

Indeed, some verses alluded to death – such as a Persian quatrain that has become very famous since then:

Will the old song return?  
Will another breeze arrive from the Hijaz?  
The time of this *faqir* has come –  
Will there be another who knows all secrets?

(Translated by Mustansir Mir)

The physicians pronounced him critical on the evening of April 20 and decided that the treatment should be changed the next day. However, it was not very likely that he would make it through the night.

His son Javid entered his bedroom in the late hours. Unable to see him due to cataract, Iqbal asked someone who the visitor was. Upon hearing that it was Javid, he smiled and said gleefully, "I would rather that you *become* Javid!" (The name means 'immortal' or 'eternal' in Persian). He then requested Chaudhry Muhammad Husain, one of the trustees, to read out 'An Address to Javid' from *Javidnama* to him when he grows up. This was the last time the boy saw his father alive.

It was a little before dawn that Iqbal felt congestion in the chest and called for the physician, who had left shortly before. It was suggested that he should not be disturbed again so soon. "It will be too late otherwise," said the poet and recited the Persian quatrain he had composed a few days ago. Someone rushed out but the end came before help could arrive.

It is reported that he refused to take pain killers because they were sedatives and he did not wish to miss out on the experience of dying awake. While his servant Ali Bux was holding him for comfort he pointed to his chest, saying, "It is here," and passed away with almost a sigh.

## NOSTALGIA



On October 16, 1935, the leader of the Untouchables, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar advised his followers to leave Hinduism and take refuge in some religion that grants equality.

Many Muslims, including Iqbal, saw this as an opportunity for increasing the political standing of the Muslim community in India but his initial correspondence with the scholars of the Al Azhar University provoked strong reaction from the Hindu press. Consequently he changed his opinion and wrote again to the Al Azhar University explaining that local preachers would be more suited since the intervention of scholars from abroad might have adverse effect on the relationship of the Indian Muslims with the Hindus. Others disagreed with him and the Al Azhar delegation inevitably arrived. They visited Lahore on January 2-3, 1937 and Iqbal attended a lunch in their honor.

The group photograph of this occasion is the last known picture of him.



*Above: The last photograph of Iqbal: seated third from left with a group of scholars from the Al Azhar University (Egypt). Lahore, January 2nd or 3rd, 1937*

*Left: An enlargement from the same photograph.*

## Happy New Year: Iqbal's last message

*New Year Message Broadcast from the Lahore Station of All-India Radio on 1st January, 1938.*

The modern age prides itself on its progress in knowledge and its matchless scientific developments. No doubt, the pride is justified. Today space and time are being annihilated and man is achieving amazing successes in unveiling the secrets of nature and harnessing its forces to his own service. But in spite of all these developments, the tyranny of imperialism struts abroad, covering its face in the masks of Democracy, Nationalism, Communism, Fascism and heaven knows what else besides. Under these masks, in every corner of the earth, the spirit of freedom and the dignity of man are being trampled underfoot in a way of which not even the darkest period of human history presents a parallel. The so-called statesmen to whom government and leadership of men was entrusted have proved demons of bloodshed, tyranny and oppression. The rulers whose duty it was to protect and cherish those ideals which go to form a higher humanity, to prevent man's oppression of man and to elevate the moral and intellectual level of mankind, have, in their hunger for dominion and imperial possessions, shed the blood of millions and reduced millions to servitude simply in order to pander to the greed and avarice of their own particular groups. After subjugating and establishing their dominion over weaker peoples, they have robbed them of their religions, their morals, of their cultural traditions and their literatures. Then they sowed divisions among them that they should shed one another's blood and go to sleep under the opiate of serfdom, so that the leech of imperialism might go on sucking their blood without interruption.

As I look back on the year that has passed and as I look at the world in the midst of the New Year's rejoicings, it may be Abyssinia or Palestine, Spain or China, the same misery prevails in every corner of man's earthly home, and hundreds of thousands of men are being butchered mercilessly. Engines

of destruction created by science are wiping out the great landmarks of man's cultural achievements. The governments which are not themselves engaged in this drama of fire and blood are sucking the blood of the weaker peoples economically. It is as if the day of doom had come upon the earth, in which each looks after the safety of his own skin, and in which no voice of human sympathy or fellowship is audible.

The world's thinkers are stricken dumb. Is this going to be the end of all this progress and evolution of civilisation, they ask, that men should destroy one another in mutual hatred and make human habitation impossible on this earth? Remember, man can be maintained on this earth only by honouring mankind, and this world will remain a battle ground of ferocious beasts of prey unless and until the educational forces of the whole world are directed to inculcating in man respect for mankind. Do you not see that the people of Spain, though they have the same common bond by one race, one nationality, one language and one religion, are cutting one another's throats and destroying their culture and civilisation by their own hands owing to difference in their economic creed? This one event shows clearly that national unity too is not a very durable force. Only one unity is dependable, and that unity is the brotherhood of man, which is above race, nationality, colour or language. So long as this so-called democracy, this accursed nationalism and this degraded imperialism are not shattered, so long as men do not demonstrate by their actions that they believe that the whole world is the family of God, so long as distinctions of race, colour and geographical nationalities are not wiped out completely, they will never be able to lead a happy and contented life and the beautiful ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity will never materialise.

Let us therefore begin the New Year with the prayer that God Almighty may grant humanity to those who are in places of power and government and teach them to cherish mankind.

*Right: Iqbal's last Urdu poem with translation. Facing page: His funeral procession (above) and cenotauph (below).*

حضرت انسان  
 جہاں میں روشن منیش کی چمک میں جازانی  
 کوئی شے چھپ نہیں سکتی کہ عالم ہے نورانی  
 کوئی دیکھے تو ہے باریک فطرت کا حجاب اتنا  
 نمایاں ہیں فرشتوں کے تہمت ہاتے نہمانی  
 یہ دنیا دعوتِ دیار ہے نہ نذرِ بدو کم  
 کہ ہر ستور کو بختِ آگیا ہے ذوقِ شبانی  
 یہی سنہ نذرِ بدو کم ہے کہ جس کے لاشخے نہیں سے  
 کیا ہے حضرتِ یمنوں نے نہ یاؤں قلوبِ منانی  
 فنا کے کیا حسبِ خیال دل کی شے ہے  
 غرض انجس ہے جس کے شہتوں کی گہنی  
 اگر تصدوکل میں نہیں تو مجھ سے ماورا کیا ہے  
 مرے ہنگامہ ہاتے نو بہ نو کی انتہا کیا ہے؟

## THE HUMAN BEING

To know and see is so easy in the world. Nothing may stay hidden, for this universe is made of light.

The Nature's veil is translucent if one is willing to see: far too visible are the angels' faint smiles.

This world is an invitation for the human being to look, for every secret is given an instinct to jump out of its closet.

It is the tears of human blood that the Almighty has used for stirring storms in His oceans.

What would the sky know whose abode is this earthy planet, on whose nightly banquets do the stars stand in watch!

If I am the end of all, then what lies beyond? Where lies the limit of my unending adventures?



## SYNOPSIS

### Armaghan-i-Hijaz

(1938)

'Satan's Parliament' was the last of Iqbal's longer Urdu poems. It was written in 1936 but was first published in the posthumous collection *Armaghan-i-Hijaz* (1938).

The poem is a dialogue between Satan and five of his advisors, who are mostly given distinct moods and voices thus making the poem a sort of poetic drama.

The Parliament opens with a diabolic address whereby Satan introduces himself and the setting of the play: the Satanic order has prevailed to the extent that God Himself seems to be losing trust in His world. Imperialism, loss of faith, fatalistic ideologies and capitalism are among the chief devices used by Satan.

His achievements are further elaborated in the preliminary by the First Advisor with special focus on the Muslim Community: servile mentality, ritualism and mysticism have done the work here.

The advisors now argue whether democracy and Bolshevism should be seen as a threat. Mussolini could have done the job for them since Satan inspired him with Caesar's dream but his invasion of Abyssinia was a mistake: it has unveiled the ugly face of Western imperialism, which was so far hidden behind a democratic appearance.

Satan rises up again for the concluding remarks: it is below his status to feel threatened by a man-made socialism whose best representatives are dishevelled vagabonds. The real danger lies in Islam: the religion that inspires virtue and courage, preaches dignity of the human being and declares that the land does not belong to the stronger contestant but to God alone. The principles of policy for Satan's disciples should therefore be to promote an interest in superficial quibbles over religion among the Muslim and to keep them occupied with rituals – even prayer and worship – to divert their attention from the real world.

*Armaghan-i-Hijaz* (The Arabian Gift) came out seven months after Iqbal's death but the poet had compiled most of it in his own lifetime. The title suggested his fervent desire to pay a visit to the Prophet's tomb in Madinah. Both Persian and Urdu poems were included in the book.

#### Persian

The Persian section is formed of thematic segments, each containing several quatrains.

##### *To the Almighty*

Consists of 11 segments – the last word (at least in Persian) in a lifelong dialogue with God. The most famous of these quatrains, "Digar dana-i-raz..." was dictated a few days before the poet's death: "Will the old song return? Will another breeze come from the Hijaz? The time of this faqir has come – will there be another who knows all secrets?"

##### *To the Prophet*

The 13 segments represent an imaginary travelogue to Madinah, culminating in the poet's lament on the Prophet's grave. The last segment is addressed to Ibne Saud, the King of Saudi Arabia at that time.

##### *To the nation*

The 18 segments in this section are titled – the first of which summarizes the poet's farewell message to his nation: "Love God and follow the Prophet."

##### *To the humanity*

The 13 segments in this section are also titled, and cover various themes of general interest – the last one consisting of a conspicuous invitation to Satan to join hands in making this world an interesting place.

##### *To likeminded friends*

These 6 segments emphasize the need to liberate religious thought from exploitative forces (mainly the mullah, who has been cursed throughout this last anthology).

#### Urdu

##### *'Satan's Parliament,' etc*

His grand masterpiece, 'The Satan's Parliament,' (written in 1936) is followed by 7 other poems.

##### *Quatrains*

Only 2 segments appear in this section; one is addressed to God, the other to fellow humans.

##### *Lollabi's notebook*

Apparently this is a fictitious character, just like Mehrab Gul in *Zarb-i-Kal-eem*. The arrangement of these 19 poems (mostly following the form of *ghazal*) is reminiscent of *Baal-i-Gabriel*.

##### *'To Sir Akber Hyderi,' etc*

Three more poems appear at the very end of the anthology – two of them momentary and polemic (one in Persian), but the third and the last poem is a very suitable finale to the entire canon of Iqbal's work. The poem, titled *'Hazrat-i-Insan,'* (The Human Being), presents a vivid picture of macrocosm from a human perspective and ends on an appropriate last question: "If I am the end of all, then what lies beyond? Where lies the limit of my unending adventures?"

*Armaghan-i-Hijaz* was first published in November 1938. It was supposed to be a Persian anthology but the material for a proposed Urdu anthology was also appended to it. While Iqbal got the contents in order at least once in his lifetime and the broad outline of the Persian section seems to be his own, the final shape was given to it by his trustees, especially Chaudhry Muhammad Husain.

The scribe was Abdul Majeed

'Perveen

Raqam. ' 5000  
copies were  
printed of  
15x18.75cm  
(280+8 pages)  
from Kapoor  
Art Printing  
Works, Lahore.

ارمغانِ حجاز

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**EPILOGUE**  
**LEGACY**



Iqbal was not a philosopher in the Western sense of the word, but in the Eastern sense. He never claimed to have a system of philosophy in the same sense as Kant or Hegel had theirs (he categorically denied this during his visits to Europe in the early 1930's). Instead, he claimed his intellectual descent from Sana'i, 'Attar and Rumi – the Eastern sages (in *Baal-i-Gibriel* he even quotes Rumi to say, "We are coming after Sana'i and 'Attar").

Hence, the distinct worldview that he had was presented in the organic, holistic structure known for such discourses in the East and not delineated in the mechanical manner common in the West.

Every philosopher, Western or Eastern, tries to answer some questions (and not *all* questions, as sometimes misunderstood by the followers of Iqbal). There are three basic questions that Iqbal tried to answer.

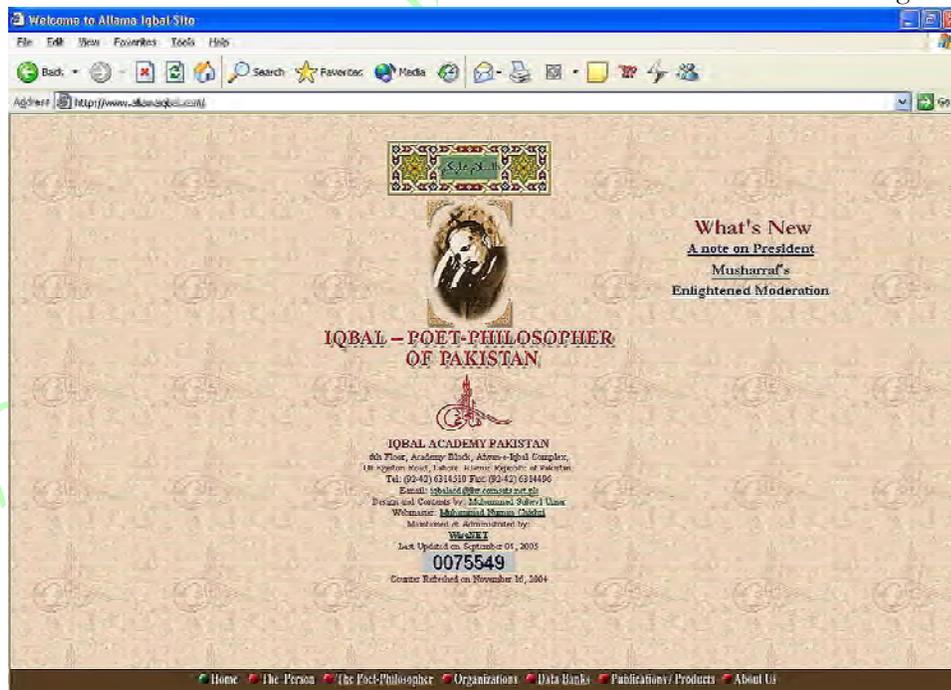
1. *What is the right approach towards understanding the world?* He believed in the ego, and specified at least three types that play an important role in the human affairs. The individual ego, the community ego, and the Absolute Ego (God), which was the source of the individual ego and was discussed only in this context. (The community ego was not a direct creation of God, but was created through a 'man of God,' the pioneer of that community. For instance, the Muslim community was a creation of the Prophet).

2. *What is the nature of human life on earth?* Applying his theory of the ego to the human world he pointed out that all humanity was one. Anything that divided the human race was evil and must be opposed, whether it was nationalism, racism or even some reductionist interpretation of religion.

3. *What is the ideal worth living for?* The ideal to be achieved is a world completely free from poverty and tyranny. Unlike Marx, Iqbal offers an essentially spiritual solution and his observations sound strikingly contemporary today in the light of the new trends now unfolding all over the world. However, he is also on guard against intellectual eccentricities and wasteful hallucination. History is a good benchmark. A balance between innovation and tradition is advisable for our own good (and not because tradition is

*Below: Iqbal takes the leap into the Cyber Age. The official website of Iqbal Academy Pakistan, managed by Muhammad Numan Chishti is located at [www.allamaiqbal.com](http://www.allamaiqbal.com)*

*The website hosts the complete works of Iqbal, translations in other languages including English and information about his life and times.*



inviolable in itself – Iqbal believed that Islam was 'anti-classical' in its cultural spirit).

As we have seen, the most important premise in his thought is the unity of the human race, rooted in the Oneness of its Creator and the divine in each human being. The very idea of humanity could drive him to ecstasy. Transformation of an individual soul into something larger than itself was the common goal of all mystics, but while some of the earlier ones had preached fulfilment through annihilation into the Divine Self – a drop becomes an ocean by becom-

ing a part of it – Iqbal declared that the individual ego must seek its expansion through union with the ego of the larger group. A kind of synergy.

Today, the gurus of human resource management are devising workshops to teach that competition within an organization, which was once regarded as the most healthy form of motivation, is an outdated monstrosity that must be replaced with the gentler incentives based on ‘abundance thinking.’ The human resource experts must primarily think in terms of organizations and small groups. It takes a world philosopher to raise our vision to the level where we can suddenly realize that our ideas need not be restricted to small groups but may be applied to the entire humanity. Cooperative learning is not for classrooms only – how about applying it to the heads at Geneva? Win/win approach is not for boardrooms only – what could the world not achieve if this became the rule for international treaties?

We need a world class thinker to provide sufficient drive for developing such a conviction in our hearts and minds. Iqbal is one such thinker. He employs the trickiest, shrewdest, loveliest possible wordplay to convince his listeners that if political leaders can talk in terms of eradicating illiteracy and poverty in their own countries then why can’t someone talk about wiping out the evils from the face of the globe? If one leader can’t do that then many should get together – or maybe all should get together.

What the scientists of management are today showing us as possible, convenient and reasonable at micro level is also possible, convenient and reasonable at macro level. It may sound strange but it might be true that among the great modern thinkers with any claim to universality, Iqbal is perhaps the only one whose thought can provide a profound philosophical foundation for building a super structure of global solutions from the ideas gaining popularity on a grass-root level in our times.

This is the difference Iqbal can make to our world. His belief in a common human future was far ahead of his times to be understood then and it is no surprise that it was mistaken for something else, something smaller. Today his voice can bring a paradigm shift in the way we see our world.

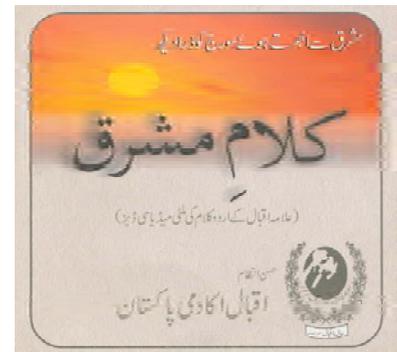


There have been many poets but few can be credited with the births of civilizations. Homer and Iqbal are two cases in point. The works of such poets not only stand in their own right but also provide a rational context for making sense of the civilizations that spring out of them. The Homeric poetry is not only a reference for the Greek poets and playwrights that came after him but also for the exploits of Alexander of Macedon, who was driven by a larger than life ambition to live out the Homeric ideals.

The genetic code of Pakistan – the state as well as the civilization – is contained in the works of Iqbal. To these we must refer with an objective mind.

Pakistan is now fifty-eight. This is a long enough duration to form a dependable historical reference. The future course of action in this country

*Below: The entire text of Iqbal's Urdu poetry is digitally available with a searchable index on CDs prepared by Qasim Shahzad and presented by Iqbal Academy Pakistan.*



An authoritative English translation of Collected Works of Iqbal is currently under print by Iqbal Academy Pakistan. Individual translations are widely available and many of the following may also be accessed through the Iqbal Academy Website:

*Secrets of the Self* (1915)

R.A. Nicholson

*Mysteries of Selflessness* (1953)

A.J. Arberry

*A Message from the East* (1980) M.

Hadi Husain

*Bang-i-Dara* (2002) M.A.K. Khalil

*Persian Psalms* (1948) A.J. Arberry

*The New Rose Garden of Mystery*

*and the Book of Slaves* (1969) M.

Hadi Husain

*Javidnama* (1967) A. J. Arberry

*Baal-i-Jibriel* (1996) Naim Siddiqui

*The Rod of Moses* (1983) Syed

Akbar Ali Shah

*Poems from Iqbal* (1955) V.G.

Kiernan

*Iqbal: A Selection of the Urdu Verse-*

*Text and Translation* (1993) D. J.

Matthews

*Tulip in the Desert* (2000) Mustansir

Mir

may be charted out now in the light of its past experiences since 1947. As Iqbal is the ideological founding father of the nation, the relevance of his thought should also be determined in the light of this recent history.

Firstly, let's look at the way the society has changed since the days of Iqbal. The British have gone and we are independent. On the flip side, it also means that the magnificent infra structure of the Raj – receiving sustenance directly or indirectly from centuries of political and administrative experience of the British – is gone too. Many things that Iqbal took for granted – such as democracy, cultural pluralism, a certain degree of tolerance and efficient governance – now need to be rediscovered through our own effort. We need to readjust his thought to this situation.

Secondly, it is often overlooked that the Muslim 'community' mentioned by Iqbal is not the same as the Muslim 'state' that we now have in our hands. The state, in the modern political sense, tends to become a Frankenstein monster, and it was this exploitative business against which Iqbal complained when he described patriotism as a false god of the new age. The give and take between an individual and the community is transparent and immediate whereas the totalitarian tendency of the state dictates a different ballgame. It creates a mystique and introduces blinkers in the name of security concerns, very often without even explaining them to the citizen. Just as religion was abused by the rulers for exploiting the common people in the medieval age so the mystique of the modern state may be abused by the ruling elites, whoever they may be.

Iqbal's concept of a separate homeland for the Muslims on 'communal' lines was driven by a desire to avoid precisely the kind of games that were later played in Pakistan by some wielders of power. One can be sure that the denial of human dignity in the name of state necessity would be *shirk* in the eyes of Iqbal, and he would say that it amounts to making the state a partner with God. (Seen in this perspective the protest poems of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, the most prominent Pakistani poet in the generation after Iqbal, were not subversive as dubbed by the establishment but a continuation of the tradition set off by Iqbal in such pieces as 'Patriotism').

It is true that the transformation of the community into a state was inevitable once the state was established, but the regrettable fact is that this transformation happened mostly at the hands of non-professionals. Bad politicians, bureaucrats and military adventurists could hardly be looked upon to accomplish a task that was more challenging than running any other state in the world, for this was a state that was to present a model against the common trends of the age. The very point in having Pakistan was to defeat the idea of geographical divisions in the world and lead the humanity in discovering a universal spiritual democracy. To match the task were needed, not just good leaders, but extraordinary ones.

Unfortunately, the people at the helm of things in Pakistan for a very long time were the complete antithesis of what was desirable – when Iqbal's younger son Javid met one of the dictators who ruled over Pakistan in its early phase, he was extended courtesy but was told that his services were not required since he was a gentleman. "I need rascals," the ruler said to Javid in just so many words. Great leaders, at least in a democratic context, can only come up when the people are empowered and mindful of their civil liberties.

Thirdly, the Pakistani society has remained divided on the issue whether Islam should have an official role in the state or not. This divide between the 'liberals' and the 'conservatives' has caused a deplorable waste of political energies and intellectual talent. It is not even diversity of opinion as known in a modern society. It is disintegration. There is no attempt of meaningful dialogue between these opposing schools of thought. Perhaps a common ground could be reached if both sides were willing to accept the humanity of the other, and focused on solving the *real* problems of the common people of the country rather than fighting over names and icons.

For Pakistan, Iqbal could mean a much-needed compromise in this heated debate. He supported the legitimacy of the Muslim law but focused on the eradication of poverty and injustice. The Iqbal scholars should now do something to bring him into the mainstream of the higher literature of the region, which has remained aloof from him since 1947. This can only be done if we stop projecting our own ideologies on him and allow him to come out as what he was.



The study of Iqbal suffers greatly from a peculiar trend of the East where even original ideas are often presented by way of 'commentaries' on past masters. A classic example of this was Iqbal's hero Al-Jili himself, whose perception of *wahdat al wujud* notably differed from Ibn 'Arabi yet his ideas were paraded as commentaries on the Spanish mystic. Likewise, a careful study of the enormous bulk of the so-called 'thought of Iqbal' literature would show that so many ideas presented by his interpreters have no foundation in his own writings.

A thinker of Iqbal's stature should have spawned a school of thought, or several schools of thought, claiming their descent from him but giving birth to entire generations of independent thinkers. One is overwhelmed by the sense of waste considering that the intellectual face of Pakistan could have been different if these countless 'commentators' had taken the sensible step of coming out on their own. Just how many independent social scientists and thinkers we could have had if instead of wasting their energies in proving their ideas with insufficient references to Iqbal they had tested and proven those new ideas against the rules of logic, reasoning and common sense!

Good results might come out if commentaries on Iqbal are restricted to those issues that he himself chose as topics or sub-topics, and preferably on which he left substantial amount of writings from every period in his life, so that we can not only see the progression of his thought but also be sure that what he was saying on these subjects was not a fleeting comment that could be misunderstood but a product of his independent thinking over a considerable period of time.

For instance, there are such themes as Time, education, law, and so on, which Iqbal touched upon in his poetry and prose but did not cover comprehensively. To claim that one knows the complete picture of these concepts as it existed in Iqbal's mind is not scholarship but clairvoyance.

Iqbal's own works in English prose are available in several editions, including:

*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* Edited By Saeed Shiekh (1986)

*Stray Reflections* Edited by Javid Iqbal (1962/2006)

*The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (1908/1962)

Collections of other writings include:

*Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah* (1943)

*Iqbal's Letters to Atiya Begum* (1947)

*Letters and Writings of Iqbal* (1967)

B.A.Dar, ed.

*Letters of Iqbal (1978)* B. A. Dar, ed.

*Speeches, Writings and Statements of Iqbal* (1977) Latif Ahmad Sherwani, ed.

*Discourses of Iqbal* (1979/2003)

Shahid Hussain Razzaqi, ed.

A good deal of energy currently wasted away in writing farflung explanations could be directed towards independent thinking on the important issues we face today. The fundamental principles of Iqbal's approach – infallible belief in the glory of the human soul and a healthy spiritual sensitivity – could be used as starting points for approaching the issues of the modern life but let there be new ideas. Let there be more philosophers.

However, the difference between presenting something on your own authority and forging it in the name of a past master is actually the difference between two entirely different intellectual settings. To make a statement in your own name you need to be in a society where critical thinking and rationalism is valued, and people are open-minded and look forward to new ideas. You can present the *same* stuff but with reference to someone dead for ages if you are living in a society where critical thinking and rationalism are considered blasphemous, people are morally insecure and look backward on their past in order to avoid responsibility for their own actions.

Regardless of the impediments in the intellectual make-up of their society, the Pakistani people today carry the immense responsibility of making the voice of Iqbal heard across the globe: today the world needs to hear him more than ever before.

## CHRONOLOGY

### The Early years: Up to 1905

#### 15<sup>th</sup> Century

Baba Loal Hajj, a Brahmin from the Sapru caste in Kashmir turns Muslims; he was an early ancestor of Iqbal

#### Late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Shiekh Jalaludin, descended from Loal Hajj, migrates to Sialkot with his four sons; among them is Iqbal's grandfather Shiekh Rafique (alias Fiqua)

#### c. 1837

Iqbal's father Shiekh Nur Muhammad is born as the eleventh son, and the first surviving one, of Shiekh Rafique and his wife Gujri

#### c. 1857

Shiekh Nur Muhammad is married to Imam Bibi from a Kashmiri family residing in Sambaryal

#### 1859

Atta Muhammad, the first son of Shiekh Nur Muhammad and Imam Bibi is born

#### 1861

Shiekh Rafique and his extended family moves to the house that was later to become known as Iqbal Manzil

#### c. 1865

Shiekh Nur Muhammad makes an aborted attempt at a job with the ACC of Sialkot and afterwards launches his own business in making and selling caps that can be worn by men and women alike

#### 1870

September 6, Talay Bibi is born to Shiekh Nur Muhammad and Imam Bibi; she is their second daughter (the first daughter was Fatima Bibi, whose date of birth is unknown)

#### c. 1973

A second son is born to Shiekh Nur Muhammad and Imam Bibi and dies infant; Shiekh Rafique falls

victim of cholera epidemic along with his younger son whose family is now supported by Shiekh Nur Muhammad

1877  
Iqbal is born on November 9 (Friday 3 Du al-Qa'd, 1294 AH)

#### c.1879

Infant Iqbal loses his right eye when leeches are applied as a traditional medical treatment

#### c. 1880

Atta Muhammad gets married and finds a job with the Civil Works in the army; Iqbal's younger sister Karim Bibi is born

#### 1882

Iqbal attends early education at the mosque school of Maulvi Umar Shah (d.1925)

#### 1883

Iqbal shifts to the mosque school of Maulvi Ghulam Hassan after Umar Shah stops teaching; Iqbal's youngest sister Zainab Bibi is born; family friend and liberal educationist Syed Mir Hasan persuades Shiekh Nur Muhammad to send Iqbal to the Scotch Mission School for modern education

#### 1885

Iqbal passes the first grade on 8 April, securing highest marks in the class

#### 1888

Iqbal passes the upper primary examination (5<sup>th</sup> grade)

#### 1891

Iqbal passes the Third Middle (8<sup>th</sup> Grade) in February

#### 1893

Iqbal passes matriculation (10<sup>th</sup> Grade) on the day of his marriage to Karim Bibi, a slightly older girl from a well-to-do Kashmiri family in Gujrat (Punjab); joins Scotch Mission College; his earliest known

*"I was born on the 3rd of Dhu Qa'd 1294 A.H. (1876 A.D.)," Iqbal wrote in the 'Lebenslauf' of his Ph.D Thesis (Below). Iqbal usually quoted 1876 as the year of his birth approximately but the Islamic date actually corresponded to November 9, 1877 A.D. as pointed out in Rozgar-i-Faqir (Vol. 2) in 1963 and later ratified by two special committees appointed for this purpose by the Bazm-i-Iqbal in late 1972 and the Federal Ministry of Education in 1974. The findings seem to be genuine but they are sometimes subjected to unfounded suspicion since they matched the expedient needs of the Government of Pakistan – India had already celebrated the Iqbal Centenary in 1973!*

*The mistaken date of birth, February 22, 1873, was first mentioned in the Lahore-based Urdu daily Inquilab on May 7, 1938 (sixteen days after Iqbal's death) and it later gained currency through Iqbal's first standard biography written by the editor of the same newspaper in 1955. The entry in the Municipal Register of Sialkot, on which this date was based is now seen as unrelated to Iqbal. Other dates regarded as Iqbal's nativity at some point include December 29, 1873 (propounded in 1971 by a family member who later relegated), 1875 (mentioned on Iqbal's Middle School Certificate) and December 1876 (miscalculated by Iqbal and his brother from the Islamic date actually corresponding to November 9, 1877).*

### LEBENS LAUF.

I was born on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Dhu Qa'd 1294 A (1876 A. D.) at Sialkot—Punjab (India). My education began with the study of Arabic and Pers. A few years after I joined one of the local sch and began my University career, passing the Public examination of the Punjab University 1891. In 1893 I passed the Matriculation and joined the Scotch Mission College Sialkot where I studied for two years, passing the Intermediate Examination of the Punjab University in 1895. In 1897 and 1898 respectively I passed my B. A. and M. A. from Lahore Government College. During the course of my University career I had the good fortune to win several gold and silver medals and scholarships. After my M. A. I was appointed McLeod Assistant Reader in the Punjab University Oriental College where I lectured on History and Political Economy for about 3 years. I was then appointed Professor of Philosophy in the Lahore Government college. In 1905 I got leave of absence for 12 years in order to complete my studies in Europe where I am at present residing.

poems had started printing in popular magazines by now and he was taking guidance from Dagh Dehlvi through mail

1895

Iqbal passes the F.A. Examination (high school, or 12<sup>th</sup> Grade) in 2<sup>nd</sup> Division (276 marks out of 570) in April; joins bachelor classes in Government College to study philosophy, English literature and Arabic, and shifts to Lahore (later residing in the college hostel)

1896

Iqbal's first daughter Meraj Bano is born; Anjuman Kashmiri Musalmanan, a community service organization for and by the Kashmiri Muslims of Lahore is formed in February; Iqbal is a founding member and recites stanzas about Kashmir; gets acclaim in a *musbaira* in Bazar-i-Hakeeman (Lahore) in November

1897

Iqbal secures 2<sup>nd</sup> Division in B.A., and first position in the subjects of English literature and Arabic (medals and degrees were distributed by the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab the following January)

1898

Thomas Arnold (later Sir) shifts from M.A.O. College (Aligarh) to Government College (Lahore); Iqbal is his only student in M.A. Philosophy; Iqbal must have failed

the exam once in his first attempt (unless he didn't appear at all); Iqbal's first son, Aftab, is born on June 23

1898

Appears for obtaining a degree in law in December; fails the paper on Jurisprudence when the results are announced next month

1899

Secures 3<sup>rd</sup> Division and a medal in M.A. (Philosophy) as the only candidate in the subject in April; has already applied for the post of McLeod Arabic Reader at Oriental College, where Thomas Arnold is going to be the acting Principal; Iqbal reports on duty from 5 May for a salary of Rs.74/Annas14 per month; as it would turn out, he would serve this institution in intervals: May 1899 to December 1900, July 1901 to September 1902, November 1902 to May 1903; rents a house in the vicinity of Bhati Gate; from July he joins the administrative body of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam, a Muslim community help organization in Lahore with special focus on rehabilitation of widows and orphans

1900

Iqbal receives wide recognition for reciting his poem, 'The Orphan's Lament' in the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam on February 24; his request for reappearing in the degree for law without attending the classes again is refused on June 21; his first known paper, 'The Concept of Absolute Unity' (completed in

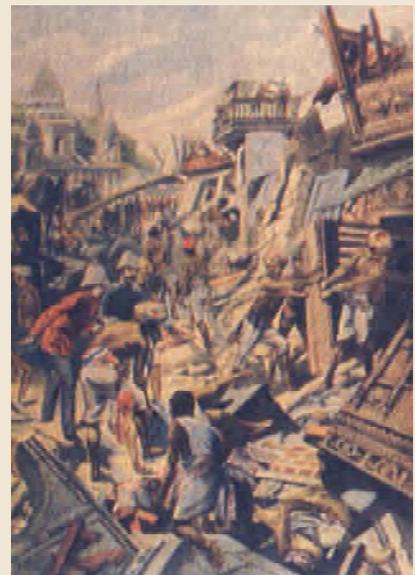
March) is printed in *The Indian Antiquary* in September

1901

Iqbal is temporarily appointed Asst. Professor in the Philosophy Department of Government College for about a month on January 4 for a salary of Rs. 200 per month; as it would turn out, he gets the lucrative position again in October 1902 (in the Dept of English) and then from June 1903 till his resignation in late 1908 (at the end of a long leave of absence that started in September 1905); writes an elegy for Queen Victoria; recites 'The Orphan's Address to the Crescent of Eid' in the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam in February and temporarily takes up teaching English Literature at Islamia College (a venture of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam) till July; gets wider recognition from the publication of his poem 'The Himalaya' in the first issue of *Makbzan*, a romantically inclined literary magazine that soon becomes the main outlet for Iqbal's poems in print; around September he appears for public service examination for the post of Extra Asst. Commissioner and gets rejected on medical grounds (apparently due to his defective right eye)



*Left: A later photograph of the vicinity of Bhati Gate (Lahore) where Iqbal changed several houses between 1900 and 1905.*



*Right: An artist's impression of the earthquake of Kangra (India), May 4, 1905. The shockwaves also rocked Lahore but Iqbal didn't budge from his armchair and kept reading a book.*

1902

Iqbal recites some minor poems in the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam in February

1903

Iqbal develops affection for the singing girl Ameer Begum, which lasts at least till late next year; 'Abre-e-Guharbar', recited in the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam in March becomes Iqbal's most popular so far (though he would include only one stanza in his anthology *Bang-i-Dara* later); Atta Muhammad gets arrested on charges of financial corruption during the summer and Iqbal travels to Quetta to clear him out

1904

Thomas Arnold leaves for England in February, and Iqbal's job at Government College gets permanent the next month with an increment of Rs.50; he recites 'The Image of Grief' in the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam, the first of such poems that would be included in his anthology *Bang-i-Dara* many years later; while visiting his brother in Abbottabad he delivers a lecture on 'National Life'; soon after his return to Lahore he writes 'The Indian Anthem' (*Saray jahan say achha Hindustan hamara*), which receives instant national acclaim

1905

September 2, Iqbal leaves Lahore for studies abroad

### The Formative Years: 1905-1913

1905

September 2, Iqbal leaves Lahore for studies abroad; visiting Delhi on the way, he boards a steamer from Bombay and arrives at Dover on 24<sup>th</sup>; enrolls with the Trinity College (Cambridge) on October 1 as advanced student of Bachelors and obtains a Matriculation Certificate

from the University on October 21; enrolls with Lincoln's Inn (London) on November 2 for Bar at Law.

1906

August–September, Shiekh (later Sir) Abdul Qadir and Musheer Husain Kidvai visit Istanbul; their first-hand account of Turkey in the turmoil of modernization may have left a mark on the mind of Iqbal

1907

March 7, *Development of Metaphysics in Persia* submitted as dissertation for Bachelors degree (subsequently granted on June 13); April 1, meets Attiya Fyzee in London; July (around 20<sup>th</sup>), arrives in Germany and stays at Heidelberg to prepare for *viva voce* on his dissertation submitted at the University of Munich for PhD; meets Emma Wegenast and develops a friendship with her; November (first week), returns to London after obtaining a PhD in Arabic from the University of Munich; temporarily replaces Thomas Arnold as teacher of Arabic during his absence from the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University

1908

*Development of Metaphysics in Persia* published by Luzac & Co. (London); January 22, mails his resignation to the post of Asst Professor at Government College (Lahore); February, delivers a lecture on Muslim mysticism at Caxton Hall (London) under auspices of Pan-Islamic Society; May, joins the All India Muslim League (London Branch); July 1, called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn; leaves for India on 3<sup>rd</sup>, and writes a poem on Sicily on his way before arriving in Lahore on 26<sup>th</sup>; October, applies for practice in the Lahore Chief's Court (permission subsequently granted on 20<sup>th</sup>) and sets up his office; paper 'Political Thought in Islam' published in *Sociological Review* (London); December 27-29,

attends the annual session of Mohammedan Educational Conference at Amritsar and joins the delegation of Kashmiri Muslims before Nawab Saleemullah Khan

1909

Resumes his active participation in the activities of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam (Lahore); February 6, elected General Secretary to the newly formed Anjuman Kashmiri Musalmanan; April 10, paper 'Islam as a Moral and Political Ideal' presented at the Annual Session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore (paper was subsequently published in *The Observer*, same month); May, reluctantly agrees to teach Philosophy at Government College (Lahore) through special arrangement with the Secretary of State (the courts needed to be directed to hear Iqbal's cases after his classes in the morning; Iqbal took charge of classes on October 12 and continued till end of the next year); sometime this year, Iqbal also joined the editorial committee of *Indian Cases Law Reports*, a specialized magazine from Lahore

1910

March 2, nominated Fellow to the University of Punjab; visits Hyderabad (Deccan) on a ten days casual leave from the University (March 18-27); starts writing his notebook *Stray Reflections*; December, farewell lecture on the poetry of Robert Browning delivered at Government College (Lahore); marries Sirdar Begum, but consummation is postponed.

1911

March, presents paper 'The Muslim Community – a sociological study' at Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College (Aligarh). April, 'The Complaint' (*Shikwah*) recited at the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam; December, presides over the annual session of the Mohammedan Educational

Conference at Delhi where he is also offered garlands by Shibli Nomani on behalf of the Muslims of India

1912

February, poem 'The Candle and the Poet' composed (subsequently recited at the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam on 16 April); November 30, recites poem 'An Answer to the Complaint' as part of fundraising for the Turks in the Balkan War (1912)

1913

Marries Mukhtar Begum from Jallundhar and the previous marriage to Sirdar Begum is also consummated now; September 7, visits Cawnpur for a day to see the Commissioner on behalf of protestors arrested for the mosque case; meets Akbar Allahabadi and Hakeem Ajmal Khan on his way back

### The Middle Years: 1914-22

1914

Portions of unfinished Persian poem *Asrar-i-Khudi* recited at the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam (Lahore); November 9, mother Imam Bibi passes away, followed by Iqbal's daughter Meraj Bano on 17<sup>th</sup>

1915

September 12, Persian long poem *Asrar-i-Khudi* published

1916

July 8, first recorded complaint of kidney pain in Iqbal's life

1917

July 28, Article 'Islam and Mysticism' published in *The New Era*, a periodical from Lucknow (subsequent contributions to the magazine over the next few weeks include 'Muslim Democracy,' 'Our Prophet's Criticism of Contemporary Arabian Poetry,' 'Touch of Hegelianism in Lisanul 'Asr Akbar,' and 'Nietzsche and Jalaluddin

Rumi')

1918

Persian long poem *Ramuz-i-Bekhudi* published; June, second edition of *Asrar-i-Khudi* published with major modifications

1919

Appointed Dean, Oriental Faculty at the University of Punjab; December 14, elected General Secretary of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam; same month he attends the joint session of the Khilafat Conference and the All India Muslim League in Amritsar (among other participants were included Hakeem Ajmal Khan, M. K. Gandhi and the Ali Brothers – Iqbal's poem 'Imprisonment' was addressed to the latter)

1920

*Secrets of the Self*, translation of *Asrar-i-Khudi* by R. Nicholson is published from McMillan (London)

1921

June-July, visits Kashmir for the first time for about a fortnight to plead a case

1922

April 16, recites poem 'The Khizr of the Way,' at the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam (Lahore)

### The Peak Years: 1922-30

1923

January 1, Iqbal gets knighted; recites poem 'The Dawn of Islam' at the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam (Lahore); May 1, Persian anthology *Payam-i-Mashriq* published

1924

September, first Urdu anthology *Bang-i-Dara* published; October 5, younger son Javid born to wife Sirdar Begum; other wife Mukhtar dies in childbirth on 21<sup>st</sup> same month; *Urdu Course* compiled in association with Hakeem Ahmed Shuja for lower secondary classes

1925

Presents paper on 'Ijtihad in Islam,' to a gathering at Islamia College; read verses from the Turkish poet Zia Gokalp

1926

December 6, gets elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly

1927

March 10, speaks on education in the Punjab Legislative Assembly; April 16, presents paper 'The Spirit of Muslim Culture' at the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam (Lahore); June, Persian anthology *Zuboor-i-Ajam* published; July, supports selection on merit to public services in a speech in the Punjab Legislative Assembly; November, joins the Shafi faction, supporting separate electorates for the Muslims, against the Jinnah faction of the opposite opinion after split in the All India Muslim League

1928

February 23, opposes the injustices inherent in the existing methods of agricultural taxation while speaking to the Punjab Legislative Council; April 18, presented a paper on the Muslim Philosophy at the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam (Lahore); May, visits Delhi for medical treatment of kidneys by Hakeem Nabina; December 31, leaves for a trip to South India for lecturing on reconstruction of religious thought in Islam

1929

January 1, attends the All India Muslim Conference in Delhi; till the 19<sup>th</sup> he is visiting Madras, Bangalore and Hyderabad (Deccan) to deliver three lectures: 'Knowledge and Religious Experience,' 'The Philosophical Test of the Revelations of the Religious Experience,' and 'The Conception of God and the Meaning of Prayer' and also meets the ruling Nizam in Hyderabad (Deccan); April 14, delivers lecture on the necessity of

a deeper study of the Quran; article 'A Plea for Deeper Study of the Muslim Scientists' published in *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad (Deccan) the same month; May, his name is turned down for appointment as justice to the Lahore High Court (former Lahore Chief Court); November 19, delivers a lecture at Aligarh where he is also offered an honorary DLitt

1930

Younger daughter Munira Bano is born; May, *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* is published from Lahore; August 17, father Shiekh Nur Muhammad dies in Sialkot; December 29, presides over the annual session of the All India Muslim League at Allahabad, suggesting the amalgamation of the north-western Muslim majority provinces of India for a balance of power in the region as well as a renaissance of Islamic thought

### The Later Years: 1931-38

1931

April, Participates in All India Muslim Conference;  
 May 10, participates in the meeting of Muslim leaders of India at Bhopal (called by the ruler of the state Nawab Hamidullah Khan to facilitate consensus on the issue of joint electorate versus separate electorate)  
 August 14, Kashmir Day celebrated in Punjab (Iqbal was one of the convenors) to support the protest movement in the valley  
 September 8, Leaves for participation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Table Conference stopping in Delhi (9<sup>th</sup>) and Bombay (10-12<sup>th</sup>) on the way;  
 November 1, 'Minority Pact' formed during the Conference; 16, dissociates himself from the Conference; 18, reception at Cambridge; 20, informs the Secretary of State about his

decision to leave the Conference; 21, leaves for Italy where he stays from 22 to 29; 25, meets deposed king of Afghanistan Ameer Amanullah to whom he had dedicated *Payam-i-Masbrig*; 26, delivers lecture at the Royal Academy, Rome; 27, meets Mussolini;  
 December 1-4, trip to Egypt; 5, arrives in Palestine by train to participate in the Islamic Conference; 6, visits Jerusalem; 5-15 stays in Palestine; 15-17, waits for the ship at Port Saeed; 30, returns to Lahore via Bombay (28) and Delhi (29)

1932

February, *Javidnama* published  
 March 6, First Iqbal Day celebrated under auspices of the Islamic Research Institute, Lahore; 21, presides over the All India Muslim Conference (Lahore) and delivers address  
 July 25 Statement on Sikh demands published, asking the Sikh community to see the communal problem in the larger perspective of constitutional progress in India  
 August 24, Statement on the Prime Minister's Communal Awards (August 19) published  
 October 17, Idarah Muarif-i-Islamia established through an announcement (Iqbal is one of the founders); Iqbal leaves for participating in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Round Table Conference via Bombay (19-22)  
 November 12, arrives in London; 17, first session of the Conference; 24, reception given by National League (London);  
 December 20, leaves London for Paris; 21, meets Bergson in Paris

1933

January, arrives in Spain; visits Cordova, Granada, Seville, Madrid and other places; 24, delivers lecture 'Spain and the Intellectual World of Islam' in Madrid University; 26, Returns to Paris  
 February 10, boards ship for India from Venice; 22, arrives in Bombay; 27, returns to Lahore

March 1, presides over extensive lecture by Ghazi Rauf Pasha, dissident colleague of Ataturk in Jamia Millia College, Delhi  
 June 20, Resigns from the All India Kashmir Committee  
 October 20-November 3, trip to Afghanistan on invitation from King Nadir Shah of Afghanistan to advise on educational reforms (Sir Ross Masud and Syed Sulieman Nadvi are also invited)  
 December 4, Honorary DLitt offered by the University of Punjab

1934

January 10, fatal illness starts after eating vermicelli with curd on the Eid Day  
 May, invitation received from Oxford University for Rhodes lecture (Iqbal chooses 'Time and Space in Muslim Thought' as his topic but it is found unsuitable by the University and the lecture could never happen eventually due to his prolonged illness)  
 June 29, visits Sirhind with son Javid (nearly 10 years old)  
 July 1, becomes president of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam  
 November, *Musafir* (versified travelogue of journey to Afghanistan) published; construction of new residence 'Javid Manzil' starts; 17-25, trip to Aligarh to deliver a lecture  
 December 13, Honorary DLitt conferred by the Muslim University, Aligarh

1935

January, *Baal-i-Gibriel* published; 30, presides over extensive lecture by Halida Adeeb Khanum, dissident colleague of Ataturk at Jamia Millia College, Delhi  
 January 31-March 7, trip to Bhopal for electrotherapy in Hamidia Hospital  
 March 8, consults Hakeem Nabina in Delhi on way back from Bhopal; 9, rejoinder to Husain Ahmed Madni's statement on nationalism published in Daily *Ehsan*, Lahore; 10, returns to Lahore  
 April, construction of Javid Manzil completed

May 14, 'Qadianism and Orthodox Muslims' published in *The Statesman*, Calcutta, as Iqbal's rejoinder to the Governor of Punjab's advice to the Muslims (Iqbal's statement launched a series of arguments); 20, shifts to Javid Manzil; 24, Sirdar Begum dies

June 1, stipend of Rs.500 per month issued by Nawab Hamidullah Khan of Bhopal

July 15-August 28, Second trip to Bhopal for electrotherapy

October 25, participates in the Centenary of poet Hali (1835-1914) in Panipat

1936

January, 'Islam and Ahmedism' published in *Islam*, Lahore, as rejoinder to Jawaharlal Nehru's criticism on Iqbal's previous statement

April, visited by Jinnah at Javid Manzil, Lahore; elected president of the Punjab Muslim League and starts his efforts to organize a provincial Parliamentary Board for the party through which the League

could unite the Muslims of the province; 12, recites Urdu poem 'Heavenly Tune' (*Khudi ka sirr-i-nihan, La ilaha il Allah*) at the annual session of Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam, which turns out to be his last public performance

May, last long poem 'Satan's Parliament' written in Urdu

July, *Zarb-i-Kaleem* published; 29, Honorary DLitt conferred by Dacca University

October, *Pas Ch Bayad Kerd*, his last Persian *mathnavi* published (coupled with previously published *Musafir* two months later)

1937

April, consults again Hakeem Nabina of illness which has turned severe now, affecting eyesight (voice had already fainted away to mere whisper)

December 13, Honorary DLitt conferred by Allahabad University

1938

January 1, New Year message

broadcast from All India Radio

March 1, Honorary DLitt conferred by Usmania University, Hyderabad (Deccan)

March 9, 'On Islam and Nationalism' published in *Ehsan*, Lahore

April 21, Dies in Lahore

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Below: Residence at McLeod Road, Lahore.  
Iqbal lived here from 1922-1934.

