

AN OUTLINE OF THE CULTURAL RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN TURKEY, IRAN AND PAKISTAN*

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The lively cultural relations existing between various nations are certainly one of the most important factors bringing them close to one another, influencing their moral destiny for hundreds of years, shaping their attitudes as well as the foundation and functioning of their institutions.

We hope this unpretentious INTRODUCTION would be useful as a presentation and a reminder of this and we consider it necessary and helpful to mention briefly the cultures and similar historical traditions of those nations which use in speech and writing three great languages of the Islamic world. We consider it so since Dr. Muhammed Iqbal wrote his poems in Persian and Urdu; furthermore this book deals with Dr. Muhammad Iqbal's biography and an evaluation of his works, his literary personality, his art, his philosophy of life and concentrates mainly on the chapter entitled *Selections* from his works, including the original text and its Turkish translation.

1. The historical and cultural ties between the Muslim India Pakistan peninsula, Iran and Turkey are very old and exist on a broad scale. To begin with, they had a religious character, and they developed in that direction. A great part of Iran and a portion of territory on the outskirts of the Himalayas (Karachi and its surroundings in today's Pakistan) was conquered during the days of the Umayyid caliphs and later on these conquests continued up to Gujerat and Moharashtra. The Turks accepted Islam of their own free will at an early date when the Islamic faith spread. For this particular reason, the

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people living in these various countries were in possession of the same religious culture, and this continued from one generation to the next.

These various people formed congregations who acted according to the teachings of the Qura'n and the *Hadith*. Although various sects and religious orders sprang up (for instance, Turkish and Pakistani people are generally Sunnite and Iranians are Shi'ite), these differences could neither undermine nor destroy the essential unity and complete system existing at the very basis of Islam, even if it seemed to weaken it from time to time — this is so, with the exception of the discussions and fights that were the result of personal activities of some statesmen and commanders, and of the exploitation of such activities.

Sufism developed alongside Muslim jurisprudence or *fiqh*: sometimes they seemed to be opposed to one another; it had an important influence upon cultural relations existing among the three countries. Sufism developed particularly in Iran, and from this centre it spread to the Indo-Pakistan peninsula and to Turkish territory. Sufism and religious orders existing in the continent on the outskirts of the Himalayas were strengthened above all by ideas coming from Iran, and they developed accordingly. It is possible to say that the *Subrreardiya*, *N'kshbanrdiya*, and *Chishtiya* Schools of mysticism existing in Pakistan developed in that particular way. However, some religious orders such as the Qadiriya have an Arab origin.

In Turkey — although the vestiges of Sufi teachers from Central Asia, and the influence of the wise men of Khurasan still exist - one observes clearly the influence of Iranian Sufism, particularly in poetry. Sheikhs from Central Asia, such as Ahmed Yesevi (deceased, 1166), their disciples, and the wise men of Khurasan played an important part in the development of Islam and Sufism in Anatolia - sometimes their influence was felt indirectly. It is well known that if Anatolia adopted Sufism. this is due to a great extent to Anatolian saints such as Mawlana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi (1207-1273), Haji Bektash (1210-1270), and Emir Sultan (1368-1429).

The fact that Sufi teachers in Iran, Pakistan and Turkey shared the same beliefs and opinions helped to strengthen cultural ties towards a synthetic end. In other words, one might venture the opinion that such spiritual ties paved the way for the people to adopt the same mystical attitude, and to become part and parcel of an integrated whole.

Contacts lasted for centuries not only among religious and Sufi orders, but also between literary circles these relations go back as far as the Ghaznavids and particularly to the time of the Ghaznavid Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, (970-1030); they became very strong during Taymur's era (1405-1506): Husayn Baykara (1438-1506) and Ali Shir Nevai (1441-1501) helped a great deal in that direction. During this period, in Herat, masters of the Iranian language and literature such as Abdurrahman Cami (1414-1492), and Huseyin Vaiz Kashifi (deceased: 1505) were writing classical works, while masters of the Chughtai dialect were creating masterpieces. The rich products of these cultural activities can be seen in the Turco-Indian Empire (1526-1737) founded by Babar (1483-1530), and later on in the sub-continent on the outskirts of the Himalayas.

Literary and cultural contacts were quite lively in regions under Ottoman administration-- Ottoman literary circles studied carefully the Shahnamah, Hamse, and the diwan of well-known Iranian personalities such as Firdawsi (934?-1020?), Attar (1119?-1193), Nizami (1150?-1214), Sa'di (1213?-1292), Hafiz (deceased, 1390), and Saib (1591-1671). These works helped to some extent the development of classical Turkish literature. Furthermore, some rulers wrote books using the language of neighbouring countries with whom they shared an identical religious faith and similar cultural values. While Shah [small (1487-1524) was writing delightful poems in Azeri Turkish language using the pseudonym of Hatai, Yavuz Selim (1466-1520) wrote so many poems in Persian that they could make up a diwan, i.e. a collection of poems. These poems awoke the interest of the people, not only of the intellectuals, in Iran and Turkey. For instance the poems of Shah Ismail (Hatai) were very popular among the Anatolian people. Furthermore, works written in Arabic,

Persian and Turkish by the great poet Fuzuli (1480?-1556), and particularly his masterpieces written in Persian and Turkish, were among the books that the educated class enjoyed in Iran and Turkey. On the one hand, classical Ottoman poets (i.e., Nef'i (1572?-1635). Nabi (1642-1712) and others) enjoyed the works of well-known Persian poets and found, to some extent, a source of inspiration in their poems-[e.g., Urfi (deceased: 1591), Feyzi (1547-1595) and others]; on the other hand, some Iranian poets (i.e., Saib), read constantly the diwan of some Turkish poets (i.e., Fuzuli). Almost all intellectuals who lived in the Indo-Pakistan peninsula and the Ottoman empire and studied poetry, mastered Arabic and Persian; it was deemed fashionable to write poetry in Persian. Poets who lived in the Indo-Pakistan peninsula, beginning with Amir Khusraw of Delhi (1253-1325), Ghani Kashmiri (deceased, 1669). the great poet, Mirza Abdal Qadir Baydil up to the time of Asadullah Khan Galib (deceased, 1869); and Ottoman poets, beginning with Gelibolulu Ali (1541-1600) and Nef'i up to the time of Nabi and Sheikh Galib (1757-1799), were stylists who used the Persian language with exquisite taste and great facility, thus giving proof of the ties existing among Iranian, Pakistani and Turkish cultures .

In the beginning, Persian was popular not only as a literary language, but also as the language used in official correspondence and political life during the consecutive periods of the Ghaznavids, the Karahanl and the Seljukians. Therefore, Persian became the common language used by the three kindred nations, and kent this special characteristic for a long time Furthermore, Persian had the privilege of becoming the literary and official language, even the language used for educational purposes until the nineteenth century in the Indo-Pakistan peninsula—for almost '000 years. It was deemed fashionable to write in Persian until the destruction of the '1 urco-Indian empire, if a different development took place later from the point of view of style, it is evident that this is due to geographical conditions, the way of life, intellectual currents and other factors. The works of this region are more original - to some extent- because they are different.

A change began to take place when the British came to power in 1858. For a while the British had to use Persian in official correspondence, but English superseded Persian — gradually. However, there are great poets who mastered the Persian language and wrote in Persian: Mirza Asadullah Khan Galib (deceased, 1869) during the last century, and Dr. Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) in this century; it proves that Persian is still a language of great promise for those who love it and for intellectuals in the sub-continent on the outskirts of the Himalayas.

At this point one should make the following remark. The Arabs brought Islam to the Indo-Pakistani peninsula, and, for a while Arabic was the official language. After various invasions and particularly the

conquest of the Ghaznavids from north to south, Persian superseded Arabic—although the administrative class was Turkish. Afterwards, a new system was established in army headquarters, when Hindus who were not Muslims offered their military service. When Hindus who had a different culture spoke various languages came in contact with Muslim intellectual members of the army who spoke Turkish and Persian, various difficulties arose and the language problem had to be solved. As a result, Urdu language developed in military circles, a language possessing many words and expressions in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. This language called *zaban-i mu'alla-yi* Urdu goes back to the seventeenth century.

Urdu language, of military origin, became popular: the Sufis started to use it when they delivered sermons to the people, or gave advice, thus helping to make it popular. Urdu developed and became a popular language in various regions. As a result, Urdu superseded regional languages (*i.e.*, Bengali, Punjabi). The British followed a different policy and encouraged the use of regional languages; but this policy was not successful, except in some cases; however, it became necessary to use English as an official language in schools for civil servants, government offices, the administrative body and

the army; as a result, English was used together with Urdu. In spite of this official change in language in British India, independent states such as Kashmir, Hyderabad, and Bhopal adopted Urdu instead of English as an official language. For instance, Hyderabad and Bhopal improved Urdu; furthermore, Hyderabad transformed Urdu into a language used at the University level for scientific purposes.

The Indo-Pakistani people loved and adopted Urdu; many writers wrote in Urdu: as time went by poetry and prose written in Urdu and translations made in that language increased; therefore Urdu became an important literary language used extensively, and acquired a distinguished position in cultural and literary history.

At this point, it would be appropriate to remember the intimate historical knowledge that some cultural centres in Pakistan, Lahore in particular, had of the Iranian language and culture, and the active part they played to keep up this tradition. Sheikh Ali Hujviri (Data Genj-Bakhsh) (deceased, 1072), the author of *Kashfu'l-mahjub*, the oldest important work written in Persian, about the Sufism of Islam, wrote this remarkable book in Lahore; the famous writer Muhammad Avfl (1171?-1233?) wrote also some of his books in this city. Beginning with Mes'ud-i Sa'd-i Salman (1046-1121) up to the time of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), many poets had mastered Persian and had close relations with Lahore. One should remember also that the Oriental College attached to Punjab University has become an important centre — for the last hundred years — studying the Iranian language and literature. This college published many classical texts in Persian; furthermore, if Pakistani intellectuals still love Persian language and enjoy Persian literature, this is due above all to the activities of the Oriental College.

One might say that after Arabic, together with Persian and Turkish, Urdu has become one of the greatest and most important languages of the Islamic world and occupies a distinguished position in the literature of the

Islamic people. When they became independent, both India and Pakistan wished to proclaim one of their regional national languages the official language of the country. A language of Urdu origin with Sanskrit characters called *Hindi*, became official in India — a greater use is made of Sanskrit words, Arabic and Persian words are being suppressed. Urdu, with Arabic characters, has been proclaimed the official language in Pakistan. However, if one compares it with the use of English, one might not say that Urdu has fulfilled its promise. One might not very well say that under various names and with different characters, Urdu has become the full-grown official language in India and Pakistan — this is so for several reasons and because many provinces still use different languages.

It would necessary to emphasize once more the high position occupied by Persian in the culture and literature of the Islamic world. Because of the superior qualifications of this language in poetry, its subtlety, loveliness and sweetness, because of its wealthy literary heritage, its attractive and colourful delicacy and beauty special importance was given to Persian in Turkish and Urdu. Many Persina works were translated or adapted into Turkish and Urdu. From time to time many Turkish and Indo-Pakistani poets imitated the Persian masters or produced similar works. It would be quite right to say that

Persian can be rated among world languages with a magic power, particularly as far as lyrical poetry is concerned. Furthermore, apart from this attractive literary genre: lyrical poetry, it would be a realistic attitude to praise Persian for being used successfully in another literary genre: epic poetry. *Persian sings beautifully songs of love and heroism, with a rich imagination, a subtlety one might envy, a perfect harmony, a lively and powerful style; it has been a literary and cultural influence — for centuries — in Turkey, Afghanistan, the Indo-Pakistani peninsula, and even Central Asia.* Apart from its various qualifications, Persian has been successful and influential because of its easy grammar, the great facility with which one could express its feelings and ideas, and other similar characteristics. Another factor that helped to popularize the study of Persian,

and its adoption as a literary and artistic language by various nations was the fact that sublime poetical geniuses such as Hafiz (deceased: 1390) and Mawlana Rumi, (1207-1273) who was born in Balkh in the present day Afghanistan wrote their works in Persian.

Indeed, the result was rewarding: as a matter of fact, and abundant crop followed the promise of flowers. *It would be an accurate statement to make that Islamic literature has indeed an aesthetic and artistic taste, great intellectual value, echoes of a delicate spirit full of excitement: that the golden key to the treasures of Islamic literature was entrusted to history by those who created masterpieces in Persian.*

At this point we should dwell a little more upon relations existing between Turkish and Iranian literatures. We have no intention of discussing the middle Turkish period of the language and literature of Muslim Turks; or the literary works produced in Chaghatay and Azeri dialects. We would only stress once again the important influence of Persian language and Persian writers during the classical period of Ottoman literature and the birth and development of Turkish language in Turkey,

At the beginning, *the Turkish Literature of Anatolia was simple and addressed itself to the people at large; as time went by, Ottoman Turkish developed Ottoman Turkish had taken many words and expressions from Arabic and Persian: therefore, a literary language that was in fact made up of three languages came into existence.* We would like to observe that a group of languages that might be called Islamic languages was created in Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Urdu, through the continuous, persistent and useful influence of Islam; as a result, one witnessed the appearance of *common literary arts, a common technique, common expressions, and even a mutual feeling and a mutual literary taste to some extent.* However, classical Turkish literature developed some new literary genres, apart from those taken from Persian; furthermore, some new forms came into existence as far as versification was concerned. In addition to what exists in common, one should not forget national and regional characteristics.

Turks settled in the West when Seljukians conquered Anatolia (*as from* 1071), after Khurasan and Iran; they encouraged the flowering of a national Islamic new culture. It would not be an overstatement to add that in such a new cultural atmosphere, Turkish and Iranian Sheikhs, scholars and artists who came from Khurasan and Iran held important positions; for that particular reason, their influence was felt not only in religious beliefs and theology, but also in literature and language. As regards cultural history, it is most important to observe on that particular subject that the Mawlana wrote the *Mathnawi* in Konya; the famous *Mathnawi* is probably the best known and most widely read book in Iranian Sufi literature. In the days of the Mawlana, Seljukian intellectuals in Anatolia read fluently, understood and enjoyed books written in Persian. The prestige of Iranian literature continued when Ottoman Turks took the place of Anatolian Seljukians, Persian poetry, in particular was taken as an example during the first period of development of Ottoman poetry, and was a source of inspiration that shaped the technique of versification, subject-matter, and *genre*. But it would be wrong to assume, as some did, that it was a complete imitation. Nevertheless, one should not forget that in these centuries (13th-15th), Iranian literature was considered a guide and was taken as an example by Ottoman literature; many Turkish artists thought highly of Iranian literature. It served as a source of inspiration for them when they created new works.

The above characteristics can be observed in Sufi and lyrical poetry first written in Anatolia. These remarks are quite objective — as far as one can be objective in social sciences and literature — as might be seen if we study carefully the works of *Seyyad Hamza* (XIII the century), *Gulshabri* (deceased, 1317), *Ashik Pasha* (1272-1333), *Hoja Mes'ud* (deceased, second half of the 14th century), *Sheikhhoglu* (1340-?), *Ahmedi* (deceased, 1413) and *Ahmedi Da'i* (deceased, first half of the 15th century); and of famous great poets of Ottoman literature, better known as *Divan Literature*, *viz*, *Ahmed Pasha* (deceased: 1497), *Necati* (deceased: 1509), and particularly *Fuzuli* (1480-1556) and *Baki* (1526-1600).

In the middle of the 16th century we observe that some writers belonging to classical Turkish Literature wish to compete with Iranian literature, and write in Persian works as successful as those produced by well-known Iran poets. The following point should be emphasized: most libraries in Istanbul are extremely rich in Persian manuscripts — no other library could compare with it — and particularly in manuscripts completed in the author's hand-writing; furthermore, rare gilded copies or editions decorated with miniatures can be found in Istanbul Libraries. From a different angle, this is evident proof of the relation and continuity existing between Iranian and Turkish literatures and cultures.

Iranian language and literature has certainly played a part in the development of successful artists who wrote either in Ottoman Turkish language or in Urdu, and helped them, to some extent. In later periods, writers wandering in the realm of the imagination and using Ottoman Turkish Language or Urdu, discovered at last their national and regional identity and became self-sufficient; therefore, they secured a place in history to their respective literature that had become independent, and was decorated with local colours.

It would be useful to lay emphasis on some other points, now that we are about to wind up this outline of cultural relations existing among Turkey, Iran and Pakistan:

- (a) For instance, these three countries used the same alphabet during the Islamic era, namely, the fact that Arabic characters were used for many centuries in these countries created a cultural intimacy among the people — and in some cases, this amounted to cultural unity. It would be appropriate to add that forms of writing were also close to one another. Although most of the forms of writing such as *sulus*, *nesih*, *ta'lik*, *nesta'lik*, *rik'a* are of Arabic origin, they were developed to their utmost perfection in Iran and particularly in Turkey. We observe in manuscripts that Iranians preferred the *ta'lik* and

nesta'lik, whereas Turks chose the *nesib* and *ta'lik*: but this is not so important. The same forms of writing were used and improved in Urdu, with some changes. Other subjects should be mentioned within the frame work of these cultural relations: viz, book-binding, decorations; miniatures; and the preservation of books.

- (b) A similar motif might be observed in architecture as well as in fine workmanship pertaining to handicraft; this might not be evident at first sighs, but in spite of different styles there are common points, and a common motif exists, even when a slight modification occurs. *We observe some fundamental common principles characterizing Islamic architecture. They can be seen in memorial buildings such as mosques, palaces, fountains, caravanserais, inns and Turkish baths.* Similarities exist in porcelain industry which symbolizes an important artistic achievement. Examples of historical and aesthetical common features existing among Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, as Muslim nations, could form a rich repertoire, from the point of view of culture, taste and aesthetics; — of course, one should always remember relations existing with Arabs and other Moslem people.
- (c) The three kindred nations are close to one another from the point of view of clothes, kitchanware, gardening, etc. Resemblance in clothes is striking among Iranian, Pakistan and Turkish people; such a resemblance existed already many centuries ago. This can be readily observed, particularly in some religious clothes (robe. turban, baggy trousers etc.)

When Turkey turned towards West and made several reforms, many changes took place in the alphabet, forms of writing, decorative arts, clothes and even architecture. But it is a fact that traditional similarities continue to exist, because revolutions cannot change history and reconstruct the past. Spiritual values and beliefs are still alive to some extent in villages and towns, together with faint vestiges of past civilizations. In Iran and Pakistan, most of the people still preserve their traditional clothes.

Such similarities exist in kitchenware, food, and bed-spreads. Doubtless, some national differences are preserved in each country. However, striking similarities still exist. For instance,— because Muslim religion forbids it — pork is never cooked in Turkish, Iranian and Pakistani kitchens — exceptions confirm the rule. Some dishes have the same name: soup, pilaw, kebab, dates; the sweetmeats are alike.

Common features pertaining to kindred cultures can be seen in birth rejoicings, circumcisions, weddings, and in ladies' adornments. Such similarities go as far as gardening, and keeping in check excessive heat through the use of devices as fountains and pools.

The above statements suffice to prove that strong ties and vestiges of a common culture, centuries old, exist among Turkey, Iran and Pakistan in their way of life, their thoughts and feelings: this common culture developed and produced a rich crop; its power can still be felt to some extent.

Under the light of these remarks, we can understand and explain readily why Dr. Muhammad Iqbal wrote his poetry in Persian and Urdu, but mostly in Persian — although his mother tongue was Punjabi. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal wanted to reach distant Islamic communities, to share with them his feelings and ideas; he wanted them to read his books; he believed that Muslim people should have faith in their own strength and their bright future. For him, it was not enough to be the leader or one nation at a particular time in history. He considered himself a poet, a thinker, and the guide of Muslim people who had a common cultural heritage and centuries old cultural relations; therefore, he began to write in Urdu: this language expressed the feelings and ideals of Muslim people and of the intelligentsia that lived in the continent on the outskirts of the Himalayas. Afterwards, he chose Persian, a common language for poetry and culture among Islamic people, when larger communities read his books and loved him. Consequently, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal reached high spheres in spiritual development: indeed, he became the poet, the seer guiding the people who were united by common historical,

religious, traditional and cultural ties; he widened their horizons and taught them how to be ultimately successful.