

IQBAL STUDIES—TAJIK CHAPTER: PAKISTANI DELEGATION IN TAJIKISTAN

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THE IMMEDIATE BACKDROP

Two important factors deserve special mention before we present our Report on our stay, from the 2nd to the 15th of September 1999, in Tajikistan.

Islamic civilisation has had three great manifestations in Asia; Persianate, Central Asian and the Indian. All shared a common base and each had its particular strengths and characteristic features. The Islamic civilisation of Central Asia has been a citadel of learning right from the early days of Islam and has bequeathed its legacy to all the cultural zones of the Islamic lands that came under the influence of the Persianate Islamic culture. Its influence on these zones has been immense, permeating every walk of life, ranging from religion to the sciences down to the matters of every day life. It has always carried a unique significance for the Islamic civilisation in general and, in particular, for those cultural zones of the Islamic world that ranged from the highlands of central Asia to the tropical areas of the Malay world.¹¹⁵

Islamic civilisation of Central Asia has remarkable quality. It suffered the domination and hegemony of the Soviet Union for almost seven decades. It meant that during this entire period of political subjugation Islam had none of the socio-economic forces— state apparatus, economy, education etc.— at its disposal that shape the life of a community. Yet it retained its “historicity”, kept its ethos thriving, gave meaning to the lives of millions of people and managed to exist as a living presence. This is unprecedented in Islamic history.

Not only that. Religion has weathered the storm. It survived and has made a come back. And it is not particular to Islam either. A remark from Malcolm Muggeridge is revealing here. On his seventy-fifty birthday, Malcolm Muggeridge looked back over his long world watch as editor of the *Manchester Guardian* and concluded that the most important single political

¹¹⁵ For an excellent brief survey of this aspect of the issue see S. H. Nasr, *A Journey through Persian History and Culture*, IAP, Lahore, 2000.

fact of the twentieth century had been that with every means of suppression at its command for seventy years, the USSR had not been able to destroy the Russian Orthodox Church. The same holds good for Islam with a greater force.¹¹⁶

Second point that needs to be kept in view is that the Soviet Union withdrew from its Central Asian Republics (read colonies) in such a manner that left the locals in total surprise. It was sudden and without transition, segmenting the Tajiks into three different mindsets.

- Those who welcomed the change and looked upon it as the inauguration of a new era, a promise for the revival of Islam and its religious values.
- Those who watched the change in stunning disbelief and regarded it as a temporary phase likely to be reverted to the old Soviet times.
- The fence sitters who were outwitted by the events that unfolded in the wake of the change and were in the state of a surprise, unable to decide.

The Pakistan Embassy Dushanbe, Tajikistan, was very active in all these troubled years, first under the able guidance of Amâr AÂmad Khan, the then Ambassador, and, later on, through the dynamic and enthusiastic presence of its Charge d' Affairs Dr. Sajj«d AÂmad Seehar. The Embassy fully realised

¹¹⁶ One of the leading authorities on world religion Prof. Huston Smith has remarked, "I can add to Muggerridge's observation the survival of the Christian Church in China under similar circumstances. When my missionary parents left China in 1951 after nine months of house arrest under the Communists, they thought that their lifework had been in vain. Thirty years later, when I returned to visit my childhood haunts, the ban against organised religion had just been lifted, and the vitality that the church had maintained in its underground years surprised everybody. To make sure I could locate the large church we used to attend when we were passing through Shanghai, I reached it forty minutes before the Sunday morning service was to begin and found standing room only. Sixteen Sunday school rooms that were wired for sound were likewise packed, and during the announcement period in the service the pastor pleaded with the congregation not to attend church more than once each Sunday, for that deprived others of the opportunity. (It has been a while since I have heard that plea in my church.) After the service, while lunching with the retired pastor of the church (who had learned his English from my father), I heard firsthand stories of what Christians had had to endure during the Cultural Revolution—being forced to wear dunce caps and kneel for two hours on broken glass in front of jeering mobs, and the like. Those stories concerned Christianity, the "foreigners' religion" but Muslims and Buddhists suffered too and have made comparable comebacks. Mao excoriated Confucius as being bourgeois, but Confucian ethics is back in the school again.

that given the deep rooted religious and cultural connections of the two regions, Pakistan should capitalised on the situation of the new born Muslim states and try to foster greater ties with their masses and the rulers. Various activities had been going on during the preceding years in which the Pakistan Embassy had played an instrumental and important role. These included, apart from the usual political and diplomatic overtures and exchanges, a host of activities that focused on the shared literary, religious and cultural heritage of the two countries; meetings, seminars, outreach, donations, visits of scholars, publication of different materials and much more. The occasion that presented itself as a unique opportunity to enhance and strengthen the on going efforts was the aforementioned celebrations of the 1100 Years of the S«m«nid dynasty. A three-member delegation was invited to participate in the celebrations and to represent Pakistan at various forums during and after the celebrations. The delegation that visited Tajikistan in the wake of these events consisted of Dr. Javid Iqbal, Vice President, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, Mrs. Nasira Javid Iqbal, Judge of the Punjab High Court and Mr. Muhammad Suheyl Umar, Director, Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

In what follows we intend to present a collage woven out of meetings, lectures, seminars, discussions, interviews, dialogues and observations/impressions gathered during the stay which extended over a period of more than two weeks. Recommendations and work plan for Iqbal Studies—Tajik Chapter shall be presented at the end.

Interview at the Dushanbe Airport

The moment the members of the delegation set their feet on the Dushanbe Airport, they were welcomed with a warmth and extraordinary zeal that was unprecedented. After the formal reception and presentation of flowers the representatives of the Tajik TV/Radio approached Dr. Javid Iqbal was by for his initial comments. Dr. Javid Iqbal pointed toward the establishment of the new road link between Tajikistan and Pakistan that ran through Afghanistan bordering on the Chinese Turkistan via Urmichi and its benefits for the two countries. He then remarked on the religious and cultural affinities of the two regions that ran very deep as well as the significance of the shared literary and intellectual heritage that provided the common ground for close co-operation. He added that despite these facts, he had a feeling before his arrival that he might encounter a bit of alienation due to certain differences in language and culture. But, on the contrary, he felt so

at home in Tajikistan in every respect as if he was in his own land. He further said that the recent past of the country was a traumatic experience for every one. The devastating civil war had left the country in the grips of various problems and the present leadership, on both sides, was, fortunately, sensible enough to overcome internal differences and rifts with wisdom and prudence to bring unity in their ranks and arrive at a workable formula of power sharing that had a promise of peace and stability for the war-ravaged land.

Interaction with the Intelligentsia and the Common Folk

During the whole of next week, apart from the official visits and events of the Celebrations,¹¹⁷ there was a series of interviews, meetings, roundtables and seminars— not to mention lunches, dinners and receptions—that the delegation had the chance to attend. Dr. Javid Iqbal, being the son of the illustrious poet-philosopher and a very distinguished scholar in his own right, is a celebrity everywhere. But the respect, love and admiration that he received in Tajikistan almost verged on veneration. All due to the love for Allama Iqbal and his works, obviously. It was always an extremely moving and spectacular sight to observe the face of the person in his audience come alight the moment he or she came to know that he or she was in the presence of the son of Iqbal. Eyes shining with a gleam that was not there an instant before! The deep-seated admiration and love for Iqbal that manifested in these encounters is beyond description. Neither is it possible to recount all the meetings that, as we remarked earlier, followed a similar pattern. In the following details we have tried to capture more important of these events and to look into their significance.

Lunch at the Embassy of Pakistan Residence by Charge d' Affairs with the Members of Anjuman-i-Iqbal— 2nd September

Anjuman-i-Iqbal is a forum associated with the Embassy of Pakistan which provides the intellectual and literary space to the Tajik scholars to express their views on Iqbal and his thought and maintains their exchange of views on the subject under the auspices of the Embassy while making inroads into the literary circles and academia of the country. The Iqbal Academy Pakistan had received the promising reports on its activities over the years, even during the times of trouble, so we were naturally delighted to meet the distinguished figures who were carrying the torch forward in their times of distress.

Over the lunch Dr. Javid and the delegation was introduced to the scholars/ members of the Anjuman-i-Iqbal who came from various disciplines, poets, linguists, research

¹¹⁷ See Annex. II for the [Program and Timetable](#).

*scholars, critics, media people, and persons from different walks of life. As the readers would see shortly, the Tajik audience was always overwhelmed to see Dr. Javid Iqbal in their midst and the emotions ran high. The scholars expressed their love and esteem for Iqbal and informed the delegation about the progress in Iqbal Studies and the factors that impede the developments.*¹¹⁸

Round Table Conference at the Writers Union—2nd September

The Writers Union hosted a Round Table Conference with the Pakistani delegation on the 2nd of September. It merits mention in some detail since it provides use insights into the reception of Iqbal in the region.

◆*The Secretary of the Writers Union welcomed the delegation and thanked the delegates to have come to Tajikistan on the occasion of the 1100 years of the Sāmānī Dynasty. Introducing the Writers Union he mentioned that a couple of years ago the Writers Union issued the Kulliyat i Iqbal in Cyrillic to promote the study of Iqbal in Tajikistan, to disseminate his ideas and to introduce him to the contemporary audience.¹¹⁹ It had played a significant role in bringing Iqbal to a larger audience. Even during the lifetime of Iqbal, he added, Sayyid Mār Shukr had written about Iqbal in this area. In the 20th century Iqbal's works were a dazzling example of literary excellence and a role model for the Persian poets and men of letters of Tajikistan. He remarked that they had always marvelled at the fact that a man who was not native to Persian language could write so excellently in Persian and show such an acumen in its poetic art while at the same time representing the best elements of its wisdom tradition. Such an outstanding achievement in an acquired language was a remarkable phenomenon and spoke of a marvellous genius and an extraordinary poetic talent. The prophetic verses of Iqbal presaged the important events of the 20th century and played a significant role in moulding the mindset of the people of this area. The message of human freedom permeating Iqbal's works was especially potent with the readers of this subjugated land and the intellectuals and poets received it with great enthusiasm. He mentioned the historic verses of Malik al-Shu'arā Bahār in this context and referred to the travel of Allama Āadr al-Dān 'Aynā to India and his acceptance with*

¹¹⁸ The cumulative plan is attached at the end which captures the tasks that needs to be addressed if the Tajik chapter has to be strengthened and maximum impact is to be achieved. See Annex. I.

¹¹⁹ A relatively unknown piece of information may be noted here. About 60% of the Tajik population still cannot read the Arabic/Persian script though more and more people are turning to learn to read their traditional script. The lack of this readership was a direct result of the educational system imposed by the Soviet Rulers.

Iqbal and his works. The message of Iqbal reverberating with revolutionary zeal, imbued with wisdom emerged in the recent times to provide us intellectual sustenance,¹²⁰

Rise from the leaden sleep

Rise from the slumber deep

The influence of poet-philosopher Iqbal on the poetic community of Tajikistan has been immense. Iqbal was squarely grounded in the traditional continuity of Islamic literature¹²¹, draws the sap of poetry from it and eventually becomes perhaps the finest flower that blossomed in the withering garden of traditional Islamic poetry. He was well versed in all the classics of Persian literature but for our contemporary Tajik poets the source of inspiration is Iqbal and they rediscovered their classics through Iqbal. Popularity of the genres of ghazal and rubāʿī was due to Iqbal's influence. He cited the examples of the outstanding literary figures of Tajikistan in this regard; Mu'min Qin'at and the generation of poets after him as well as Lā'iq Sher 'Alā. The comparison of the verses from these literary figures with Iqbal was illuminating.¹²²

He continued to remark that the matter did not end at the surface, on a resemblance of artificial or cosmetic elements of poetry. It went far deeper and touched the sensibility of the Tajik mind. In the end he thanked the delegation again on behalf of the Writers Union and the people of Tajikistan.

◆*Dr. Javid Iqbal rose to the occasion effortlessly and started his remarks by mentioning the reassuring phenomenon that in Tajikistan you find Qur'ān, Rēmā's Mathnawā and Kulliyat i Iqbal every where. He said that he would not deliver a formal speech but rather have a heart to heart talk with them. He said that he looked at Tajikistan as a second home and the warm reception given to him there was really remarkable. This land was venerated his father, regarded him as one of the best poets and placed him in the ranks of the most outstanding poets of the world. He added that the works of Iqbal are a guide to all individuals and nations as it preached self-realisation and self-reliance. His lofty message was timeless and related to us as much today as it did in the 1920s. Knowing*

¹²⁰ Here his implied reference was to the most popular verses of Iqbal in Tajikistan *az kbāwb i garān kbāz*.

¹²¹ Many fine studies have appeared which focus on this aspect of continuity. See Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, Iqbal Academy, Lahore, 1989; *Two Colored Brocade*, op. cit.; Mirza Muhammad Munawwar, *Iqbal kā Fārsā Ghazal*, (Persian) IAP, 1989.

¹²² We have not quoted the verses here though the recitation was a feast and revealed the extent of penetration that Iqbal's works had made in the contemporary Tajik mind.

oneself paves the way to knowing our Lord and our destiny. This is the intellectual underpinning of all that Iqbal had said; freedom, making your destiny, selfhood, self-realisation, such was his message. He said that he was very pleased to note that the Tajiks were so receptive to his life-giving message. It is as if Iqbal had paid the debt back to the land from whose treasures he drew the essence of his poetry!

I myself have not been blessed with a talent for poetry and all my educational training has been in the field of philosophy, law and constitutional history. Iqbal gave an enlightened path to the Muslim community for a new Muslim society. The Indian Muslims had become oblivious of the factors of change, their thinking became decadent and they had lost sight of the fact that Islam is a forward-looking dynamic religion. Iqbal, therefore, re-emphasised the importance and dire need of ijtihād for the present day Muslims and it is among the fundamental aspects of his thinking. An integral and genuine revival of Islam and the required reconstruction of its religious thought would depend on the comprehension and realisation of the principle of movement inherent in the structure of the Islamic civilisation. It is essential not only for Islamic law to remain dynamic and alive, it is also necessary for Islamic culture for its sustained and healthy progress. The present day Muslims should understand that every new generation has to re-establish its contact with the basic texts and original sources of its Tradition and to make a restatement of its vision and map its future in the light of the eternal principles of Islam.

We are passing through a phase of our history that has many similarities with the challenges that our great ancestors faced, say in the times of Imam Ghazālī or Ibn Rushd. They encountered the challenges posed by the attack of the Greek philosophy with its armour of excessive rationalism while we are faced with the challenge of encroachment of an alien worldview added with the force of modern science and technology. They emerged successful in meeting with the challenged they face through employing the principle of movement and our success would equally depend on a fresh application of the same principle of movement to our concerns and our milieu.

I always wonder at the perspicacity of the great poet-philosopher when he presaged the changes that were in the offing and wrote about the times when the Soviet Rule would ultimately be removed from these areas.

You are yourself a witness to the potent message of his works and how it worked for your intellectual and political awakening. I would like to remind you that the message of hope and self-realisation that helped you to

persevere in your times of distress can also sustain you in the present tribulations that strike your national scene in recent years.

◆ Mu'min Qina't, the national poet of Tajikistan, was the next to address the gathering. He said that Iqbal was a household effect in Tajikistan and every one can talk on Iqbal. He would rather talk about the unique contribution of Iqbal to the Tajik literary milieu.

“During the Soviet times”, he opened his remarks, “ the quality of Tajik poetry exhibited a marked decline. All that the Tajik poets could do was political facile versification. It lacked the depth in the extreme. Gradually an awareness started to dawn upon the men of letters that drew them to look for their own roots. They looked up to various sources and role models in their search. They emulated Mayakofski but it was short-lived. It faded with the departure of the poet. They tried Naim Aikmat but Aikmat was completely westernised devoid of the Oriental wisdom and moral sense. For a while they tried other western figures but failed. None of these measure up to their expectations. Then in the sixties a change came about. Iqbal came to their rescue in the time of their desperation as a saviour. The rediscovery of Iqbal meant that we had found a source where philosophy and poetry combined in an exquisite fashion. Our poetry had long lost its dimension of wisdom that Iqbal restored to us. It was like a lifeline to us, an unending source of inspiration and wisdom. Today every poetic creation of worth in Tajikistan breathes in the air of Iqbal's works; it flourishes under his influence which has taught us again to rise above the mundane, the ordinary, the ephemeral and the psychic to the affairs of more enduring and meaningful nature. It was first time after the Soviet rule that the Tajik literature could rise to these heights. Mu'min Qina't ended his glowing tributes to Iqbal by reciting his verses in praise of Iqbal. At the end of the meeting Khnum Kamal Baig also presented her poetic composition.

*Dinner at Hotel Tajikistan by the Government of Tajikistan — 2nd September
Visit to the Tajik Academy of Sciences—3rd September*

The delegation visited the Tajik Academy of Sciences on the morning of 3rd September and had a detailed tour of its archives, manuscripts and other sections. The anticlimax came when the delegation called upon the Head of the Academy. It was as we were in the presence of a Soviet bureaucrat who walked like a Russian, who talked like a Russian (speaking no Persian) but who was not Russian. A part of the relics indeed!

*Lunch with Jurrah Baig*¹²³—3rd September

The delegation was invited to a lunch party at Jurrah Baig's residence the same day. As the guests settled in their seats around the traditional Tajik table-spread for lunch the first thing that we spotted was a copy of the collected poetical works of Iqbal (Kulliyat i Iqbal) Persian.¹²⁴ The host brought it forward and started talking about Iqbal and his works with great enthusiasm and passion. It was, as we discovered in a few more meetings, going to be the recurring pattern of every gathering where the Pakistani delegation and, more particularly, Dr. Javid Iqbal was present. Warm reception, verses from Iqbal, allusion to the great love and admiration that every Tajik has for Iqbal, exchange of views followed by meals or refreshments.

Repeated encounters with the same Iqbal Academy edition of Kulliyat i Iqbal Persian also solved a puzzle for us. We had always wondered at the astonishing pace of sale that was experienced in the case of this particular edition when it appeared in 1990. Given the decline of the Persian language in the Pakistani environment and the limited readership of Persian poetry it was an inexplicable phenomenon. Seeing our edition of the Kulliyat i Iqbal Persian every where in Tajikistan explained who consumed the entire edition!

Namāz-i-Jum'ā at the Jam'i'a Masjid—3rd September

The mosque was full to its capacity and gave the aura of any traditional mosque in any of the big cities of the Islamic lands. It was a good indicator to judge the comeback of religion in the land that struggled to save its identity for over half a century.¹²⁵

Seminar on Iqbal—3rd September

The Tajik Academy of Sciences arranged a seminar on Iqbal's life and thought in the afternoon of 3rd September jointly with the University departments of Dushanbe. The proceedings started in a large hall packed with audience from all walks of life especially the academia. ♦ Amār Yazdka introduced the delegation. ♦ Alā Mu'ammad Khurshid, a scholar from Dushanbe, introduced Dr. Javid Iqbal and read a paper on his seminal work on Iqbal's

¹²³ A distinguished Tajik diplomat.

¹²⁴ It was a copy of the *Kulliyat i Iqbal* Persian that the Iqbal Academy Pakistan had prepared and published in 1990 and which, to our astonishment, had vanished from the market in a relatively short period of time.

¹²⁵ See note no 6.

life, *Zinda Rēd*,¹²⁶ showing its importance in the study of Iqbal's life. ♦ Qurbān 'Alā Jān presented *ghazals* from Āfī. ♦ Dr. Javid Iqbal rose to the occasion effortlessly and gave the following remarks:

It is a matter of great pleasure and honour for me that I am visiting Tajikistan at this momentous occasion of the celebrations of the 1100 Years of the Sāmānid dynasty. First of all I would like to express my heart felt gratitude for extending the invitation to me and then for the warm reception and welcome that your government and the countrymen have given to me.

Ever since the day I set my foot on the Tajik soil I have a feeling as if I am in Islamabad. It is so similar to it in terms of atmosphere, weather and other things that I never thought of myself as being away from Pakistan.

I have suggested to our Charge d' Affairs Mr. Sajīd AĀmad Seebar that there should be an Iqbal Chair at the Dushanbe University. I know that the Department of Urdu Language and Literature is making good headway in Dushanbe University but a chair at the University would be more effective seat of Iqbal studies and a channel for the dissemination of Iqbal's thought in this area. There are many countries where Iqbal Chairs have been established with the assistance of the Government of Pakistan. These are located at various centres in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, USA, Iran and other places. The government of Pakistan has tried to reach out to these areas through these Chairs and has made good efforts to disseminate Iqbal's thought, especially in its revolutionary aspect, in these cultural zones. It is however a matter of great concern that an Iqbal Chair is still non-existent in the Central Asian lands even after a decade of their independence from the Soviet Empire. The matter takes on an ironic colour when we take into consideration the fact that among the many cultural and linguistic zones of the Islamic world this area is perhaps the most receptive to the life giving message of Iqbal's works.

As you know, Iqbal was born at a time when the Islamic civilisation was in the throes of decadence and almost all the Islamic lands were suffering from foreign domination, cultural hegemony of the West, inferiority in front of the West and its worldview and educational, scientific backwardness. The pivotal concern of Iqbal's thought, therefore, is revival, a new life and a new vision. In this regard the fundamental issue that emerged again and again in his thought was that of the question of time. There are other

¹²⁶ See *Zinda Rēd*, Iqbal Academy Pakistan, 2001; Persian translation by Dr. Shāhān Muqaddam Safyārā, *Javidān i Iqbāl*, 4 volumes, IAP, Lahore, 1985-89.

important issues as well that the Iqbal Chair could address. Concept of God is an other such topic. Scholars who have devoted their study to it either approach it on the basis of the outdated theological debates or else turn a blind eye to the rich Islamic tradition that has bequeathed to us a vast treasure of knowledge on the subject. Concept of Man, concept of reality, Islamic view of the world, concept of knowledge and the means of knowledge, concepts of prophetdood and sainthood, the degrees of sainthood etc. are the other topics where the Iqbal Chair could make a useful contribution. Iqbal's concept of Iblâs is an other subject that needs careful study as it has novel ideas in its fold since Iqbal has tried to look at the rebellion and denial of Iblâs from a different angle. There are many other aspects of which I cannot go into the details. One such issue is the question of a modern Islamic state. It needs a lot of re-thinking and research and your area could be a crucible for future thinking.

◆ *After the remarks of Dr. Javid Iqbal the translator presented him with a copy of the Tajik translation of The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. ◆ Qurbân 'Alâ Jân again recited verses from Âşfi. ◆ Then Qurbân 'Alâ Jân, accompanied by 'Askar Âkâm, made a moving presentation of Iqbal's hasti i ma nûm i m¹²⁷. ◆ Ustâdh Sher 'Alâ, Chairperson, Department of Philosophy, Dushanbe University delivered a short speech. ◆ Mr. Sajjad A'Amad Sebar, Charge d' Affairs, Embassy of Pakistan, Dushanbe, made his remarks and introduced the audience to the activities that the Embassy had undertaken.*

◆ The seminar concluded with the keynote address by the present writer. The address focused on the traditional concept of poetry and tried to place Iqbal in the long and illustrious tradition of Persian wisdom poetry.¹²⁸ I alluded to the fact that sapiential poetry is a means and a vehicle for the expression of truth and it complements logic in that it deals with forms of knowledge which are not accessible to the unaided logical faculties of man. Also this poetry brings about the transformation of the soul and its sensibilities in a manner which is not possible otherwise. It causes an assent in the soul of man and in this regard it has an almost alchemical quality about it, a power to transform knowledge,

¹²⁷ See *Payam i Mashriq*, in *Kulliyat i Iqbal*, Persian, IAP, 1990, pp. 255.

¹²⁸ The address has since been published from the Iqbal Academy Pakistan in Persian as well as English and a Cyrillic transliteration is forthcoming. See M S Umar, "That I May See and Tell", Lahore, 2002; *Har Cheh Geyad Dâda Geyad*, IAP, Lahore, 2000.

making it a “tasted” fruit which is digested and which transforms one’s being, thus, through its re-echoing of the fundamental truths of our existence aids man to return to the higher states of being and consciousness.

According to Firdawsâ, San«â, ‘AÇÇ«r, Sa’dâ, Rêmâ, J«mâ and other masters of Persian literature, poetry is the fruit of a vision that is articulated by the poet. To quote their exact formulation, “it is conceived in the intellect and then born through the wisdom of the poet”.¹²⁹ The word used for wisdom is *Âikmah* (sapiential wisdom) and the intellect is referred to by the words “ ‘aql, zamâr, dil or j«n etc.”.¹³⁰

A large proportion of the verses in his work is truly gnomic poetry — “Âikmah ” wisdom in the highest sense of the word. Moreover, they are not wisdom only to Muslims, or to Orientals, but to men of every creed and race. This is one of Iqbal’s great achievements that he bridged the gap between East and West, and gave utterance to the common ground in the great religious and philosophical systems of the world.

Whether we call it higher poetry, designate it as the poetry of gnomic wisdom, give it the title of sapiential or contemplative poetry¹³¹ or classify it as in-spired poetry, all these appellations refer to one and the same reality which is situated at the junction between the form and essence and opens onto the Infînite. It is an activity in which the human

¹²⁹ They all use various expressions but the meaning is almost always the same.

¹³⁰ ‘AÇÇ«r, *Asr«r N«mah*, p. 186; *Mu’âbat N«mah*, p. 48, 50, 367; *Dâv«n*, p. 800; *Ikâh N«mah*, p. 366; San«â, *Âadâqab al-Âaqâqab*, p. 706, 708. In this regard the remarkable detailed studies of Nasr Allah Pourjavadi are extremely informative and illuminating. See his *Bê-i J«n*, Tehran, 1387 and *Naqd -i-Falsafâ-i shi’r az Naiir -i-‘AÇÇ«r*, 1995.

For Suharawardâ’s formulations on art and aesthetics see *Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques*, (ed. S. H. Nasr) Paris, 1977; W. Thacksten, (tr.) *The mystical and Visionary Treatise of Subranardi*, London, 1982; For Mu’ammad Ghazzâdâ, see R. Ettinghausen, “Al-Ghazzali on Beauty,” in *Art and Thought*, Luzac, London, 1947, p. 160; For A’amad Ghazzâdâ, *Majmë’ab jth«r-i-Farsi*, Tehran, 1370s. especially his *Saw«ni’A*, (pp. 93-190 loc. cit.) translated into English by Nasrullah Pourjavadi, London, 1986: Rêmâ, to give just one example of his formulation from among his large opus, speaks of the *modus operandi* of traditional art in the story of the Greek and the Chinese painters in exactly the same vein, see *Mathnavi*, Bk I, 3465-85 (also see Bk IV, 733; Bk V 372); For an other of J«mâ’s formulations see *Lan«i’A*, tr. Whinfield and Kazvini, London, 1978. For a comprehensive survey of these formulations, see S. H. Nasr, “Islamic aesthetics” in *A Companion to World Philosophies*, Blackwell, 1996, pp. 448-459.

¹³¹ This is my preferred expression for it.

poet is but the imitator of the Divine Poet since his “logical”¹³² utterance is simultaneously a “poetical”¹³³ work.¹³⁴

Thus it does not come as a surprise when we find Iqbal singing in the same vein: “Poetry is the heir of prophecy”¹³⁵ or when he refers to himself as “of one voice with the trustworthy Gibr‘âl”¹³⁶ or declares that “poetry that communicates the message of eternity is either the song of Gibr‘âl or the trumpet of Isr‘fâl”.¹³⁷ By doing this, he places himself squarely in the traditional continuity of Islamic literature¹³⁸, draws the sap of poetry from it and eventually becomes perhaps the finest flower that blossomed in the withering garden of traditional Islamic poetry.

¹³² Meaning here “stemming from the *logos*”.

¹³³ Referring here to *poiesis*.

¹³⁴ In their essence, “poetry” and “logic” are one and the same. “According to traditional doctrines, logic and poetry have a common source, the Intellect, and far from being contradictory are essentially complementary. Logic becomes opposed to poetry only if respect for logic becomes transformed into rationalism: poetry, rather than being a vehicle for the expression of a truly intellectual knowledge, becomes reduced to sentimentalism or a means of expressing individual idiosyncrasies and forms of subjectivism.” Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987, p, 91.

¹³⁵ *Jawād Nama*, tr. A. J. Arberry, Unwin, London, 1966, p. 65.

¹³⁶ *Zabër-i-‘Ajam*, in *Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 430. Gibr‘âl is the angel of revelation in the Islamic angelology.

¹³⁷ *Zarb-i-Kalâm* in *Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 644. These are only representative samples, otherwise much more could be cited from him on this point. See “Aikmat-o-Shi‘r” in *Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 262; “Rëmâ” in *Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 335; “*Asrâr-o-Rumëz*” in *Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 30, 52; pertinent is also the following quotation from his prose “Or perhaps our chief want is rather for the poet of the new age than for its prophet—or for one who should be poet and prophet in one. Our poets of recent generations have taught us the love of nature, and enabled us to find in it the revelation of the Divine. We still look for one who shall show us with the same clearness the presence of the Divine in the human — We still need one who shall be fully and in all seriousness what Heine playfully called himself “Ritter Von dem Heiligen Geist”, one who shall teach us to see the working out of our highest ideals in the everyday life of world and to find in devotion to the advancement of that life, not merely a sphere for an ascetic self-sacrifice, but a supreme object in the pursuit of which all thoughts, all passions, all delights may receive their highest development and satisfaction”, Sayyid Abdul Wahid, *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, pp. 95, 96.

¹³⁸ Many fine studies have appeared which focus on this aspect of continuity. See Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, Iqbal Academy, Lahore, 1989; *Two Colored Brocade*, op. cit.; Mirza Muhammad Munawwar, *Iqbal kâ Farsâ Ghazal*, (Persian) IAP, 1989.

Dinner by the Charge d' Affairs, Pakistan, with the Members of *Pak-Tajik Friendship Society* at the Embassy of Pakistan Residence—3rd September
Interviews: — 2nd to 4th September

- Dr. Javid Iqbal Interviewed by the Tajik Television—Iqbal, the Sæmænid Celebrations
- Dr. Javid Iqbal Interviewed by the Tajik Television—Iqbal, the Silk Route
- Dr. Javid Iqbal Interviewed by the Tajik Radio—Iqbal
- M. Suheyl Umar Interviewed by the Tajik Television—Iqbal and the Sæmænid Celebrations

Visit to the Office of the Pak-Tajik Friendship Society
4th September

The delegation visited the Pak-Tajik Friendship Society on their way to the Seminar held at the Department of Urdu, Dushanbe University. They were introduced to the members of the Society who happened to be the leading scholars of Tajikistan; Rasæl Hædæ Zæædab, Kbænnun Sha Bæno, Kamæ al-Dæn 'Aynæ and others. Madam Sharf al-Nisæ explained the activities of the Society. It was evident that the Society had a great potential for out reach in the Tajik society but it needed support. The meeting ended at the presentation of Urdu poetry from a student.

Iqbal Day Function at the Tajik State University— 4th September

The delegation was ushered directly to the office of the Vice Chancellor, Åabåb Ullab Murædoof, upon their arrival at the University who received them in a most cordial manner. Himself a scholar of distinction, Murædoof introduced the members to the University and its various department. His conversation was animated with the same admiration and love for Iqbal that we had seen so often, except for a very few exceptions, during our encounters with the Tajik public and men of letters.

The function was mounted in the hall room of the department. ♦Dr Åabåb al-RaÅmæn Rajab, Chairperson of the Department of Urdu, a very modest man but an accomplished scholar, introduced the guests to the occasion. The Vice Chancellor, Åabåb Ullab Murædoof, opened the proceedings by welcoming the guests. He said that it was indeed an honour for the University to have been able to invite the son of the great poet-philosopher of the East and he felt it his duty to express his heartfelt gratitude for Dr. Javid Iqbal to have agreed to grant them a visit despite his busy schedule. It spoke of the friendship and regard that he had for had Tajik brothers.

Our students have studied the works of Iqbal and they are doing translations too. Iqbal is an on going affair in our department. We always have our Iqbal days but the visit of the delegation has imparted an extraordinary status and flavour to our function today and it is my fervent hope that it will turn out to be a memorable occasion.

◆ Dr. *Áabáb al-RaÁmæn Rajab*, Chairperson of the Department of Urdu, then presented his sip«s n«mah (thanks giving) written and delivered in Urdu, sprinkled with Persian verses. The ease and fluency with which Dr. Rajab conducted himself in Urdu was impressive. The presentations of the students that came later on confirmed the impression that the department was working on a high level of professional excellence and dedication.

◆ Members of the faculty made a versified presentation consisting of Iqbal's verses interspersed with pieces of Persian poetry and their own compositions.

◆ Dr. *Áaif al-Dân Akram*¹³⁹ started his musical rendering with a presentation of a ghazal from *Á«fái*.¹⁴⁰ *Á«fái* was followed by the ghazal from Iqbal, *chën char«g i L«da sëzam dar khay«bæn i shum«*.¹⁴¹ This ghazal and the verses cited earlier¹⁴² are among the most popular ones among the Tajiks. The charming music and the singing made it a most remarkable audio feast and a moving experience of spiritual uplift.

◆ *ziy«z«dah Ýd Beg* delivered his speech preceded with verses of welcome for Dr. Javid Iqbal and followed by the presentation of two works on Iqbal to Dr. Javid Iqbal.

◆ Dr. Javid Iqbal rose to the occasion and gave the following remarks:
Honourable Audience

It is a matter of great pleasure and honour for me to be with you today. We had planned to travel to Tajikistan in April this year but circumstances beyond our control prevented us from materialising our program. Then the occasion of the celebrations of the 1100 Years of the S«m«nid dynasty offered an opportunity to visit Tajikistan which we were able to avail. I have a great feeling of familiarity, brotherhood and

¹³⁹ Dr. *Áaif al-Dân Akram*, whom we saw at this gathering turned out to be an extraordinary man. An author of some 13 books and holding PhDs from the local universities, Dr. Akram had spent thirty years of his life composing tunes for Iqbal's verses and singing Iqbal.

¹⁴⁰ He uses a *tor* (like a sitar in from the Indo-Pak instruments) accompanied by *tumbak*, (a variant of Indo-Pak *Çabla*) the traditional musical instruments of central Asia.

¹⁴¹ *Zubër i 'Ajam*, in *Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, (Persian) Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 415.

¹⁴² *až kb«arb i gar«en kbáz*.

oneness ever since we arrived in Dushanbe. More over the reception, the love and admiration, the extraordinary warm welcome that I found every where I go is a captivating new experience that has touched me to the depths of my heart.

As I had the occasion to point out earlier¹⁴³ there should be an Iqbal Chair at this University. I knew that the Department of Urdu Language and Literature is making good headway in your University and now I am a witness to it but a chair at the University would be more effective seat of Iqbal studies and a channel for the dissemination of Iqbal's thought in this area. It is however a matter of great concern that an Iqbal Chair is still non-existent in the Central Asian lands even after a decade of their independence from the Soviet Empire. The matter takes on an ironic colour when we take into consideration the fact that among the many cultural and linguistic zones of the Islamic world this area is perhaps the most receptive to the life giving message of Iqbal's works. You are the heirs to the language and literature that Iqbal loved most and to which he owed most for the intellectual and technical elements of his poetic medium as well as for the underpinnings, key concepts and symbolism of his message. It is not an exaggeration when he sings that "this is what I have borrowed from your garden!". He has given you what he had learned from your intellectual tradition.

Listening to the verses of Afāi and Iqbal winged by song and music was also an extremely moving experience for me and made me realise how potent an appropriate music could be in enhancing the effect of poetry.

The budding scholars and the new generation of Tajiks should carry on the torch of Iqbal's message into the future.

I am so overwhelmed by the presentations that I feel difficulty in expressing myself and would request you to bear with me.

◆ Dr. Aabāb al-RaĀmĀn Rajab, Chairperson of the Department of Urdu, announced the presentations of the Tajik artists. Artāq Qādir recited verses from Javād Nāmah in an exquisite manner and then made a moving and inspiring rendering of yā chunā kun yā chunā.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ See the section on *Seminar on Iqbal*.

¹⁴⁴ *Zubĕr i 'Ajām*, in *Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, (Persian) Iqbal Academy, 1994, p. 363.

◆ *Dr. Āaif al-Dān Akram still had an other enchanting item up his sleeves. It consisted of his own musical renderings of two Urdu ghazals: dil i murda dil nahāā hae and dary« meā motā ay mawj i büb«k.*¹⁴⁵ *Although he only had a smattering of Urdu, the musical rendering was very successful. The present writer had been involved in preparing Iqbal's Urdu and Persian poetry in various audio formats including musical renderings and this exposure to the Tajik musical tradition left a very different impression on us. We felt that the cadence, the flowing drowning rhythm, the grandeur and the deep-seated power of the Tajik music provided a most suitable accompaniment to the equally powerful message of Iqbal's poetry. It stands truer in case of Iqbal's Persian works that are squarely grounded in the centuries old formats of poetic composition of the Persian poetic tradition. The same verses worked into the Persian/Tajik cadences give an entirely different result as compared to those composed in the Indo-Pak style.*

◆ *A female student from the department then read her Urdu poetry and afterwards presented a recitation of the famous verses of Iqbal, Äërat na parastam man.*¹⁴⁶

◆ *A brief session of question-answers followed to which Dr. Javid Iqbal and the Director Iqbal Academy responded. Audience was curious to know about the ability of Allama Iqbal to speak Persian. Alluding to various pieces of evidence, we were able to prove that Iqbal was quite fluent in spoken Persian.*

◆ *Urdu verses presented by various groups of students concluded the function and at the end Dr. Āabāb al-RaĀm«n Rajab, Chairperson of the Department of Urdu, and Qurb«n W«si' made a vote of thanks for the guests and the Embassy.*

The next item on the Agenda was an official Lunch by the Government of Tajikistan at Elite Restaurant. The delegation, however, missed the lunch and preferred to visit the rural residence of Akram Roziyaf, Assistant to the Deputy Minister for Food Grains. As a silent caretaker, Akram Roziyaf had looked after each and every need of the delegation from the moment it arrived in Tajikistan. In the traditional simplicity of a Tajik village we had a quite but extremely sumptuous lunch.

Visit to Qil'a-i-ÄiÄ«r and Sh«b-i-'Ambrān— 4th September

On its way back the delegation had a chance to pay a visit to the remnants of the ancient castle of Qil'a-i-ÄiÄ«r and the adjacent Museum.

¹⁴⁵ *Zarb i Kalām in Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, (Urdu) Iqbal Academy, 1994, pp. 549 & 645.

¹⁴⁶ *Pay«m i Masbriq*, in *Kulliyat-i Iqbal*, Persian, IAP, 1990, pp. 298.

Reception by the Charge d' Affairs at the Embassy of Pakistan
4th September

A reception was given by the Charge d' Affairs at the Embassy of Pakistan on the evening of the 4th of September that was attended by all the noted people from the Government and other Embassies. Exchange of views with them offered an excellent opportunity to gain insights into the situation as well as requirements of Iqbal Studies in the Area.

Visit to the Tomb of Sayyid 'Alá Hamad«nâ at Kulaib City
5th September

Sayyid 'Alá Hamad«nâ (or Sh«b i Hamad«n, as he is more popularly called) is the patron saint of Kashmir as he brought Islam to this area and beyond. He also appeared in Iqbal's magnum opus Javâd N«mah.¹⁴⁷ The delegation visited his tomb and had a memorable time beside the mausoleum of the saint.

International Symposium: "S«m«nâs and the Revival of Tajik Culture" —8th September

The address that Dr. Javid Iqbal delivered at the Symposium was in Persian. An English Translation is given here below:

Before I actually deliver my address I deem it my pleasant duty to convey to you and to the people of Tajikistan the message of goodwill and friendship from the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan on this momentous occasion.

The Honourable President

Learned scholars and distinguished guests!

It is a matter of great pleasure and honour for me that I am visiting Tajikistan at this momentous occasion of these grand and magnificent celebrations of the 1100 Years of the S«m«nid dynasty and it is also a great privilege for me to address this distinguished gathering.

First of all I would like to express my heart-felt gratitude for extending the invitation to me and then for the warm reception and welcome that your government and the countrymen have given to me. From the moment that I emerged from the aircraft at the airport till the present, I never have once felt that I am in a foreign country, neither in spirit nor in body.

¹⁴⁷ *J«vâd Namah*, in *Kulliy«t i Iqbal*, Persian, IAP, 1990, pp. 630.

Tajikistan has a striking similarity with many of parts of Pakistan in terms of atmosphere and geographical conditions. But is above all in terms of cultural and spiritual affiliations that your land is nearest to us. Starting from language and literature down to fiqh, Sufism and philosophy the cultural ambience of the Indo-Pak subcontinent has been under a profound influence of the Persianate culture, particularly under the extremely rich and fecund culture of this area that now makes the present day Tajikistan. It would be not an exaggeration if I say, borrowing my expression from Iqbal, that almost every piece of cultural ruby that we possess is from the “Badakhsan” of your land!

The love, respect and admiration that I have seen for my great father in the Tajik society, both in the masses as well in the intelligentsia, have touched me deeply. It is an extremely meaningful and moving experience for me. I could not have imagined of such a deep-rooted relationship, great esteem and admiration staying back in Pakistan and it indeed speaks of the link, the spiritual nexus and the bonds of ages old affinity between the two countries. In this regard I would like to draw your attention to the very urgent and essential requirement of cementing the cultural bonds and forging greater ties between the two countries.

In the vast breadth of Islamic intellectual history this area has always been a great citadel of philosophy, natural and religious sciences and high culture. The Sāmānīd era has also been one of the high watermarks of Islamic culture. The celebrations of the 1100 Years of the Sāmānīd dynasty is a most suitable metaphor that draws our attention to the fact that the Muslims of Tajikistan are not only the heirs to an extremely rich and diverse cultural and intellectual heritage that outshine most of the other cultural zones. It also points to the hope that their future holds an enormous promise for latent possibilities for the development and spread of Islamic culture. It is my fervent hope that Tajikistan would one day again emerge on the world scene as a great centre of learning.

The celebrations of the 1100 Years of the Sāmānīd dynasty also speak of another fact. Tajikistan has emerged from its period of tribulation and civil unrest. The efforts of the President Mr. Sharf ‘Alā Raġmān can not be belittled in this regard. The economic uplift, the peace making and general well-being of the present day Tajikistan owe a great deal to him. I

congratulate him on his success and pray for the prosperity of the land in future.

Economy has emerged as a vital and most important aspect of international relations in the modern world. In this regard I would like to draw your attention to the need for stronger bi-lateral economic relationships between Pakistan and Tajikistan along with cultural and academic exchange. It would be for the benefit and strength of both the countries.

In the end I would again express my best wishes for your success and pray for a new and prosperous Tajikistan.

Many other scholars from various countries of the world addressed the seminar. The response that the present writer made to the overall theme of the Seminar is given below.

The Honourable President

Learned scholars and distinguished guests!

For the Pakistanis in general and the man of letters in particular, Tajikistan is not merely the name of a country that exists in among the Central Asian Republics and which gained its independence about a decade ago. For us Tajikistan always stood for an identity, a cultural and spiritual entity and an intellectual and historical heritage which had remained in history, till such times that the Soviet hegemony subjugated it, a source of knowledge, culture, sciences and philosophy. In terms of cultural values, intellectual riches and religious ethos, every ruby that we have received is from the “Badakhsan” of your land. The people who hailed from this land also built the best and most enduring political empire of the mediaeval Muslim world.

It is a matter of great pleasure and honour for me that I am visiting Tajikistan at this momentous occasion of these grand and magnificent celebrations of the 1100 Years of the Samanid dynasty. Through these celebrations they are reaching out for their own cultural and religious roots and rediscovering their true identity for themselves and for the foes and friends alike. This is no easy job. Search for one’s national identity

and of the roots of one's culture is bound to bring a lot of differences to the surface. I do not intend to indulge in a refutation of the false ideas that are being aired in this regard. What I intend to do is to bring a few issues and questions to your notice that could lead us to a better perspective on the issue and dispel certain ambiguities that engulf the problem.

First: There are many walks of life and several disciplines where the cultural, religious, political, academic and intellectual excellence of the Tajiks is acknowledged and tributes are paid to their outstanding contribution. Where do these intellectual and cultural achievements stem from? Let me put this question in a specific manner. If Islam had not come to the Central Asian lands what would the condition and development of the Persian Dari language had been? Would the emergence on the literary scene of Rēdakâ, Firdawsâ and other stalwarts of Persian literature been possible? If Persian language appeared as a language of arts and sciences and outshined the others in many of its branches was it not directly related to the Islamic civilisation that flourished in these areas?

If Islam had not nurtured philosophy and the sciences in these lands how are we to account for the emergence of such towering figures as Ibn Sâna, Al-F««bâ, Al-Bârēnâ, Al-Khaw««zamâ and a host of other scholars, theologians, philosophers, natural scientists, men of letters and personalities of dazzling spiritual excellence who are related to this land? Not only the production of the works of lasting value, but also the presence of benevolent and efficient kings, good governance, political acumen, of which the S««mid dynasty was a good example, speaks of the power that Islam has infused in the people of this area.

In our view every manifestation of the Islamic civilisation—be it Central Asia, Africa, Spain, India, Far East—absorbed and then transformed the best elements of the cultural, artistic and intellectual heritage of the region in question in accordance with its world view and vision based on Tawââd. All the ethnic genius, the local talent, the intellectual heritage and the cultural traits were reborn in a new form and gained greater vitality. This is precisely the reason that when Salm««n i F««rsâ was asked

about his ancestry he replied, “Salm«n, ibn Isk«m, ibn Isk«m, ibn Isk«m, ibn Isk«m....”

Second: Apart from laying claim to a glorious past that we alluded to just now, the Tajiks have an other very outstanding characteristic element which manifested in the present times and which is unprecedented in Islamic history. The Tajiks suffered the domination and hegemony of the Soviet Union for almost seven decades. It meant that during this entire period of political subjugation they had none of the socio-economic forces— state apparatus, economy, education etc.— at their disposal that shape the life of a community. Yet they retained their “historicity”, kept its ethos thriving, gave meaning to the lives of millions of people and managed to exist as a living presence. Was it not some thing for which they are indebted to Islam?

Therefore, the future of this land is also strongly related to how Islam re-emerged in this area. The pathways for peace and prosperity which the present day Tajik leadership has visualised are in accordance with the teachings of Islam epitomised in the enduring words of À«fâi:

«s«'ish i do gaitâ tafsâr i ââ do harf ast

b« dâst«ä talaÇÇuf b« dushman«ä mad«ra

The attitude of accommodating the “other”, of enlightenment, of peaceful co-existence that you have demonstrated in your society should be maintained at all costs. Never lose sight of the fact that Islam has been the foundation and source of all the achievements of the Tajiks in the past and it worked as a protective shield during the hegemony of the Soviet Union for almost seven decades. Your future is, therefore, also related to your commitment to Islam.

I pray for your success in this uphill task and for your bright and peaceful future.

Other Side of the Fence—Interviews with ‘Abdullah Nêrâ, Leader of the Opposition

The delegation had the chance to exchange views with the leader of the Tajik Opposition also. ‘Abdullah Nĕrĕ, dressed in the robes of a traditional Tajik religious scholar, was a man of nobility. Following is the resume of our talks with him at various occasions.

We found him the same as his other countrymen in our first meeting with him, loving Pakistan and full of admiration and respect for Iqbal. There was, however, an other dimension to his personality that revealed itself later. He told us about the struggle that continued, mostly clandestine, for the revival of Islam during the Soviet times.¹⁴⁸ They were running schools undercover, mostly during the nights, that imparted teachings on three basic lines; Qur’ĕn, basic Islamic teachings and Iqbal. They used to bring works of Iqbal, in pieces, folded up their sleeves to avoid detection. Nĕrĕ himself taught Iqbal to the seekers of knowledge in these underground schools. According to him, after the Qur’ĕn, Iqbal’s Persian poetry was their mainstay and it played a most significant role in the Tajik renaissance.

He also had a very balanced view of the Afghan problem. According to him Afghanistan was a problem of the Islamic *ummah* and not a localised phenomenon. He had spent 5 years of his life in Afghanistan, apart from frequent visits there, and had contacts with all the major factions there. He shared with us his meetings with Mulla ‘Umar in which he had discussed the future of Afghanistan with him and had pressed upon ‘Umar that the Afghan problem cannot be solved through war. It needed negotiations. He also mentioned all the other Afghan leaders whom he tried to convince on the same lines. He argued that being Muslims and Āanafĕs they should be able to reach an agreement. There had been enough talks, now the matter should be resolved. If you unite you can reach some formula of peaceful existence otherwise the devastating war will ruin what ever is left. You would be thrown in the category of Dostam and his ilk. Dr. Javid Iqbal asked him certain questions that we reproduce here:

Dr. Javid Iqbal— All the warring factions are Muslims and Āanafĕs at that. War is not religiously sanctioned. Why then all this killing and fratricide? The Taliban say that we have the control of 90 % of the land so why should we negotiate.

¹⁴⁸ See Broxup, *Mystics and Commissars*, Oxford, 1987 that provides useful insights into the process.

Nērâ— This is all the more reason that they should talk. The party that wielded such a power should be more accommodating and considerate talking from its vantage point of greater strength. It should give others what is their due and bring peace.

Dr. Javid Iqbal—Very right. This is what they should have done but unfortunately that has not come to pass. They are too rigid and narrow-minded.

Nērâ— There are reasons to this mindset; prolonged war, their life style and the hidden hands manipulating them for motives other than their own.

Dr. Javid Iqbal— It has something to do, perhaps, with the *madrasah* mindset that the Taliban represent. It is because of this mindset that the Shi'ite-Sinni conflict in Pakistan has reached such threatening dimensions. Both the spillovers of the Iranian Revolution and the Taliban have created tensions and promoted intolerance. We do not want to partisans of a certain party but we do want that there should be a broad-based government in Afghanistan with friendly relations with Pakistan unlike the earlier Afghan governments who were friendly towards India and antagonistic towards Pakistan creating all sorts of problems for us.

Nērâ— You are right. The Muslim masses should not remain indifferent to it. The world is progressing and we remain backward due to these internal rifts and disharmonies.

Dr. Javid Iqbal—Look at the long and bloody history of the European Wars. Eventually they realised that it was futile and they united for their economic cause. Why can't we do that instead of killing one another?

Nērâ— *The mineral and natural resources of the West are dwindling. They are on the look out for greener pastures and want to have a certain control on these areas. If they really want that peace should come to this land it could be established very quickly.*

Look at our situation, the seculars and the Islamic parties were at daggers drawn here, civil war was raging and we made peace just to save the country from going to ruins.

Dr. Javid Iqbal— This is the sensible thing to do and it reflects mature and enlightened thinking. The UN has not recognised the Taliban Government but it is using Pakistan to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table and to agree to a broad-based government. If they do not agree the conflict will continue and would devourer what ever is left.

Nërá— Look at our situation again. We could not gain every thing but at least there was a referendum, a constitutional amendment allowing us to breathe and a formula for peaceful co-existence. The religious parties had a success when they obtained the right to conduct political activity on religious ground. Now they can nominate their candidate for presidency and the struggle continues in the political arena. Peace is to the benefit of every one. We have more following now. Earlier we were 4 parties in the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). Now we are 7. We are united and forming a block. Remember that there are lapses too. The promises have not been honoured. You must have noticed the propaganda by the state machinery. The formula that we had agreed earlier for the power sharing has not been kept up in its totality. On the level of the ministers it is done but not on the level of the local government.

Dr. Javid Iqbal— Where do you turn to seek amends for the grievances?

Nërá— There are many forums and national and international institutions where we can make an appeal but the problem is that they do not have the power to enforce their decisions.

Dr. Javid Iqbal— It some times happen with us too. Even worse in some cases where the Government tries to intimidate the Judiciary. We try to take a stand then so that the role and rule of law is not curtailed and people should not lose their faith in the law. I hope the situation will improve here too as you have a higher rate of literacy and education.

Nërá— The problem with us is that the Government is not law abiding and we avoid confrontation beyond a certain limit for fear of plunging the country into a civil war again. Nevertheless present day Tajikistan is quite different from what it had been a few years back. The return of UTO has changed a lot as you can see for yourself. However it would still take us 5 to 10 years to restore the writ of law completely and successfully in its letter and spirit. It is true that we have a 90 % rate of literacy and education but the armed, militant groups are usually illiterate and we need to get rid of them.

Dr. Javid Iqbal— We have much hope for your future.

Nërá— I am grateful for your kind sentiments and pray for Pakistan as well.

Meeting with the Minister for Culture—MuÁammadof Bba Khn ‘Aliovich

An important encounter that took place was our meeting with the with the Minister for Culture, MuÁammadof B«ba Kh«n ‘Aliovich and his Deputy, Mr. Salâm Z«dah. The Minister was as full of enthusiasm about Iqbal as any Tajik scholar and immediately set off to tell us about the respect, love and admiration that Iqbal received in Tajikistan. As always it was an extremely moving and spectacular sight to observe his face come aglow the moment he sat in the presence of the son of Iqbal. Eyes shining with a gleam that was not there an instant before! He talked at length about the details of Iqbal’s reception in Tajikistan, his contribution to their endeavours, Iqbal and Iqbal Studies as a part of the curriculum and his influence on the world of letters.

Conversation turned to the cultural affinities and the feelings of brotherhood that existed between the two countries and the significance that the opening of the new highway would have for the region. Dr. Javid told him that he had prayed for it at the tomb of Sh«h i Hamad«n to which he remarked that he had watched it on the TV.

Since the issues of education and publication also fall within the purview of the Ministry of Culture he told us about the activities in this field and asked for suggestion for more publications. Dr. Javid responded to it by pointing to various titles that needed to be brought to the Tajik readership.¹⁴⁹ He also welcomed the suggestion of holding seminars on Iqbal on regular basis.

Dr. Javid further suggested that there should be a separate Iqbal Section in the Firdawsá Library to which he could send all required materials. The Minister was so forthcoming on the point that he ordered the section to be established in an hour.

Deep-rooted relations of Persian with Urdu was an obvious part of the matters of mutual interest. Suggestion were exchanged for enriching and augmenting the collections of Urdu/Persian books in various libraries across the countries and representation of these materials at various museums under the control of the ministry especially the museum attached to the Tomb of Sh«h i Hamad«n.

The Minister went a step forward and suggested that we should take an other step by announcing awards for best articles and books on Iqbal in order to promote Iqbal studies, to generate greater interest and to bring more awareness about Iqbal.

¹⁴⁹ Suggestions included in the cumulative projection plan.

Dr. Javid then suggested that there should be an Iqbal Chair in Tajikistan that should work in close contact with the Iqbal Academy and maintain connections with all the allied institutions here. Scholars would then make intellectual exchanges and research shall be conducted. He said that it was a matter of great concern that an Iqbal Chair was still non-existent in the Central Asian lands even after a decade of their independence from the Soviet Empire. The matter takes on an ironic colour when we take into consideration the fact that among the many cultural and linguistic zones of the Islamic world this area is perhaps the most receptive to the life giving message of Iqbal's works. The Minister was very forthcoming on the point and said that a formal agreement shall be drafted to materialise these suggestions because it would not only serve Tajikistan but also the adjacent lands where millions of Tajiks live and which essentially belong to the same cultural and religious ethos.

The Minister reiterated the fact that Iqbal was an intellectual need of every man of culture and refinement and maximum steps should be taken to increase the awareness in this regard.

Mr. Sajjad Ahmad Seehar, Charge d' Affairs, Embassy of Pakistan, Dushanbe who also accompanied the delegation, suggested that there should also be an exchange of cultural troupes and delegations making and outreach to various cities in Tajikistan and, perhaps, in the neighbouring areas. In this regard special troupes could also be arranged for Iqbal. The Minister agreed to the proposal and added that, apart from that, the Tajik television and media service shall be advised to give special focus on Iqbal and include important aspects of Iqbal's thought in their cultural, academic, educational and training programs.

The meeting ended with exchange of gifts and pleasantries.

Meeting with the Director of The Agha Khan Foundation—Mr. Akim Farishta

The Agha Khan Foundation is one of the most active organisations in the Central Asian lands. Dr. Javid Iqbal had a number of meetings with its in charge Mr. Akim Farishta. Mr. Akim was very interested in lending the support of his organization for the activities that we had planned for the Tajik chapter of the Iqbal Studies. These included publication and distribution of the Cyrillic transliteration of (*Kulliyat i Iqbal*) Persian, donation of selected books and preparation of audio cassettes/CDs of Iqbal's Persian poetry.

Pilot Project for Audio Recordings of (*Kulliyat i Iqbal*) Persian with Dr. Âaif al-Dân Akram

During our stay in Tajikistan, time and again the need was felt for presentation of Iqbal's verses through the medium of song and music. We had occasion to comment on our encounter with Dr. Âaif al-Dân Akram who had spent thirty years of his life composing tunes for Iqbal's verses and singing Iqbal and whose audio renderings of Iqbal's poetry through his charming music and the singing made it a most remarkable audio feast and a moving experience of spiritual uplift. Realising the need and thinking of utilising the talent to meet the requirement, Dr. Javid Iqbal decided to run a short pilot project for the audio renderings of Iqbal's poetry. Dr. Akram was commissioned for it and selected verses from Iqbal were prepared under the supervision of the present writer. The project was to be expanded into a full length recording of the audio recording of (*Kulliyat i Iqbal*) Persian back at the Iqbal Academy.

This brings us to the close of our narrative of a very productive and meaningful visit to Tajikistan. The recommendations that emerged from our experience are noted under the cumulative plan here below.

Annex. I

IQBAL STUDIES—TAJIK CHAPTER

RECOMMENDATIONS AND WORK PLAN

◆ *Preparation and dissemination of various Persian titles that need to be brought to the Tajik readership. As a first step the following were earmarked:*

Publication and distribution of the Cyrillic transliteration of *Kulliyat i Iqbal*, Persian with parallel Persian text.

Publication and distribution of the Cyrillic transliteration of *Javidan i Iqbal*, Persian, in full.

Publication and distribution of the Cyrillic transliteration of *Javidan i Iqbal*, Persian, in abridgement.

Publication and distribution of the Cyrillic transliteration of *Har Che Geyad*, Persian.

◆ *An Iqbal Chair in Tajikistan may be established that should work in close contact and affiliation with the Iqbal Academy and maintain connections with all the allied institutions*

in Tajikistan. Scholars would then make exchange and research shall be conducted. The local scholars shall man it and its projects shall be chalked and carried out through its board to be nominated by the Iqbal Academy.

◆ *Awards for best articles and books on Iqbal in order to promote Iqbal studies, to generate greater interest and to bring more awareness about Iqbal. It would consist of cash, a medal and a free trip to Pakistan.*

◆ *An assistance of 100 US\$ per month to the Department of Urdu for its activities and publications.¹⁵⁰*

◆ *Preparation of audio and video cassettes/CDs of Iqbal's Persian poetry, both in music and in multimedia format.*

◆ *Scholarship schemes for talented students to come and study for Iqbal Studies in the various universities of Pakistan.*

◆ *Holding seminars on various aspects of Iqbal's life and thought on regular basis.*

◆ *Mounting exhibitions of books, journals, CDs and other audio video materials, Iqbal's photographs and of calligraphy on various aspects of Iqbal's life and thought on regular basis.*

◆ *Establishment of a separate Iqbal Section in the Firdawsâ Library to which the Academy could send all required materials.*

◆ *Enriching and augmenting the collections of Urdu/Persian books in various libraries across the country and representation of these materials at various museums under the control of the ministry especially the museum attached to the Tomb of Shakh i Hamad.*

◆ *Donation of selected books and other materials to institutions, libraries and individuals who could be instrumental in the promotion of Iqbal Studies.*

¹⁵⁰ Given the economic conditions of Tajikistan this meagre sum can go a long way to create goodwill for Pakistan in the area and can successfully counter the cultural and political assault from the Indian side which more often than not uses the Urdu language to make inroads into the academia.

◆ *An exchange of cultural troupes and delegations making and outreach to various cities in Tajikistan and, perhaps, in the neighbouring areas. In this regard special troupes could also be arranged for Iqbal.*

◆ *Liaison with the Tajik television and media service to obtain special focus on Iqbal and include important aspects of Iqbal's thought in their cultural, academic, educational and training programs.*

◆ *Affiliation of Anjuman-i-Iqbal and Pak-Tajik Friendship Society with the Academy and assistance to these and other similar organisations and forums.*

Annex. II

PROGRAMME OF THE DELEGATION

2nd September:

Arrival - Reception at the Airport –
Interviews/T.V/Radio. Stay at Hotel Tajikistan

1000 hrs: Breakfast at Hotel Tajikistan

1100 hrs: Visit of Firdawsi Library and Bahzad Museum

1230-1400 hrs: Lunch at Embassy of Pakistan Residence by CDA
with members of Anjuman-e-Iqbal.

1400 hrs: Round table conference at Writers Union

2000 hrs: Dinner at Hotel Tajikistan by Government of
Tajikistan

3rd September

0800 hrs: Breakfast at Hotel Tajikistan

0900 hrs: Visit of Academy of Sciences

1000 hrs: Inauguration of Takht Samani (Postponed to 9

September)

- 1200 hrs: Lunch by Mr. Jurabek, a Tajik
- 1300 hrs: Namaz-i-Jum'ā at the Jami'ā Masjid and meeting with Mufti-e-A'zam of Tajikistan Negmatzoda
- 1400 hrs: Seminar upto 1700 hrs
- 1930 hrs: Dinner by CDA with members of Pak-Tajik Friendship Society at the Embassy of Pakistan Residence

4th September

- 0900 hrs: Visit to Pak-Tajik Friendship Society Office
- 1000 hrs: Iqbal Day function at Tajik State University
- 1300 hrs: Lunch by the Government of Tajikistan at Elite Restaurant
- 1500 hrs: Visit to Qila-e-Hissor and Shah-e-Ambreen
- 1800 hrs: Reception by CDA at the Embassy of Pakistan

5th September

- at Visit to Verzob and Khawaja-Ab-e-Garm and lunch
- Verzob by the Government of Tajikistan
- 2000 hrs: Dinner in honour of H.E. Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, Federal Minister for Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis at the Embassy Residence by CDA

PROGRAM

FUNCTIONS DEDICATED TO THE 1100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAMANI
STATE (6 – 11 SEPTEMBER 1999)

6th September

Monday

All day Reception and accommodation of guests

18.00 Ceremony of laying wreath on Ismail Samani memorial

18.30-19.30 Visit to Republican Behzad museum.

7th September

Tuesday

06.0 Excursion to Kuliab city for participation in the opening ceremony of Kurgan Tubeek-Kuliab railway line.

8th September

Wednesday

9.00-10.0 Visit to the exhibition of Tajik painters works

10.00 – 12.30 Grand meeting devoted to 1100th Anniversary of Samani State and Independence Day of Tajikistan. Festive concert.

14.00 International symposium: “Samani and the Revival of Tajik culture”

19.00-21.0 Official reception by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (state residency)

9th September

Thursday

9.00-13.0 Rally and military parade dedicated to 1100th Anniversary of

Samani State and Independence Day of the Republic of
Tajikistan. (Dusti square)

18.00-20.0 Stage program and national arts show (Republican Frunze
stadium, Samani Avenue)

10th September

Friday

10.00-13.0 IVth world Tajik Forum

14.30-15.30 Visit to Firdosi National Library

17.00-19.0 Premier of play “Ismail Samani” in Lahuti theater

11th September

Saturday

During the day Seeing off Guests