

INFORMATION & COMMENTS

1. MUHAMMAD IQBAL AND THE ASIAN RENAISSANCE

Report: Muhammad Suheyl Umar



2. CONFERENCE ON *ISLAMIC THOUGHT* *IN ANATULIA IN THE* *12TH - 13TH CENTURY*— IN KAYSARI AND VISIT TO QUNYA AND ISTANBUL.

Report: Muhammad Suheyl Umar

Muhammad Iqbal and the Asian Renaissance

"Poet, philosopher, social reformer and political activist, Iqbal was a multi-faceted genius in the tradition of Al-Razi, Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazali. Iqbal has also made a major contribution to the awakening of Asia after decades of colonial rule.

As an awakened Asia continues its humble journey of rediscovering its poets and philosophers, its social reformers and political leaders, Muhammad Iqbal will be a shining light guiding Muslims and non-Muslims alike into the twenty first century because the life and thoughts of Iqbal embody the spirit of the Asian Renaissance.

It is to honour that life and those thoughts that the Institute of Policy Research (IKD) is holding this International Conference on Iqbal".

This is how the Institute for Policy Research articulated the motivating idea and basic concept which materialised into the grand event of a three days conference and four different events-exhibitions that accompanied the conference and enhanced its overall impact on the intelligentsia while making a successful outreach to the uninitiated masses. Here is a brief report on the salient features of the Conference/exhibitions.

The conference opened with the introductory speech of Dato Kamaruddiri Ja afar, Chairman, Institute of Policy Research, (See Anx. I) Kuala Lumpur. Dr. Ja' afar, introduced his Institute and its charter and gave details of the Renaissance Project that it had undertaken in connection with a civilization dialogue in which the rich traditions of Asia, that is, our histories, cultural and religious heritage should be first rediscovered and then recovered. According to him "This international conference-exhibitions cultural event on "Muhammad Iqbal and the Asian Renaissance" is a part of our efforts to deepen our understanding of the great contribution that Asia has made to world civilisation".

The Introductory speech was followed by the Keynote address H. E. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif the Prime Minister of Pakistan, read by Dr. javid Iqbal.

The address met with a great applause from the gathering especially when it came to its concluding part which reads as 'follows:

It is primarily and above all a matter of civilizational and intellectual issues as the East has always been the repository of wisdom and spirituality and it is through focusing on the protagonists of this wisdom and spirituality that the East can make a significant contribution to the civilizational dialogue. It is in this respect that the Conference "Muhammad Iqbal and the Asian Renaissance" is to be regarded as an extremely important step toward this all important goal and I whole-heartedly associate myself with the present theme, which is directly related to us, and to the forthcoming events

in the series and pray that it would be helpful in creating a just and peaceful world order.

Keynote address of the Acting Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato Siri Anwar Ibrahim eloquently articulated his vision of the future of South East Asia and his admiration of Iqbal as a guiding force in the rediscovery of the Asian Self.

After his Keynote address the Acting Prime Minister inaugurated the three exhibitions mounted as parallel events to the academic proceedings of the conference, namely:

_Exhibition of the Iqbal Memorabilia

_Art of Aslam Kamal

_Book Sales

His keen interest in these was evident from the time he spent at each of these exhibitions and the queries he made about each and every exhibit and the themes of the paintings.

MUHAMMAD IQBAL AND THE ASIAN RENAISSANCE

Academic Session

The proceedings of the conference started on the same day after the tea break. Twenty three delegates from 13 countries of the world attended the conference, contributing to a rich atmosphere of scholarly debates and active participation from the local audience. Details of the proceedings are as follow

Day One: 2 June 1997

AM/PM

Arrival of Participants

8pm

Welcome Dinner for Conference Speakers

Hosted by Hon. Anwar Ibrahim

Acting Prime Minister, Malaysia

DAY TWO: 3 JUNE 1997

8-9am Registration.

OPENING OF CONFERENCE

Venue: The Ballroom, Pan Pacific Glenmarie
Resort, Shah Alam

9.00am Introduction

Policy Dato' Kamarudin Jaffar, Chairman, Institute for
Research, Malaysia

9.10am KEY ADRESSES

of H.E. Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister, Islamic Republic
Pakistan

Hon. Anwar Ibrahim, Acting Prime Minister,
Malaysia

9.45am OPENING OF EXHIBITION OF IQBAL
MEMORABILIA AND THE ART
OR ASLAM

KAMAL

BREAK

10.30am PANEL ONE: THE WORLDVIEW OF THE
POET-PHILOSPOHER

Chairperson: Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Member of Parliament, Thailand

Speakers: Iqbal: His Life and Worldview:

Oriental
Shan Yun, Professor of Urdu, Department of
Studies, Peking University, China.

Iqbal: His Metaphysical Ideas

Dr. Sheila McDonough, Professor, Department of
Religion, Concordia University, Canada

Iqbal's Relationship to Mysticism:

His Reconciliation of Science and Religion

Fellow,
Associate Prof. Dr. Azizan Baharuddin, Visiting
Institute for Policy Research, Malaysia

11.30am DISCUSSION

12.30PM LUNCH

2.00pm PANEL TWO: THE POETRY OF IQBAL

Chairperson: Philip Jeyaratnam
Advocate & Solicitor, Singapore

Speakers: The Poetry of Iqbal
Dr. Liu shuxiong
Deputy Dean, Graduate School, Peking University
Poetry of Iqbal

Muhammad Suheyl Umar

Director Iqbal Academy

Lahore, Pakistan.

Poetic World of Muhammad Iqbal

Professor Natalia Prigarina, Institute of Oriental

Studies, Russian Academy of Science, Moscow,

Russian

Federation

3.00pm

DISCUSSION

4.30pm

BREAK AND END OF PANEL TWO

8.00PM

DINNER

Hosted by Dato' Kamarudin Jaffar

Venue: Poolside, the Pan Pacific Glenmarie Resort

DAY THREE: 4 June 1997

9.00AM

PANEL THREE: IQBAL AND THE QUEST FOR
REFORM

Chairperson:

Dr, (Fr.) Raul J. Bonoan,

Philippines.

S.J. President, Ateneo de Naga University,

Speakers:

Iqbal as a Social Reformer

Mahmood Esmail-Nia, Diploment, Tehran, Iran

Iqbal's Quest for Social Justice

Djohan Effendi, Jakarta, Indonesia

Iqbal and the Concept of an Islamic Polity

Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, Associate Professor,

Department of Political Science, University of San

Diago,

U.S.A

Iqbal and the Struggle for Freedom in the

Muslim World

Dr. Abdul Karim Soroush

Kiyan Cultural Institute, Tehran, Iran

12.30am

BREAK

11.00am

DISCUSSION

12.30PM

LUNCH

2.00PM

PANEL FOUR: THE MUSLIM, CIVIL SOCIETY
AND THE GLOBAL ORDER

Chairperson:

Professor Dr. Syed Hussain Alatas

Speakers:

The New World Order within the Iqbalian
Framework

Dr. Hafeez Malik, Professor of Political Science
Villanova University, U.S.A.

Iqbalian Idealism and its Impact on the
Muslim World Today

Senator Dr. Javid Iqbal, Retired Judge of the Supreme
Court of Pakistan

Iqbal and Reform in the Muslim World

Professor Dr. Chandra Muzaffar

Director, Centre for Civilizational Dialogue

University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur

Iqbal's Views on the Occident:

The Relevance of a Vision for Europe's Muslim
Communities

Professor Yahya Michot

Brussels, Belgium

3.30pm'

BREAK

4.00PM

DISCUSSION

5.00PM

END OF PANEL FOR FOUR

8.00PM

QUICKENING OF THE SELF:

A Celebration of Iqbal in Drama and Music

Venue: Dewan Tun Hussein Onn, Putra World

Trade Centre

DAY FOUR: 5 June 1997

8.30am

PANEL FIVE: SYMBIOSIS OF CIVILISATIONS

Speakers:

Iqbals Critique of the “East”

Suroosh Irfani, Senior Research Fellow,

The Institute of Strategic Studies, Pakistan

Iqbal’s Evaluation of the “West”

Professor Barbara D. Metcalf

Dean, College of Letters and Science,

University of California, Davis, U.S.A

Iqbal and the Renaissance in Asia

Professor Datuk Dr. Osman Bakar

Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Malaya

9.30am

DISCUSSION

10.30am

BREAK

11.00am

RENAISSANCE?

PANEL SIX IS THERE AN ASIAN

Chairperson:

Professor Dr. Chandra Muzaffar

Director, Centre for Civilisational Dialogue
University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur

Panelists:

Francisco Sionil Jose

Editor and Publisher, Solidarity

Manila, Philippines

Senator Dr. Javed Iqbal

Retired Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan

Professor Pabitra Sarkar

Vice Chancellor, Rabindra Bharati University

Calcutta, India

12.40pm

END OF PANEL SIX

15.45PM

CLOSING REMARKS

Abdul Rahman Adnan

Director, Institute for Policy Research, Malaysia

EXHIBITION OF IQBAL MEMORABILIA

Exhibition of the Iqbal Memorabilia was the second part of the conference events, envisaged as a visual outreach to the non-academic and uninitiated masses informing them about the life and achievements of the poet-philosopher through a systematic display of various exhibits. It was unmatched by any attempt of its kind that went before it in the past. Unique it was in terms of its comprehensiveness and the impact it created through intelligently selected exhibits, displayed in an artistic and attractive manner. I

had a chance to arrange International conferences before, in 1986 (Tehran) and 1991 (Cordoba, Spain) and these were successful events in their own right. But these were purely academic pursuits with little or no interest for the local populace. Present exhibition, on the contrary had a much broader scope in that it succeeded in riveting the attention of a large number of visitors through a variety of mediums.

A large hall was allocated for the exhibition. Except for the entrance door all the three walls were covered by huge panels lighted with adjustable lamps. These panels were then used for mounting the photographs of Allama Iqbal in chronological order starting from the photographs of his father and his early life. Most of the photos were in 20 X 24 inch size. Left corner of the room displayed the turban which Iqbal used while his hookah was displayed in the right corner. In the middle, beside the wall, stood a small table on which Iqbal's wrist watch and eye glasses were displayed. Centre of the room was occupied by two large tables. The first, lying in front of the entrance door, was used to display original manuscripts of Javid Nama, Asrar-i-Khudi and Rmmuz-i-Bekhudi, flanked with 11 original letters in Urdu and English. In the row. next to the MSS., first editions of Iqbal's Urdu, Persian and English works were displayed. The table adjacent to the it displayed representative samples of translations of Iqbal's works in more than 18 languages of the world. A small table on the right hand side of the entrance door displayed Iqbal's works in current editions as well as copies of the journals of the Academy (5 languages) and selected works on Iqbal studies.

The passage leading to the entrance of the exhibition hall was decorated by large sized panels displaying "A day from Iqbal's life", a narrative drawn from the memories of All Baksh, the faithful servant who served Iqbal till his last days. On one side of these panels a large Video Screen was installed which was used to continuously play several short documentaries on Iqbal's life and works and documentaries about the art of the leading Iqbal painters. These were:

- 1) Sha'ir Mashriq --- Beareu of Film and Publications
- 2) M. Iqbal --- prep. by Mr. Anis Nagi
- 3) Lala-i-Sahra --- prep. by Mr. M. Tariq

4) Ta'bir-i-Sukhan --- prep. by P.T.V.

5) Aslam Kamal and His Art.

The Audio System was used to play the musical rendering of selected Urdu/Persian poems form Iqbal provided by the Academy to augment and enhance the visual displays. The same cassette was used to provide the background music which continuously went on in the exhibition halls entertaining the ears of the visitors as well.

The exhibition was visited by a large number of scholars, students, statesmen, and people from all walks of life.

BOOK SALES EXHIBITION

Outside the conference hall a special corner was allocated to exhibit and sell books of Iqbal and selected books on Iqbal studies and journals. The number of books sold and demands for more reflected that it was a success in terms of introducing Iqbal and disseminating basic materials of Iqbal Studies.

MUHAMMAD IQBAL AN ARTIST'S PERSPECTIVE

The exhibition of Paintings and Drawings was given the title that we mentioned above. In a large hall, adjacent to the exhibition of the Iqbal Memorabilia, 36 paintings and 14 drawing of Aslam Kamal depicting various selected themes of Iqbal's poetry through a variety of mediums were mounted and displayed in an elegant manner. Aslam Kamal has painted and illustrated Iqbal for almost three decades and has won world wide recognition. The works displayed were among his best. The spell binding impact of the beauty of his art combined with the force and grandeur of Iqbalian themes captivated the visitors and they stayed on. The Acting Prime Minister, when he inaugurated the exhibition, became so interested and occupied with the masterpieces that he stayed on in the hall for a detailed survey of each and every piece. Conducting the chief guest, Aslam Kamal explained, briefly, each art work and the theme or themes it illustrated. At the end of this conducted art-tour of the gallery a special gift was presented to the Acting Prime Minister by the Iqbal Academy and the Artist. It was a large oil painting of Iqbal, nicely framed and captioned for the occasion. The

exhibition was visited by crowds of art lovers and admirers of Iqbal. Aslam Kamal was all the time busy in his exhibition in accepting congratulations, signing autograph looks and imparting the exciting experience of mysteries of painting the poetry of Allama Iqbal. Everyone of the delegates from 13 countries was keen to see him personally and to pay homage to his mastery. It was amazing for Aslam Kamal himself that by virtue of his creative commitment to Allama Iqbal his name had been spread to these parts of the world along with the name and thoughts of the great poet philosopher. The appreciation and admiration it received is reflected in the following comments of Dr. Natalia Prigarina from USSR which is but one of the many comments made during the exhibition:

I am deeply impressed by the work of the well known artist Aslam Kamal.. I was always fond of his portraits of Muhammad Iqbal which I met in the books, illustrated by this painter. One may say that he created an image of Iqbal's spirituality by laconic and elegant means.

His vision of Iqbal and his poetry is of high artistic merit, it combines the precise interpretation of Iqbal's poetic world and the free imagination of the master of art. His black and & white graphics are full of energy and expression.

QUICKENING OF THE SELF

A Celebration of Iqbal in Drama and Music

Putra World Trade centre was the grand setting in which the events of the cultural evening "Quickening of the Self" took place. It was yet another attempt to reach out for the common man through popular modes of entertainment. Staged on the two consecutive days of 4th and 5th June, this event of 2 hours length was divided into three parts. First part of the show started with a Tableau Drama in Malay and English languages based on the selections from Iqbal's Persian works, Asrar-i-Khudi, Rumuz-i-Bekhudi and Javid Namah; an interplay of light and sound, action and dialogues, alternating in Malay and English, it was performed by accomplished actors

and vocalist. It conveyed the salient themes of Iqbal's thought through the medium of drama and music in such an enchanting manner that the audience, which consisted of the high-ups of the Govt., including the Acting P.M., were visibly spellbound.

The second and third parts of the cultural evening comprised of a performance of Pakistani ghazal singing interwoven with recitations from Iqbal's Urdu/Persian works in translation. The vocalists from Pakistan were Salamat Ali and Azra Riaz supported by four musicians playing sitar, tabla, harmonium and violin. The performance was extremely impressive and musicians were both very well prepared and quickly achieved such a level of excellence in their performance that the whole assembly was greatly moved. The quality of pronunciation and style of delivery of the English recitations was equally superb. The show ended with the performance of the art of the four musicians, without any singing or recitation, enhancing the already elated mood of the audience and bringing the show to its close with its culmination in a magnificent blend of emotions and exquisite auditory pleasure. The Acting P.M., after a long interval of roaring applause, concluded the session with his appearance on the stage and congratulating the artists and performers. The same show was repeated for the general public the next day and with an equal level of success.

To conclude our report we would like to quote from the remarks made by Kamar ud Din Ja'afar, Chairman, IKD, which speak of their gratitude and reflect our contribution.

"Let me end by thanking the following persons and organization who made this meeting possible.

The Rt. Honourable Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for his support;

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for giving us all the support, particularly the loan of the original manuscripts and personal belongings of Allama Iqbal to be displayed at this conference;

The Iqbal Academy, the Iqbal Museum, and the Lok Virsa for their co-operation during the preparations of this meeting;

Our special thanks to Mr. Muhammad Suheyl Umar of the Iqbal Academy for his advice and assistance; and to the Pakistani painter, Aslam Kamal, for his exhibits .

The Malaysian High Commission in Islamabad and the Pakistan High Commission in Kuala Lumpur for facilitating our organisation."

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