

# MAKHTUMKULI AND IQBAL: TWO POETS AND TWO DREAMS

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Makhtumkuli is the national poet of Turkmenistan and Iqbal is the national poet of Pakistan.

Astonishing similarity is found between the ideas and concepts of these two poets who lived in different times and at different places, at least 3000 kilometres away from each other.

Great poets like Iqbal and Makhtumkuli don't belong to any one nation or any one country. Like sunshine, they belong to all mankind. That, I suppose, is one of the fundamental differences between a great man and a not-so-great man. A great man rises above the geographical boundaries and breaks the barriers of cast and creed. Great men, especially great poets and visionaries, soar above the mundane and manage to get in touch with the eternal truth. Here I remember two couplets; one by Iqbal and one by Makhtumkuli, which say virtually the same thing, although style of expression is different:

Iqbal says:

***“Be it Attar, or Rumi or Razi or Ghazali Nothing  
is attainable without tears in the twilight of dawn”***

He refers to great thinkers, Sufis and philosophers like Fariduddin Attar, Jalaluddin Rumi, Fakhruddin Razi and Imam Ghazali. He says that you cannot attain anything unless you make a habit of rising in the hours of dawn when creative twilight is enveloping the earth. You have cultivate solitude in such hours and only then can you be granted a part of the eternal truth.

Makhtumkuly, in his poem, “This is the Time”, says:

***“Friends, don't remain asleep at the time of dawn.  
This is the time of opening the doors, the time of nearness.  
Those who are awake at dawn, find the Benevolence of God.  
This is the time when soothing light of Truth pours forth”***

He also stresses the importance of this powerful parcel of time, the Dawn. He has found the great truth and wants his followers to benefit from his knowledge. He stresses the very same thing that you have to get up in the early hours if you want to reach the truth sublime.

Similarities of these two great poets don't end with these two couplets; they just begin there.

Iqbal was writing with pain when he looked at the plight of Muslims in India under the colonial rule of the British. His pain was made all the more acute by the fact that the Muslims of Indian subcontinent were slumbering in indifference, unaware of their humiliation and subjugation. Having done his doctorate from Germany, he would have spent his life in ease and comfort in any European country. But he elected to return to his homeland to devote his life to awakening the Muslims of Indian subcontinent. He gave them thundering jolts through his powerful poetry and managed to awaken more than ten million people. Not only did he manage to awaken them, he also bestowed on them his dream. The dream of an independent country, a country where they will be free to pray according to their wishes, a country where all persons will have equal opportunity; above all, a country where yokes of slavery will not be awaiting the generations yet unborn.

It was on 23 March 1940, that representatives of Muslims all over India gathered in Lahore and passed a resolution, demanding an independent country for Muslims. Also Iqbal had died two years before this historical event, his spirit was guiding the people and kept them until Pakistan gained independence on 14 August 1947. Pakistan, in true sense, is legacy of Iqbal.

Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah who put concerted efforts to translate the dream of Iqbal into reality was his contemporary but in historical sense he could be called spiritual son of Iqbal because at spiritual plane, son is the rightful heir of father.

Makhtumkuli was always restless over the plight of Turkmen people who were splintered into tribes and did not have a united homeland of their own. In his poem "About Turkmen", he says:

"Tribes are like brothers, like family, like true friends.  
Even destiny doesn't dare antagonize them,  
when they are united.

“Their unity is the light of God”

Makhtumkuli also said that:

“My best words are dedicated to my people”

He said very clearly:

***“Oh, Turkmen, Be one. Teke, Yemut, Sarek, Alili, Arseri, all the tribes who are woven as one into blood relations, unite and create a country for yourself. Lay the foundations of a strong country. You can break the chains of your heart and gain freedom if you are united as one entity.”***

It took more than two hundred years to become the dream of Makhtumkuli a reality. Turkmenistan, therefore, is the legacy of Makhtumkuli. President Saparmurat Niyazov, rightly titled Turkmen-bashy, can be called spiritual son of Makhtumkuli- although they are separated by more than two hundred years-because he managed to translate the dream of Makhtumkuli into reality.

The similarity does not end there either. It goes on. Both the poets not only dreamed of independent countries for Muslims of their areas, they also gave code of conduct, the way how life should be regulated in the countries of their dreams.