

IQBAL AND THE SAUDI SCHOLARS

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“The personal conviction of mine has in recent years received historic support by the establishment of Pakistan”, stated Dr. Asad at the time of the emergence of Pakistan as Second Ideological Islamic State after the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Since the birth of Pakistan, the two brotherly countries have had the singular distinction of maintaining the most cordial and friendly relations.

The two countries have common Islamic principles and aspirations, and share a common heritage and ideology and the scholars and writers of both the countries have played an important role in this regard.

It is an admitted fact that Allama Iqbal was introduced to the Western world in the early Twenties, and to the Arab world particularly Egypt, in the early Thirties. As far as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is concerned, Iqbal was known to the Saudi Scholars in the late Forties. The first Arabic translation of Iqbal’s poem by Al Saiyed Ahmad All appeared on the 5th February, 1950 in ‘Al Bilad Al Saudia’, an Arabic daily published from Makkah Al Mukarrama.

After the inauguration of the Pakistani Consulate at Jeddah, the first Pakistan Day was celebrated on the 16th August, 1949 which was attended by a large number of high ranking officials, and diplomats and Saudi scholars. Afterwards, whether it was 23rd March, 14th August, 11th September or 25th December, special functions were held under the auspices of the Pakistani Consulate which were attended not only by government officials and diplomats but also by Saudi literary personalities. On these occasions, tributes were paid to the memory of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad All Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan and Allama Mohammad Iqbal, the Thinker of Pakistan. Saudi Radio broadcast special programmes and Saudi newspapers particularly ‘Al Bilad Al Saudia’ published special supplements.

The Pakistan Embassy held a function on the occasion of Iqbal Day on the 21st of April, 1954 at Jeddah. High ranking government officials, diplomats and dignitaries attended the function. Glowing tributes were paid

to the memory of Allama Iqbal. This was the first Iqbal Day which was celebrated in the Kingdom.

The second Iqbal Day was celebrated on the 21st of April 1955 at Jeddah in which a great number of scholars and men of letters were present. His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Al Faisal, the Interior Minister, was the Chief Guest while Dr. Abdul Wahab Azzam, Ambassador of Egypt to the Kingdom, presided over. His Excellency Umar Baha-ud-din Al Ameeri, Ambassador of Syria to the Kingdom, spoke on the philosophy of Iqbal. At the end of his speech, Mr. Zia-ud-din Al Mosvi, gave a summary of the lecture in Urdu. Afterwards, Dr. Abdul Wahab Azzam in his long speech talked about the life and works and influence of Iqbal on literature. During his speech, he disclosed that he was going to translate into Arabic some of the rare books of Iqbal. Again, Mr. Zia-ud-din Al Mosvi, gave a summary of Dr. Azzam's speech in Urdu. His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Al Faisal paid rich tributes to the Poet-Philosopher of Islam. At the end, Dr. Riaz ul Hasan, Charge de Affairs of the Pakistan Embassy, thanked His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Al Faisal, in particular, the other scholars and audience in general.

The most famous and remarkable Iqbal Day was held on the 24th March, 1957 under the auspices of Pakistan Emabassy. Khawaja Shahab-ud-din, a great lover of Iqbal, took personal interest and invited a large number of Saudi scholars and men of letters. His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Al Faisal, the Interior. Minister, presided over the function.

Khawaja Shahab-ud-din, in his opening speech, discussed the importance of Iqbal Day and thanked His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Al Faisal and the Saudi Scholars. More than ten Saudi writers presented papers on this occasion. We will give a brief account of each for general interest.

His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud, (born 1341 A.H. = 1923 A. D.), the eldest son of the late King Faisal, a veteran poet and writer and is a great lover of Iqbal. "Mahroum; Min Wahye al Hirman" and "Hadith -e- Qalb" are his famous poetic writings. He was awarded Honorary Ph.D in 1981 by the World Academy of Arts and Culture. On different occasions, he spoke very highly about Iqbal. But on 24th

March, 1957 in his presidential address he paid rich tributes to Iqbal for his services for Islam and called him “Batle Khalid”.

Mohammad Hasan Awwad, (born at Jeddah in 1320 A.H. = 1902 A.D.) Member Board of Directors of Okaz Est., headed a delegation to Lebanon in 1954 in the First Arab Writers Conference, a poet and writer of repute and author of about one dozen books in poetry and prose, is one of those Saudi scholars who have written about Iqbal. In his paper presented on the Third Iqbal Day, he discussed in detail “Iqbal” and called him “Poet of Islam”, “Shakespeare of Pakistan” and “Muarri of the Modern World”.

Abdul Quddous Al Ansari (born at Madinah in 1324 A.H. = 1906 A.D.) is a well known journalist, poet and writer who has written more than 12 books on various subjects. He has been the Chief Editor of “Umm Al Qura” newspaper. He is the founder and Editor in Chief of “Al Manhal”, a monthly magazine which he started in Zul Hijjah 1355 i.e. February 1937. He is a great admirer of Iqbal and has deep understanding of Iqbal. In his paper entitled “Poet of Islam”, he presented on the third Iqbal Day, he discussed his philosophy and paid rich tributes for the services Iqbal rendered to Islam and for the Muslims.

Another well known personality who has written about Iqbal is Mohammad Hassan Faki, (born in 1331 A.H. = 1912 A.D. at Makkah). He is not only a poet, writer and journalist but also a diplomat of great repute. He has been Professor of Arabic Literature and Chief Editor of “Sout Al Hijaz”. He has written a number of books on different subjects. Besides, he has been one of the Members of Board of Directors of Al Bilad Est., and worked as its Director General. He participated in the Third Iqbal Day and contributed a paper dealing with the life and services of Iqbal. He called Iqbal as a “Great Reformer”.

Mohammad Omar Tawfiq, (born at Makkah in 1337 A.H.) is another well known man of letters and an intellectual who graduated from Dar Al Uloom Al Shariyyah (School of Islamic Sciences) at Madinah. He has studied Iqbal very deeply through the writings of Abbas Mahmood Al Aqqad, Dr. Mohammad Husain Haikal, Dr. Taha Husain, Ahmad Hasan Al Ziyat and Dr. Abdul Wahab Azzam. He has been a Member of Board of Directors of Al Madinah Establishment. He also read a paper entitled “Iqbal as a Great

Man”. He gave a review of the services rendered by Iqbal as a “Poet of Humanity”.

Al Sheikh Ahmad Ibrahim Al Ghazawi, (born at Makkah in 1318 A.H. =1900 A.D.) a poet and writer of great fame and reputation, and one of the pioneer writers of “Umm Al Qura”, “Al Isiah”, and “Sout Al Hijaz”, who was given the title of “Sha’ir Jalat Al Malik Abdul Aziz Al Saud “ (Poet of His Majesty King Abdul Aziz Al Saud) in 1351, is well known for “Qasidah’ writing. He also attended the Iqbal Day and recited a long “Qasidah” namely “Sha’ir Al Islam” in his typical way.

Another literary figure of great repute is Ahmad Mohammad Jamal, (born at Makkah in 1343 A.H. = 1925 A.D.). He has been Member of Shura Council, Professor of Islamic Culture, King Abdul Aziz University, Member of Endowments Council (Wagf), Member Cultural Committee of Muslim World League and Member International Islamic Organization, and has attended Islamic conferences in different countries and also in Pakistan. He has written a number of books on Islamic subjects which have won much recognition. He is a great lover of Iqbal. He also participated in the Iqbal Day and presented a paper dealing with the poetic and philosophic aspects of Iqbal.

Another literary personality worth mentioning is Mahmood Arif, (born at jeddah in 1329 A.H.). He has been a Member of Shura Council and one of the Members of the Board of Directors of Okaz Establishment. Moreover, he has been the first Chief Editor of “Okaz” newspaper. Being a lover of the “Poet of Islam” he also attended the Iqbal Day and contributed an article which dealt with the ‘Life and Works of Iqbal”.

Hasan Abdul Hai Gazaz is another outstanding figure who attended the Iqbal Day and presented a paper namely “Artistic picture of the Philosophy of Iqbal”. Mr. Hasan is a well known journalist who started a weekly journal entitled “Arafat’ from Jeddah. Its first issue was published on 21-7-1377 A.H. (i.e. 10-2-1958). Among others who contributed articles, were Mr. Ahmad Zaki Yamani, Ahmad Saleh Jamjoom, Abdul Aziz Al Rifai etc. Mr. Hasan has been associated with “Al Bilad Al Saudia” and is a Member of the Board of Directors of “Al Bilad” Establishment.

Other two Saudi scholars, who had contributed papers, were Al Syed Ali Hasan Fad'ak, Member of the Board of Directors of Okaz Establishment and author of "Ayyam Fi Al Shark Al Aqsa", and Abdullah Al Mazroo.

Every one of the abovementioned Saudi Scholars is the torch bearer of the literary history of Saudi Arabia. Besides, there are other distinguished literary personalities who are worth mentioning. Their Excellencies Abdul Hameed Al Khateeb and Riaz Al Khateeb who had been Ambassadors of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, were great lovers of Iqbal. His Excellency Abdul Hameed Al Khateeb (born in 1316 A.H. at Makkah and died in 1381 A.H.), Member Shura Council, was a good poet and writer. He was one of the pioneer writers of "Al Nida Al Islami" (started in Rabi Al Thani 1356 A.H. = June 1937 A.D.), alongwith Mohammad Hasan Awwad, Mohammad Husain Zaidan and Ahmad Abdul Ghafoor Attar. He wrote a few articles about Iqbal but we have been able to trace one "Qasidah" of Iqbal which he wrote after studying the book entitled "Life and Death in the Philosophy of Iqbal". He has left behind him a legacy of four/five books.

His Excellency Riaz Al Khateeb was also a lover of Iqbal. During his stay in Pakistan as Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, he presented a few papers on the occasions of Iqbal Day. In one of his papers, while paying glowing tributes to Iqbal, he said:

"In short, Iqbal was a great poet and philosopher.

He sacrificed his whole life and energy for the services of Pakistan, Islam and the Muslims. He dedicated his self, his philosophy, and his mighty pen for the cause of Islam."

Mohammad Saeed Al Amoudi (born in 1323 A.H. at Makkah) is a well known journalist, poet and writer. He started his literary career by writing articles in journals like "Al Shura" and Al Hilal". He became the Chief Editor of "Majallat Al Hajj" (afterwards "Al Tazamin Al Islami") after the resignation of Hashim Yousaf in 1369 A.H. He also edited the journal namely "Sout Al Hijaz" in its beginning. He has been a Member of Shura Council. He attended a number of conferences. He has a great love for Iqbal and his writings. He has studied Iqbal very deeply. In his article "Sha'ir ul

Islam” which appeared in his book entitled “Min Auruqi”, he has discussed the life and philosophy of Iqbal. He has paid rich tributes to him for his services for the Muslims and Islam.

Dr. Mohammad Bin Saad Bin Husain, Professor and Head of Arts Faculty in the Imam Mohammad Bin Saud Islamic University is another Saudi scholar who has studied Iqbal deeply and written about him. In his article namely “Sha’ it-i-Pakistan, Mohammad Iqbal” which is included in his book “Min Shu’ arc. Al Islam”, he has given a comparative study of the Islamic Culture, Hindu and Western Cultures” in a beautiful way. Dr. Husain is an author of more than twelve books dealing with Arabic poetry, literature and biography.

Lastly, we would like to give a brief account of Dr. Abdullah Mubasher Al Terazi (born in 1938) who is currently associated with Faculty of Arts, King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah. Dr. Abdullah is the son of Sheikh Mubasher Al Terazi Al Husaini, a great scholar and thinker of the Muslim world. He had close association with Allama Iqbal and used to attend the annual conferences of the Anjuman-i-Himayat -i- Islam, Lahore. Dr. Abdullah has written a large -number of books and articles both in English and Arabic on different subjects. Moreover, he has attended different seminars and conferences. Besides Arabic and English, he is well - versed in Turkish, Persian and Urdu. He wrote a research work on the life and philosophy of Iqbal.

At present, he is writing a comprehensive book entitled “The Poet of Islam; Dr. Mohammad Iqbal: His biography and poetry, and his view about the outlook of Muslims towards the philosophy of ‘Al Jihad’ within their outlook towards the philosophy of life and death in the past and present.

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