

Editorial

Remembering Iqbal

Sir Dr. Muhammad Iqbal was born in November 1877 in Sialkot, Punjab (now Pakistan). He was one of the greatest of Urdu and Persian poets of the 20th century and one of its brightest philosophers. Iqbal set before him an ideal of combining poetry with doctrine. He took it upon himself to inspire the Muslims to consolidate themselves in order to imbibe the true spirit of Islam. He taught in London and in Lahore. He was an ‘*Allāmah* (the greatest ‘*alim*) and a Doctor in philosophy. He was a lawyer and a leader. He struggled against British colonialism and yet he received a knighthood from the British government. Sir Muhammad Iqbal is the spiritual founder of Pakistan which gained independence in 1947, nine years after he passed away in April 1938. As a poet, Iqbal was unrivalled. People bestowed on him the title of *Shair-e-Mashriq* (Poet of the East) and *Malik al-Shu‘rā* (the king of poets). He was also a jurist, a politician, a social reformer, and a great Islamic scholar. There is much more that can be said in praise of Muhammad Iqbal which has been said by many. The important thing is that Iqbal lived in the twentieth century, tried to solve the problems he encountered, and thought about the challenges Muslims would face in the twenty-first century. He addressed such burning issues as the relationship of the Ummah to the West; of pluralism and toleration and of living in a multi-ethnic society, and of the nature and feature of an Islamic state that Muslims are currently debating.

Iqbal had a multi-dimensional personality. He was a mystic, a rationalist, a philosopher, and a rebel. Conversant with all the traditions of Islam, Iqbal believed that all contributed to an understanding of the relation between God and Man, but none did so exclusively. Thus he extolled mysticism for demonstrating to

the self the inner experience of God. He faults it, however, for not understanding the concreteness of nature. Iqbal praised the philosophical school of Islam for demonstrating to the self, the rational structure of the universe, but faults it for neglecting the inner experience of the divine. He believed that law is a means for the self to find its fulfillment, but faults it for hardening into unyielding rigidity. He was a great mystic, with a pure spirit, delivered from materialism and, at the same time, a man who respected and honoured science, technological progress, and the advancement of human reason.

Iqbal was a person with a world view based upon the Qur'ān. He developed philosophical-spiritual interpretations based upon it which he offered to the world and its people. The Qur'ān, to him, was not only a book of religion but also a source of foundational principles upon which the infrastructure of an organization must be built as a coherent system of life. That system of life when implemented as a living force is what Iqbal called Islam. Based on permanent (absolute) values as stipulated in the Qur'ān, this system provides perfect harmony, balance, and stability in the society. It also provides freedom of choice and equal opportunity for the development of personality for everyone within the framework of the Qur'ān. For Iqbal, religion was not simply a matter of faith but a way of life, which has to be tested in accordance with the strictest moral and scientific standards.

Iqbal was not a thinker who debases science, reason, and scientific advancement. Neither was he a proponent of "dry" factual science like the science of Francis Bacon or Claude Bernard, which is limited to the discovery of the relationships between phenomenal or material manifestations and the employment of natural forces for material life. Likewise, he was not a thinker who links philosophy, illumination, science, religion, reason, and revelation together in an incongruous way. Rather, in his outlook and attitude towards this world, he regarded reason and science as complementary and supplementary to each other. One of his unique contributions to the contemporary Islamic thought is his linking of modern science with "God-consciousness" which he considered more precious than mere belief in God. He equated the scientist's observation of nature with seeking a kind of intimacy with God, a kind of mystic search

in the act of pray. He believed that scientific observation of nature would help maintain "a close contact with the behaviour of reality, and thus sharpens our inner perception for a deeper vision of it." If Muslims had heeded Iqbal's advice and considered scientific advancement as an act of prayer, the road map of world power today would have been very different.

Iqbal was despaired with the Muslim religio-philosophic tradition of his time, which he called a "worn-out and practically dead metaphysics" with its peculiar thought-forms and set phraseology producing manifestly "a deadening effect on the modern mind." God had created the universe so that man could play a creative role with passionate zeal for the higher ideals of truth, justice, and social good. Iqbal emphasised that the conventional view of Islam, so sedulously propagated, needs re-examination to bring it in accord with the advanced scientific and philosophical knowledge. He stressed the interrelatedness of some of the fundamental Islamic concepts such as prophethood, revelation, knowledge, faith and its efficacy which serve as potential means for the apprehension of reality. For Iqbal, the illumined mind awakened by meditation over the essentials of Islam, self-realisation and self-affirmation are the pointers for the perfectibility of man which is the aim, goal and master-passion of human existence. The only alternative for Muslims, then, is to tear off from Islam the hard crust which has immobilized an essentially dynamic outlook on life, and to rediscover the original verities of freedom, equality, and political ideals with a view to rebuild their moral, social, and political ideals out of their original simplicity and universality. Iqbal called upon Muslims to transcend their history. He believed that a participatory system is the natural form of government for Islam and that Islam's message has been corrupted by centuries of autocratic empires. He, therefore, called for a new jurisprudence, a new *ijtihād*, which he defined as movement.

Iqbal's contribution to the Muslim world as one of the greatest thinkers of Islam remains unparalleled. In his writings, he addressed and exhorted people, particularly the youth, to stand up and boldly face life's challenges. Humanity, as a whole, has never faced the challenge posed by the enormity and the complexity of human problems, such as it is facing in the twenty-first century. The

problems have now assumed a global dimension transcending the barriers of race, colour, language, geography, and social, political and religious ideologies. Most of the problems of mankind are universal in nature and, therefore, require a universal approach to the solution. Iqbal's universal message of love, self-development, perseverance, dignity and freedom is an attempt to address this challenge faced by humanity. To introduce this universal vision to the youth, the International Islamic University Malaysia organized an international conference on Iqbal. Some of the papers read in this conference are presented in this special issue on Iqbal and his Universal vision.

Abdul Rashid Moten

Iqbal: A Chronology *

1877 (9 November): Iqbal was born at Sialkot (present Pakistan), Kashmiri origin.

Obtained early education in the Maktab of Maulana Ghulam Hasan and Allama Syed Mir Hasan.

Admitted to Mission High School, Sialkot.

1891 Passed the Anglo-Vernacular Middle School Examination from the Punjab University.

1892 Ghazal published in the November issue of *Zaban*, Delhi.

1893 Passed the High School Examination with First Division from Scotch Mission High School, Sialkot, and was awarded medal and scholarship.

(April): Married Karim Bibi.

1895 Passed the Intermediate Examination of the Punjab University with Second Division.

(December): Participated in Urdu Bazm-i-Mushairah, held in Andaroon-i-Bhati Darwaza.

1896 Member of the Anjuman-i-Kashmiri Musalmanan, Lahore.

* Compiled by Dr. Abdul Rashid Moten, Professor, Department of Political Science, International Islamic University Malaysia. E-mail: rashidm@iiu.edu.my

- 1897 Obtained B.A. with Second Division; stood First in Arabic and was awarded the Khan Bahadur F. S. Jalaluddin Medal.
- 1898 (December): Admitted to the Law School, Lahore. Took Law Examination; failed in Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence).
- 1899 Obtained M.A. (Philosophy) from Government College, Lahore. Topped the list of successful candidates in Punjab and awarded Gold Medal.
- (13 May): Appointed Macleod Arabic Reader in Oriental College, Lahore.
- (12 November): Became a member of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, Lahore.
- 1900 (24 February): Recited "Nala-i-Yateem" in the annual meeting of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.
- 1901 (1 January): Appointed to teach English at Islamia College, Lahore, for six months.
- (24 February): Recited the poem "Dard-i-Dil" in the annual meeting of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.
- (April): The poem "Himalah" was published in the first issue of *Makhzan*.
- (1 July): Back to his old job in Oriental College, Lahore.
- Took the Extra Assistant Commissioner's Examination but didn't qualify due to medical reason.
- 1902 (23 February): Recited the poem "Islamia College Ka Khitab Punjab Ke Musalmanon Ko" in the annual meeting of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam. The Chairman of the meeting, Miyan Nizamuddin, Sub-Judge, Rawalpindi, bestowed upon him the title of *Malik al-Shu'ra'*.

(3 October): Appointed to teach English at Government College, Lahore, for six months.

1903 (1 March): Recited the poem "Faryad-i-Ummat" in the annual meeting of the Anjunian-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

(3 June): Appointed Assistant Professor of Philosophy in Government College, Lahore.

*His first book *‘Ilmul Iqtisād* was published. This was the first book on Economics in Urdu language.

1905 (25 September): Admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge.

1907 Obtained the Degree of Philosophical Tripos from Trinity College, Cambridge.

(April): Passed the final examination of the Bar.

(November): Awarded Ph.D. degree by Munich University.

1908 Taught Arabic at London University for some time.

(1 July): Called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, London.

(27 July): A lawyer and philosopher, Iqbal returned to India.

(30 October): Enrolled as an Advocate of the Chief Court of Punjab.

Part-time Professor of Philosophy and English Literature.

*His Ph.D. thesis *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* published.

1909 (6 February): Elected General Secretary of the Anjuman-i-

Kashmiri Musalmanan, Lahore.

(24 February): Appointed a member of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam for three years.

(May): Appointed as Acting Professor of Philosophy at Government College, Lahore.

1910 (2 February): Appointed a member of the General Council of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

(April): Recited his poem "Shikwah" at the annual meeting of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

Presided over the third meeting of the All-India Mohammedan Educational Conference at Delhi.

1912 (16 April): Recited the poem "Shama aur Shair" at the annual meeting of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

1913 Recited the poem "Jawab-i-Shikwah" in Lahore.

* *Tarikhi-i-Hind* was published (with Lala Ram Prasad, Professor, Government College, Lahore, as co-author).

1914 Married Sardar Begum - his second marriage.

(9 November): Iqbal's mother, Imam Bibi, passed away in Sialkot.

(December): Married Mukhtar Begum - his third marriage.

1915 (17 October): Iqbal's daughter, Miraj Begum, born of his first wife, died.

* *Asrar-i-Khudi* was published.

1916 (30 January): Elected member of the General Council of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

1918 Taught Philosophy at Islamia College, Lahore.

**Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* published.

1919 (14 December): Elected the General Secretary of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

1920 (31 March): Re-elected the General Secretary of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

*The English Translation of *Asrar-i-Khudi* by Professor Nicholson published in London.

1922 (14 October): Elected member of the General Council of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

*The first book on Iqbal, *A Voice from the East* by Nawab Sir ZuIfiqar Ali published.

1923 (1 January): Awarded Knighthood by the British Government.

**Payam-i-Mashriq* published.

1924 (19 May): Elected the President of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

**Bang-i-Dara* published.

(15 October): Javed Iqbal born.

(21 October): His third wife, Mukhtar Begum, died in Ludhiana.

1926 (23 November): Elected member of the Punjab Legislative Council. He won the election by 3,000 votes.

*Maulvi Ahmaduddin Vakil published *Iqbal* - the first Urdu book on Iqbal.

1927 (May): Appointed the Convenor of the Relief Committee

*The Persian Text Book by Iqbal for High School students *Aina-i-Ajam* published.

**Zabur-i-Ajam* published.

1929 (May): His name was proposed for the post of Judge, Punjab High Court, but he was not appointed owing to the opposition of the Chief Justice.

Delivered famous six lectures at Madras, Osmania University, Hyderabad, and Aligarh.

1930 (17 August): Iqbal's father, Sheikh Noor Mohammed, passed away.

**Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* published.

(29 December): Presided over the annual session of the All-India Muslim League held at Allahabad. In his Presidential Address, Iqbal advanced the idea of separate Muslim homeland consisting of Muslim majority provinces in Northwest India, a political scheme that became an ideal for the creation of Pakistan.

1931 (April): Attended the All Parties Muslim Conference held at Delhi.

Participated in the Round Table Conference in London from 28 September to 20 November.

(27 November): Met Mussolini.

(7 December): Elected Vice-President of the Motamar.

1932 (17 October): Proceeded to London to attend the Third Round Table Conference.

1933 (20 October): On the invitation of King Nadir Shah, Iqbal with Syed Sulaiman Nadvi and Sir Ross Masood

proceeded to Afghanistan.

(4 December): Awarded D.Litt. degree by the Punjab University.

1934 (10 January): He caught a chill during his visit to Badshahi mosque of Lahore. This was the beginning of his serious illness.

(1 July): Elected the President of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

1935 Nawab Hameedullah Khan of Bhopal awarded him a monthly Pension of Rs. 500.

(25 May): His wife (mother of Javed Iqbal) died.

**Bal-i-Jibril* published.

1936 Appointed President of the Punjab Parliamentary Board.

(12 May): Elected the President of the Punjab Muslim League.

**Zarb-e-Kalim* published

1937 (28 April): Elected President of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.

1938 (21 April): Iqbal passed away in Javed Manzil at 5-15 A.m.

**Armughan-i-Hijaz* published.