IQBAL AND THE MUSLIM RENAISSANCE IN BENGAL

Anwar Dil and Afia Dil

ABSTRACT

After the partition of India, when a group of people started saying that Rabindranath Tagore belonged only to India as he was a Hindu, the Muslim Bengal protested and did not give up Tagore as an Indian. They claimed Tagore as their own poet, as one who had sung for them in their own language, about their own joys and sorrows, beauty and power. Now they are not about to give up Iqbal to the Pakistanis. Iqbal still is their poet, their own Muslim poet, who wrote for them as well as for the whole world. Thus Iqbal and Tagore in this century are the best of the heritage of the Bengali people.

Introduction:

How did the Muslim Bengal receive the news of Iqbal's death?

On the morning of the 21st of April 1938, a great shock went through the nerve-center of the whole of the Indian subcontinent. Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the leading poet, philosopher, and thinker of the Eastern World had breathed his last, in Lahore, in the early hours of dawn. The Muslim Bengal, in particular, was stricken with grief and newspapers carried the story of the national loss. Some newspapers, for example, the daily *Al-Hilal* (Urdu) and the *Azad* (Bengali) published special bulletins and supplements, carrying the news and its significance for the nation and the Muslim world. The heaviest coverage of this sense of loss came out in the newspapers and hundreds of public meetings and congregational prayers were held all across the province of Bengal.

If the sheer volume of writing can be taken as proof of the sorrow that a whole nation felt, then the coverage that Iqbal's death received from the newspapers of Muslim Bengal shows beyond a doubt how much they loved and treasured the thought of the great poet and leader. For instance, the editorial of the *Star of India*, the leading Muslim English daily newspaper published in Calcutta, on the day of Iqbal's death reflected the deep sorrow

felt by the whole of Muslim India, especially Muslim Bengal, which recognized in him the visionary who rekindled their faith in themselves, faith in their religion and culture, and hope for their future, which had looked so bleak for so long. The following few lines from the editorial give some idea of the feelings of the people on that day:

> We did now know that the end was so near and that our work this morning would commence under a pall of gloom … He [Iqbal} can be truly described as the greatest intellectual leader of his day, a poet whose works will never be forgotten and a philosopher who never failed to shed light in darkness … As far as Muslims were concerned it can be claimed that Iqbal was the strongest living factor between Muslims of divergent views and opinions, for Iqbal was common to them all. The late Maulana Mohammed Ali, who for a considerable time belonged to a different political clan, used to publicly acknowledge that he had learned the true nature of Islam through Iqbal. Meetings of Muslims of different political views have begun and ended with quotations from Iqbal. One need not emphasize this point, for it speaks for itself that Mohammad Iqbal was the most prominent and towering personality among the Muslims who ever looked to him for inspiration and it is for this reason that we mourn his death today as if ever his services were eeded for the good of his community, it is at this hour. [132]

(Documented in *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture* (Islamabad), Vol. XIII, No. 2, pp. 1-24.)

From the 21st of April onward, for well over a month, everyday, the *Star of India* covered news and published articles on Iqbal's life and thought as viewed all over India, but especially in Bengal. Some of the articles notable for their enduring value in Iqbal studies include: "Sir Mohammad Iqbal" by "One Who Knew Him" and translation of Iqbal's *Tarana-i-Milli* ("The Muslim National Anthem") by Altaf Husain, then Principal of the Dacca Intermediate College (April 21, p. 4), Krishan Chandar's "Iqbal Who Even Tried to Better God's Universe" (May 9, p. 6), and Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's "Iqbal Had a Distinct Personality of His Own".[133]

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[132] *Star of India* (Calcutta), April 21, 1938, p. 4.

[133] *Ibid.*, May 24, 1938, p. 3.

Some of the headlines in the *Star of India* during April and May of 1938, reflect the extent to which the Muslim Bengal felt the loss at that time:

Sir Muhammad Iqbal Dead

India's Great Poet Passes Away

Not Afraid of Death[134]

Calcutta Mourns Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal

Mammoth Condolence Meeting at Park Circus

"I Have Lost My Friend, Philosopher and Guide," Mr. Jinnah's Glowing Tribute[135]

The Voice That Stirred the East to its Depths

Few Easterners Had such an Appreciative Following among Discriminating Western Scholars

Breathed New Life into India & Transfigured the East of Song and Legend

Iqbal Who Ever Dreamed of a New Human Civilization

His Five Unfinished Works[136]

Iqbal a Great Poet but a Greater Philosopher

Greatest Loss Sustained by East since Death of Jamaluddin Afghani

Hindus and Muslims Unite in Honoring Poet of Islam[137]

Universal Tributes for a Universal Poet[138]

Like Flying Eagle Rises Above, Surveys World & Asks Man to be Himself

His 'Lenin Before God' has No Equal in World Poetry

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[134] *Ibid.*, April 21, front page title.

[135] *Ibid.*, April 22, 1938, p. 5.

[136] *Ibid.*, April 25, 1938, p. 5.

[137] *Ibid.*, April 26, 1938, p. 7.

[138] *Ibid.*, April 27, 1938, p. 3.

His Great Abhorrence for Capitalism[139]

"Iqbal, Ghazai and Decartes [sic]"

Artists and Philosophers in Europe Keenly Interested in Iqbal

Irreparable Loss to the World of Philosophy[140]

Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Muslims Meet on One Platform

Iqbal Gave a New Philosophy of Life to World[141]

Iqbal the Apostolic Poet Mourned in London

Arabs, Iranians, Egyptians, Turks and Afghans Honor Sage of East

The Greatest Fighter for Equality and Justice[142]

No Other Poet in History Has so Much Fire as Iqbal

His Great Originality and Universality

Essentially Cosmopolitan and International[143]

He Struck Out New Path for Himself

Unrivalled Career as a Poet[144]

Not only Muslim Bengal, but leaders of all communities across the nation expressed their sense of grief and loss. Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest poet of Bengal, issued the following statement through the Associated Press:

> The death of Iqbal creates a void in our literature that, like mortal wound, would take a very long time to heal up. India, whose place today in the

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[139] *Ibid.*, May 9, 1938, p. 6.

[140] *Ibid.*, May 9, 1938, p. 6.

[141] *Ibid.*, May 6, 1938, p. 6.

[142] *Ibid.*, May 11, 1938, p. 3.

[143] *Ibid.*, May 21, 1938, p. 3.

[144] *Ibid.*, May 24, 1938, p. 3.

world is too narrow, can ill afford to miss a poet whose poetry had such universal value.[145]

Subhash Chandra Bose, the then President of the All-India Congress, regarded as one of the greatest freedom-fighters of Bengal in British India, sent this message:

> The passing away of Sir Mohammad Iqbal means the disappearance of one of the brightest stars from the literary firmaments of India. Besides being a front-rank poet and literature, Sir Mohammad Iqbal was a unique personality. The loss we have suffered through his sad demise will be felt all over the country. Latterly he held [a] political view with which many of us could not find ourselves in agreement.[146] But never did anybody question his bonafides [sic] or the sincerity of his views. In this hour of silence all controversy is hushed and we bow our heads in reverence for one of the great sons of India. His memory will ever remain enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen through such songs as "Sare Jahan Se Accha Hindustan Hamara".[147]

A.K. Fazlul Huq, popularly known as *Sher-i-Bangla* ('The Tiger of Bengal'), a most highly respected Muslim political leader of Bengal, who was at the time President of the All-India Muslim League, issued the following statement to national press:

> The death of Sir Mohammad Iqbal removes from the literary world one of the most towering personalities of this country.
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> The Muslim world is stunned by this terrible blow. It is impossible at the present moment, with our hearts lacerated by one of the keenest sorrows that can befall a nation to discuss the position in any detail. Every Muslim not merely feels the loss but prays to the Almighty for the peace of his great soul, which has gone to Heaven.

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[145] *Ibid.*, April 21, 1938, p. 1.

[146] The reference is to Iqbal's Two-Nation Theory, which led to the creation of Pakistan resulting in the partition of the Indian subcontinent into independent nation-states of India and Pakistan in 1947. (Authors)

[147] *Ibid.*

This national calamity comes to me as an intensely personal one. We were associated in many ways during the last quarter of a century and latterly at the Round Table Conference meeting in England.

I wish I were in Lahore at the present moment to present my last homage to the remains of illustrious dead."[148]

Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, who was a member of the All-India Muslim League Working Committee, and who later became the Governor-General of Pakistan after the passing away of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, issued the following message on the occasion:

Sir Mohammad Iqbal has left us when we needed him most. In his death, India has lost one of her greatest intellectuals and Islam a son whose name will live for ever.

In the troubled Punjab today there is removed a personality who by his song and verse could kill all rancor, calm troubled minds and give a message of hope and enlightenment in his own inimitable style…[149]

Syed Azizul Huq and Habibullah, both of whom later became cabinet members in the Government of East Pakistan, issued the following statement:

A tower of strength has fallen. A poet, philosopher, a born fighter has succumbed to the cruel hands of death. Iqbal's National Songs though written in Urdu, were a source of inspiration in every Bengali home.

When Maulana Shaukat Ali announced in the Session of the All-India Muslim League that the poet-philosopher of the Punjab was ill, we could never dream that he would be removed from us so soon.

Muslim India– nay India as a whole, is distinctly the poorer today. Nobody knows how the gap created by his death will be filled…[150]

The news of Iqbal's death was received in Calcutta by the Khilafat Committee by about 11:30 a.m., and it spread all over Calcutta immediately.

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[148] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[149] *Ibid.*

[150] *Ibid.*

All the Muslim shops of the different areas of Calcutta, Colootola, Murghihatta, Chunagalee, Zakariah Street, Chitpur Road, Mechua Bazaar, Kalabagan, College Street, Chandi Chak, and other Mulsim areas of the city were closed for the day to show respect to the departed leader.

Special *namaz-i-janaza ghaibana* (funeral congregational prayer in absentia) was attended by over fifty thousand Muslims at the football ground in Park Circus, Calcutta, at 8 p.m. It was followed by a mammoth condolence meeting, presided over by Mr. M.A. Jinnah, later the leader of the Pakistan Movement. Mr. Jinnah paid tribute to Dr. Iqbal calling him his "friend, philosopher and guide":

> The sorrowful news of the death of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal had plunged the world of Islam in gloom and mourning. Sir Iqbal was undoubtedly one of the greatest poets, philosophers and seers of humanity of all times. He took a prominent part in the politics of the country and in the intellectual and cultural reconstruction of the Islamic world. His contribution to the literature and thought of the world will live for ever.
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> To me he was a friend, philosopher and guide and as such the main source of my inspiration and spiritual support. While he was ailing in his bed it was he who, as President of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League, stood single-handed as a rock in the darkest days in the Punjab by the side of the League banner, undaunted by the opposition of the whole world…
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> It would have been a matter of great satisfaction for him to hear the news with great delight that the Bengal and Punjab Muslims were absolutely united on the common platform of the All-India Muslim League. In that achievement the unseen contribution of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal was the greatest. No greater blow had struck the Muslims at this juncture. [151]

Maulana Shaukat Ali, another great Indian Muslim leader held in the highest esteem in Muslim Bengal, was visibly overwhelmed with grief as he said:

> Iqbal was the poet of hope and the philosopher and teacher of self-realization and self-culture. The dream of Iqbal was being actually realized

[151] *Ibid.*, April 22, 1938, p. 5.

by the union of the Islamic states and peoples. Iqbal died with the satisfaction of his heart that he had seen his mission fulfilled. Iqbal was dead but he had given new life to millions of human beings and delivered a message of life and selfhood to the entire Muslim world.[152]

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, the distinguished Urdu poet, Editor of the daily *Zamindar*, and one of the most eloquent and powerful political orators of his time, paid his tribute in a poem especially composed for the occasion. The poem, as sung by Yakub Gora Bawa of Rangoon, moved the audience to tears.

Condolence meetings were held all over Bengal on the 21st of April and continued for over a month. Such meetings were by no means limited only to Bengali Muslims. For example, all the educational institutions of Visva-Bharati University at Shanti Niketan, remained closed for a day as a mark of respect to the memory of Dr. Iqbal.

Bangiya Mussalman Sahitya Samity's condolence meeting was held at the Muslim Institute, Calcutta. The general tone of the sentiments expressed at this meeting can be judged by the following extracts from the speech of S. Wajed Ali, Barrister-at-Law, Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta:

Dr. Sir Iqbal was a Muslim of outstanding character. He was no doubt one of the greatest poets of the age; but he was greater than a poet. He was a man with a mission to preach. To understand him properly and to appraise his services adequately, we must cast a glance at the age in which he started his literary activities. That was at the beginning of this century. The lamp lighted by Sir Syed Ahmad of Aligarh, had practically flickered out. Among the educated class then skepticism was the dominant note in religion and philosophy. Politics with them had degenerated into a squabble for posts and appointments. No high ideals stirred the hearts of the young men of the community. As Iqbal was also the product of the age, he reacted to it in his own individual way… his soul was groping for a secure anchorage. He searched the philosophers of the East and the West for guidance…

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[152] *Ibid.*, April 21, 1938, pp. 1, 8.

Acute thinker that he was he realized that the malady his community is suffering from was threefold: 1) the lack of purposeful individuality, 2) the lack of communal cohesion, 3) the lack of a dominating idea– a will to live effectively. Iqbal like a true man of genius set out with all the energy, fire and enthusiasm he possessed to supply these wants and in doing so he dived deep into the teachers of the Qur'an and those of the Prophet; and studied the writings of Jalaluddin Rumi whom he acknowledged as his guide. In his *Asrar-I-Khudi* he deals with the problem of self, how to strengthen it, how to intensify it and how to make it a worthy tool in hands of the Almighty.

Wajed Ali continued his analysis of Iqbal's thought as follows:

Islam according to Iqbal is not a static religion and the Qur'an is not a book that has ceased to be a living force. In every age the true believer will find new message in the Holy Qur'an suited to the requirement of the age and that message he must affirm and announce to his generation There will be new 'Ijtehad' from age to age. That is the substance of the message of the great poet.

Speaking about the political upheaval of the country at the time and predicting the course of future events in the Sub-Continent, Wajed Ali observed:

The fight that is going on between the Congress and the League will in near future develop into a fight between two rival cultures in this country and in that fight the party that values its culture most will win. The greatest tribute that we can pay to the soul of the greatest poet is to carry his message far and wide to every Muslim house in India. So far as Bengal is concerned the study of and the working out of his message is absolutely necessary. Though the Muslims form the majority of the population in Bengal yet they have little of that life-giving force and of that mad passion for service which Iqbal has preached with unrivalled fire and eloquence…[153]

Considering the fact that women of Bengal, especially the Muslim women, in 1938, were neither as educated nor as vocal in public life as they are today,

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[153] *Ibid.*, May 2, 1938, p. 7.

their participation in special public meetings on Iqbal, is quite significant. For example, Mrs. Husnara Begum, Honorary Secretary of the All-India Muslim Ladies Conference (Bengal Provincial Branch), announced a condolence meeting for Sunday, the 24th of April.

Mrs. M. Rahman, Secretary of the Anjuman-i-Khawatin-i-Islam, Bangla, sent out the following press statement:

> The Anjuman-i-Khawatin-i-Islam, Bangla ("All Bengal Muslim Ladies Association") has learned, with profound sorrow, of the death of Sir Mohammad Iqbal, who was undoubtedly one of the noblest sons of Islam and one of the greatest poets, philosophers, patriots and politicians of India… Though gone into the Great Beyond, Sir Iqbal will surely live in the memory of his grateful countrymen and women through the enthralling message of patriotic love and universal brotherhood of mankind, as expounded in his songs, poems and writings…[154]

Historical Perspective:

Why did the Muslim Bengal respond to Iqbal's thought the way it did?

In order to understand the impact of Iqbal's thought on the Bengali mind, it is necessary to become aware of the socio-political situation of Bengal at the time.

The history of the Muslims of Bengal under the British rule is not basically different from the history of any other colonized people except in the fact that in most of the colonized countries there were more or less homogenous communities living under the colonial powers, whereas in India, especially in Bengal, there were two distinct communities living side by side, and the colonial rulers found it expedient to play one against the other as part of the Divide-and-Rule policy. Since it was from the hands of the Muslims rulers that the British merchants and soldiers had snatched away the power, it stands to reason that it was the Muslims who suffered the worst consequences of the British occupation in comparison to the Hindus for whom it was essentially a change of rulers. The history of Muslim Bengal, while under British rule since their defeat in the Battle of Plassey in 1757, is a story of great suffering, humiliation, and deprivation for the Muslims.

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[154] *Ibid.*, April 22, 1939, p. 5.

The Muslims of Bengal in mid-eighteenth century can be divided into two general classes: 1) the upper classes consisting of rulers, administrators, zamindars, merchants, holders of rent-free land, scholars and men of letters who received grants from the state, and 2) lower classes compromising farmers, weavers, day-laborers, petty service holders of the civil and military government, and domestic servants. The lower classes looked up to the upper classes for leadership and patronage and in turn, the upper classes felt that they were entrusted with the welfare of the lower classes. The British takeover succeeded in crushing this structure within a very short period of time– a part of history yet to be written from the perspective of the oppressed party. Within sixty years of the Battle of Plassey, the British had completely destroyed the Muslims politically, economically and psychologically. As the administration was snatched away from the Muslims, they were not entrusted with any jobs in the new regime. As a consequence, thousands of Muslim civil and military employees found themselves without jobs and with no prospects for employment

The Permanent Settlement Act implemented in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis, reduced the Muslim zamindars to paupers and recognized their Hindu managers and tax-collectors as the new zamindars. This effected a complete turnover in the life of the Bengali Mulsims; overnight the Hindus became their lords. From that time onwards the zamindars in Bengal were all Hindu *Banias* (traders) of Calcutta, who under the favor of the ruling British, became helpers to the British in their monopoly of trade and industry. The worst hit were the traders of salt, who were denied all rights to deal in the salt business. Secondly, the forced cultivation of indigo imposed by the British rulers on the peasantry of Bengal ruined the economic prosperity of hundreds of thousands of Muslim peasants.

Another Act, known as the Resumption Regulation Act (1819), went further against Muslim interests as there could no longer be any holders of rent-free land. Thus it reduced to destitutes, by one declaration, all the erstwhile holders of rent-free land. As a consequence, scholars and artists who were traditionally dependent on such holders of land for their patronage also found themselves divested of their means of livelihood. The replacement of the Muslim zamindars by the Hindus also meant that the sources of income that supported a large network of madrasahs (traditional educational institutions) mainly teaching Arabic, Persian and Islamic Studies

to Muslims, dried up, thus resulting in most of the madrasahs being gradually forced out of existence. Describing the plight of the upper class Muslims of this period, W.W. Hunter, a British humanist, writes in his book *The Indian Mussalmans* (1871):

> A hundred and seventy years ago, it was almost impossible for a well-born Mussalman in Bengal to become poor; at present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich…[155]

Hunter also describes the effect of the two Acts mentioned above:

> Hundreds of ancient families were ruined, and the educational system of the Mussalmans, which was almost entirely maintained by rent-free grants, received its death-blow. The scholastic classes of the Muhammadans emerged from the eighteen years of harrying, absolutely ruined. [156]

The farmers of Bengal were crushed by other well-planned maneuvers. Warren Hastings, the British Viceroy (1772-1793), started a policy of leasing farming revenues to the highest bidders. The speculators for this bidding were mostly Hindus, because in the new setting, they were the ones who had ready cash. This led to the vicious circle of the underlings paying more and more revenue to meet the growing demands of the ambitious bidders who became the financial pipeline for the greater glory of the British Empire. The new zamindars, in reward for this role, were given the powers to fix the rent and as can be expected they went on giving their land to contractors who offered them the largest profit. The end result was that all profit was extorted from the unfortunate cultivators. Forced cultivation of indigo was imposed on the cultivators and the agents of the planters subjected them to indescribable oppression. The weavers suffered no less. The weaving industry was deliberately destroyed to make room for the import of British cloth from Manchester. There were numerous cases of the cutting of thumbs of weavers so that they could no longer weave the celebrated Bengal *malmal* (muslin), a speciality of Muslim craftsmen.

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[155] W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Mussalmans*, reprinted from the 3rd edition by Indological Book House Delhi, India, 1969 edition, p. 150.

[156] *Ibid*., p. 177.

Another great blow was the change of the official language from Persian to English in 1837. Overnight the educated Muslims became illiterate and unable to demonstrate their knowledge, and were thereby unqualified for government jobs. To make matters worse, Muslims did not adapt themselves to the changing times and boycotted the learning of English, because the ulema of the time gave the *fatwa* (edict): 'Do not learn English, the language of the *Kafirs* (infidels).' Thus, robbed of land, money, education, and self-respect, Muslims of Bengal found themselves in a most wretched position in a country where they had lived as rulers for ten centuries. W.W. Hunter, quoted earlier, described the situation, 'in fact, there is now scarcely a Government office in Calcutta in which a Muhammedan can hope for any post above the rank of the porter, messenger, filler of ink-pots or menders of pens.'[157]

Stated succinctly, the position of the Muslims of Bengal at the time was such that it did not matter what you were before the turn of the tide– a ruler, an administrator, a zamindar, a scholar, a farmer, a weaver, an artist, a soldier– as so long as you were a Muslim, you could not win in the new set-up. It must be said in fairness, that whatever was left undone by the British rulers and the Hindu landlords, was completed by the edicts of the ignorant among the Muslim mullas and ulema.

The Bengali Muslims were at their lowest point in history and many of them blamed this on their deviance form the path of Islam. Within this frame of reference, two movements for Islamic revivalism gained ground mainly in the rural areas of Bengal. First of all, the Faraidi Movement led by Haji Shariat Ullah at the turn of the 19th century (around 1818) in Eastern Bengal, and secondly, the Tariqa-i-Muhammadi Movement (around 1827) which was initiated by Syed Ahmad Shahid and popularized in West Bengal by Mir Nisar Ali, known as Titu Mir. Both of these movements were aimed at rousing the rural Bengali peasants against the suppressions and oppressions they were subjected to. It is almost unbelievable today to think that the followers of Titu Mir, who were all required to grow beards, as a mark of their religious solidarity, were forced by the British rulers to pay tax on their beards. This beard tax was at the rate of two and a half rupees per head at a time when rice was selling at twenty-four maunds a rupee, i.e., when one

[157] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

rupee could buy about 200 lbs. of rice.[158] This gives an idea of the extent of oppression and humiliation that the Muslims peasants were subjected to. Naturally, both Titu Mir and Dudhu Mia (the son and successor of Haji Shariat Ullah) came in direct confrontation with the exploiters– the Hindu zamindars and the European planters, who were startled by the uprise of peasantry, and joining hands with the British Government, they did their best to crush these mass movements. Both the leaders, along with many followers, were killed in the struggle, but the accumulated discontent of the exploited peasantry continued to gather momentum, i.e. the masses started to become all the more aware of the need for socio-religious reform and the urgent need for the revival of Islam. The polarization of the Hindu and Muslim communities in Bengal during the British period became a serious problem.

While these movements for Islamic revivalism were going on in Bengal, they formed a part of the overall struggle that was going through the whole of India at the time– a struggle for independence on the part of the Muslims as well as by certain factions of Hindus. It took the shape of the first War of Independence in 1857– called by the British the "Delhi Mutiny". The facts are that war broke out in all the major cities of India, first among the soldiers and then among the populace; but the unorganized Indian soldiers and the common people stood no chance and the effort was lost. The Muslims, who were leaders of this uprising, paid especially dearly in the post-1857 years. Sir Alfred Lyall, a prominent English officer at the time (1884), described the situation in the following words:

> The consequence was, as all who were in Northern India in 1857 can recall, that the English turned fiercely on the Mohammedans as upon their real enemies and most dangerous rivals, so that the failure of the revolt was much more disastrous to them than to the Hindus.[159]

It was a tragic and ruinous defeat. For full fifty years after that and more, the Muslims were stunned by the blow. However, one positive development

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[158] Muinuddin Ahmad Kahm, 'Muslim Struggle for Freedom in Bengal (AD 1757-1947)', *East Pakistan, A Profile*, ed. S.S. Husain (Dacca: Orient Longmans, 1962), p. 66.

[159] Alfred Lyall, *Asiatic Studies, Religious and Social*, pp. 239-40, quoted in Muinuddin Ahmad Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

did emerge in that the two Indian communities were to an extent brought closer together through their common quest for release from foreign bondage. Another relatively positive result of the disaster was that the Muslims were awakened to the unequivocal fact that only religious revivalist movements were not enough. They had to begin to seek for other foundations for their survival and their ultimate comeback to the mainstream of life. A small but growing number of enlightened Muslims came to realize that in order to make a comeback, the younger generation of Muslims must be given proper modern education, and that meant not only revised and upgraded education in Arabic and Persian, but also in the English language, which could constitute the essential foundation for progress in contemporary society.

The two names in Muslim India that are most well-known in this connection are those of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of the United Provinces and Nawab Abdul Latif of Bengal. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the first among the Muslims to realize that they could never progress without Western education. He founded the first Anglo-Muhammedan college for the Muslims of India which became in time the famous Muslim University of Aligarh. Nawab Abdul Latif of Bengal, in his turn, established a Muslim Literary Society in Calcutta, which served as a foremost center for the regeneration of Muslims of Bengal.

Both these leaders, in their superior understanding and wisdom, had realized that the Muslims of India must try to take part in the government in a constitutional manner, and by working together with the Hindus, ultimately achieve independence and establish for themselves a parliamentary democracy in India. This realization led the Muslims to join hands with the Hindus on a national platform for the final goal of freedom from British rule.

However, for various reasons the Muslims' desire for cooperation met with indifference from the Hindus. In a country where the Muslims constituted only one-fourth of the total population, they were a minority community, and in the changed political circumstances, the Hindus could afford to neglect the Muslims– at least that was the reasoning on the part of the more assertive elements in Hindu India. Speaking about the sentiments of the Hindus at this time towards the Muslims, the eminent Hindu Bengali writer, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, writes in his *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian:*

> Of Islamic culture we know nothing, although it was the spiritual and intellectual heritage of nearly half the population of Bengal and we in East Bengal came into intimate and daily contact with Muslims. I do not know of one great Bengali writer, religious reformer or political leader… who had any first-hand knowledge of Islam as a whole or any of its aspects … We ignored the Muslims completely.[160]

Nirad C. Chaudhuri further discusses this problem and shows rare insight and impartiality when he analyzes the sentiments of the Hindus towards the Muslims:

> We presented four distinct aspects in our attitude towards them as it was shaped by tradition. In the first place, we felt a retrospective hostility towards the Muslims for their one-time domination of us, the Hindus; secondly, on the plane of thought we were utterly indifferent to the Muslims as an element in contemporary society; thirdly, we had friendliness for the Muslims of our own economic and social status with whom we came into personal contact; our fourth feeling was mixed concern and contempt for the Muslim peasant, whom we saw in the same light as we saw our low-caste Hindu tenants, or, in other words, as our livestock.[161]

In 1867, the Hindus demanded that the Urdu language, which was historically a common language of both Hindus and Muslims, should be Indianized or Hinduized. This they wanted to do by changing the name of the language from Urdu to Hindi and also by changing the script of the language. The script of Urdu is an adapted form of Persio-Arabic script. The extremist Hindu revivalists campaigned among the common Hindu populace to reject it as a symbol of Islamic rule in India. In course of time the name of the lingua franca was changed to Hindustani or Hindi, and the Devanagri script accepted for it by a section of the Hindus. Borrowing heavily from Sanskrit, discarding words of Perso-Arabic origin and trying to give the language a sudden change of the Urdu script to the Devanagari script created

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[160] Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, Berkeley, California, 1951/1968, quoted in Mohsin Ali, *The Bengali Muslim* (Karachi: Department of Films and Publications, Government of Pakistan, 1971), pp. 10-11.

[161] Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

for the less-educated Muslims a handicap even in their own language. In wider political terms, it became evident that the more militant elements among the Hindus argued quite frequently from open public forums that they were in a clear majority and did not need the help of the Muslims in their struggle for Indian independence. They could do it all on their own and establish a Hindu India for the revival of the ancient Hindu glory. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan could see this coming and in his lectures especially those that he gave at Lucknow and Meerut, entitled "The Present State of Indian Politics", he spoke about the objectives of the Indian National Congress as being untenable for a country which was inhabited by two 'nations':

> Now, if all the Englishmen were to leave India, who would be the rulers of this country? Is it possible that under the circumstances two *qawm*s, the Muslims and the Hindus, could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not. One of them surely would subjugate the other and thrust it down. To hope that both could remain equal is to desire the impossible and the inconceivable.[162]

At that moment in history perhaps it was not possible to think of a geographical division of the subcontinent. But in order to safeguard the interests of the Muslims, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan came forward with another solution. He made a call that modern education was the only remedy if the Muslims were at some stage to fight for their legitimate rights. They had to deserve them, and in the changed circumstances that was possible only through Westernized education. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's Muslim University at Aligarh was instituted as an initial pioneering effort.

In the meantime, Hunter's expose in 1981 of the plight of the Muslims and other similar humanitarian treatises had opened the eyes of at least some of the British officers, although this greater measure of awareness did not bring any immediate tangible change. In 1905, Bengal was partitioned into two provinces, for the ostensive purpose of facilitating administration. At that time, East Bengal was joined with Assam, it thereby becoming a distinct Muslim majority province. The headquarters of the new province were established at Dacca. This created high hopes among the Bengali Muslims,

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[162] Quoted in Muinuddin Ahmad Kahn, *op. cit.*, p. 225

who had been comparatively less educated than their Hindu neighbors of Bengal, since they no longer could be required to compete with them.

As was to be expected, this partition proved totally unacceptable to the Hindus. They perceived it as threatening in terms of its long-term consequences. An All-India movement for the annulment of the partition of Bengal was the result. The agitation throughout West Bengal, with support from Hindus all over India, was so strong that it brought home, as nothing had until then, a realization to the Muslims that they had to have their own distinct and separate political leadership if they were to have any better prospects for the future.

It was out of this background that Nawab Sir Salimullah of Dacca convened a meeting of the Muslim leaders at Ahsan Manzil, Dacca, in the December of 1906. It was at this meeting that the All-India Muslim League was founded. The Muslim League, which was to become, in time, the vanguard in winning freedom, was formed 'to protect and advance the political rights of the Muslims of the subcontinent and to represent their needs [sic] and aspirations to the Government."[163]

The Hindus eventually succeeded in pressuring the British Government into annulling the partition. In 1911, King George V, at the close of the Delhi Darbar, yielded to the Hindu pressure and setting aside the interests of the Muslims, proclaimed the annulment of the partition of Bengal. This was the final betrayal of the Bengali Muslims who were left to look for a different strategy for their survival. They began to regard both the British and the Hindus as opponents in their struggle for self-preservation, and saw that progress would be possible only if they could organize themselves well enough to demand their rights from a position of strength.

A Contemporary Comment:

What is the impact of Iqbal's thought on Muslim Bengal?

It was at this time, when the whole of India was afire with determination to acquire independence, and the Muslims were required to fight for their own rights, that the call of Iqbal roused their national consciousness. Suddenly his voice came, from the depth of his self, surging with power.

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[163] *Ibid*, p. 82.

Reading or hearing his poetry, even in translation, felt like being carried in a raging current of a stream that gathers force as it rushes you onward. The unhappy, despondent Muslims were startled at first, but only to be uplifted in hope and determination, and finally to become exuberant at the possibilities of new life that shone before their eyes with every call of the poet.

Iqbal's *Asrar-i-Khudi* ('The Secrets of the Self') came out in 1915, when the first World War was on. The powerful poetry of *Asrar-i-Khud I* inspired the Indians in general, and the Indian Muslims in particular, bringing home to them the wonderful realization that the individual had the potential to mould his own destiny, that the potential of an individual is immeasurable and that there is no limit beyond which a human being cannot rise. To quote from Nicholson's translation:

Tho' I am but a mote, the radiant sun is mine:

Within my bosom are a hundred dawns.

My dust is brighter than Jamshid's cup,

It knows things that are yet unborn in the world…

I am born in the world as a new sun,

I have not learned the ways and fashions of the sky:

Not yet have the stars fled before my splendor,…

I have no need of the ear of Today,

I am the voice of the poet of Tomorrow.[164]

It is no exaggeration to say that Iqbal's voice electrified the consciousness of the nation. The use of images of Muslim culture and tradition added a new dimension to the Bengali Muslim mind. It gave him a sense of historicity by which he became the spokesman for a great cultural tradition; the Muslim heroes of Islam's glorious past were thus made part of his inspiring and symbolic self. This feeling is nearly indescribable, but nevertheless it was real for his readers and admirers. The fact that Qazi Nazrul Islam, the beloved Bengali poet, was also writing his inspiring poems along the same lines for

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[164] Sir Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self (Asar-i-Khudi)*, tr. Reynold A. Nicholson (Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf, 1915-1944, pp. 23.

invigorating the unconquerable spirit of the Muslims further deepened the powerful role of Iqbal in the Bengali Muslim renaissance.

From then on, Iqbal kept on supplying the despondent, weary nation (as a result of nearly two hundred years of humiliation in bondage) with new energy and hope for the future with every new work. Each of his poems and essays was published and republished literally in thousands of papers and journals throughout India. His poems were recited by millions of people in public and in private. The public meetings were opened with Iqbal's songs and it was Iqbal's songs or poems that concluded meetings with a message of hope for the Muslims of the world. Thousands of speakers at political platforms, in religious celebrations, in events of recreation, in social and cultural programs, in short, in every aspect of life, went on relaying Iqbal's thought and giving the people his message of determined action capable of changing their destiny.

Iqbal was born in the Punjab and had perfect mastery of his first language, Punjabi; but he wrote his poetry in Urdu and Persian as he wanted to reach a larger audience. He knew Arabic quite well also. He also wrote in English, which was then (as it is now) the official language of the country. Iqbal had learned German very well when he was in Germany and had studied Goethe and other great German writers in the original.

In Urdu, Iqbal is regarded as undoubtedly the greatest poet of the century, an equal of Ghalib of the nineteenth century. For his philosophical writings he made use of Persian, which had been taught, learned and admired throughout India for centuries of Muslim rule. Bengali Muslims had continued their learning of Persian as a cultural heritage, and Urdu was respected and loved as the language of Muslims.[165] Thus Iqbal's original writings in Urdu, Persian and English were read and admired in Muslim Bengal. These works were received with great enthusiasm by the Bengalis and several of his works were translated into Bengali to bring them to a larger number of Bengali readers and listeners. It is certain that the translations must have taken off some of the beauty and power of this

[165] It must be noted that until the inception of Pakistan, Urdu was regarded by the Bengalis as a special language. It was only when they felt threatened with the loss of their own language that they realized that however much they respected and treasured Urdu, the official language of East Pakistan must be Bengali. (Authors)

poetry, but enough was retained to make the Bengalis give Iqbal a special place in their hearts, as a great poet, philosopher and thinker of the East.

Rabindranath Tagore, the greatest Bengali poet of all time, had very high regard for Iqbal's poetry. In a letter dated February 7, 1933, addressed to Mr. Abbas Ali Khan Lamha of Hyderabad, Deccan, from Shanti Niketan, Tagore expressed his great pleasure that his correspondent had found a special relationship between his poems and those of the great poet Iqbal. He expressed his sense of loss that because of his unfamiliarity with the languages in which Iqbal composed his poems, it was impossible for him to understand and appreciate the real excellence and depth of Iqbal's thought. But he said that he was sure that Iqbal's thought had the excellence of immortal literature. He also said that he was often hurt that a certain group of critics had spread misunderstandings by placing his work in opposition to Iqbal's. This viewpoint does great injustice to that universal dimension of the human heart and mind which links together all writers and artists of all countries and languages into one family. Tagore said that he believed that Iqbal and he were two friends dedicated to the cause of truth and beauty in literature and that they were one and together where the human mind offers its best gift to the Universal Man.[166]

We have cited this letter to show how Iqbal, of the Muslim community, and Tagore, of the Indian Hindu community - one ushering in a renaissance in the world of Islam, and the other extending the great Hindu tradition of philosophic and literary excellence - were in essence friends and colleagues in enriching human life. They were together dedicated to offering their best to universal humanity where all such efforts finally strengthen one another for the overall benefit of the human species. But the recipients of the great thoughts of Iqbal and Tagore, as outlined earlier, were in the midst of command turmoil and confrontation. That is what Tagore referred to in his letter, i.e. there were Hindus as well as Muslim communalists and extremists who distorted the messages of both Iqbal and Tagore. It is hard to imagine today that there were scholars and commentators engaged in expositions to prove Tagore superior to Iqbal or vice versa and thus either heaped

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[166] Rabindranath Tagore's letter to Abbas Ali Khan Lamha of Hyderabad, Deccan, dated February 3, 1933, Vishva Bharati, Shanti Niketan, Bengal, Urdu translation in Rahim Bakhsh Shah in (comp.), *Auraq-i-Gumgashta* (Lahore, Islamic Publications, 1975, pp. 440-41).

exaggerated praise or outright condemnation on one or the other. This was to be expected in the political conditions of the time and was merely a foreshadowing of the more serious confrontation that the two communities were headed towards.

There was a growing awareness, even among objective observers, that the Indian Muslims and the Indian Hindus could not coexist as one nation. Thus the Two-Nation Theory, presented by Iqbal in 1930 in his presidential address at the All-India Muslim League Session at Allahbad, was offered as a practical and far-reaching solution to the growing political division and unrest in the country. As A.T.M. Mustafa, an eminent lawyer and political leader of Dacca, who was Pakistan's Minister for Education at the time, observed in his presidential address at the Iqbal Day meeting in Lahore in 1964, from Iqbal's perspective that the overall goal of Islamic ideology was the highest possible fulfillment of human potential, and a nation-state is only a human organization necessary for facilitating the realization of human destiny. Iqbal's demand for a separate homeland for the Indian Muslims must be viewed as part of his aspiration that Muslims should freely shape their lives in accordance with the life-enhancing principles of Islamic culture and civilization.[167] His purpose was to enable the Muslims of the area to thereby become a more worthwhile community which in turn could contribute its share to the common good and overall development of humankind. Muslim renaissance in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent should, therefore, be viewed as a welcome movement in the world today. It must be understood in this context that Iqbal was not a separatist. He did not envisage the Hindu majority nation (India) and the Muslim majority nation (later to be named Pakistan) without minority communities within their borders or as theocratic states. The plan was to safeguard the political, economic, and cultural rights of his own people as well as of other communities in the Subcontinent.

In speaking about the impact of Iqbal on Bengali poetry, Syed Ali Ahsan, a leading Bengali poet and literary critics, and a former Minister for Education in the Government of Bangladesh, points out that Iqbal's influence on the Bengali poetic tradition was not in the form of poetry, but

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[167] A.T.M. Mustafa, 'Islam ka Falsafi Shair' (Urdu) ['The Philosopher Poet of Islam', in *Iqbal Payambar-i-Inqilab*, ed. Agha Shorish Kashmiri (Lahore: Ferozesons, 1964/1968) pp. 72-73.

in the form of poetic thought. His influence was on the mind of the people. It was not the poems as such, but the message they contained that captured the imagination of the Bengali people. "The initial popularity of Iqbal in Bengal," Syed Ali Ahsan observes, "was due to an apparent parallelism of his ideas with Nazrul Islam. Iqbal brought to the people of Bengal a sense of restlessness and questioning." Iqbal and Nazrul Islam's poetry essentially dealt with life-enchancing experiences. At the time when Nazrul Islam was inspiring the Bengali Muslims with his revolutionary ideas, put forth in powerful poetry, Ashraf Ali Khan had translated Iqbal's great poem *Shikwah* ("The Complaint") into Bengali. The call for revolt by Iqbal, for a renaissance of the Muslim people was to the Bengali public a resonant reinforcement of the revolutionary fervor of Nazrul Islam and it roused them and touched their hearts as nothing before in their entire history. Their own Bengali poet, Nazrul Islam, and their own distant Urdu and Persian poet, Iqbal, from Lahore, together became their inspiration and guidance.

Secondly, Ali Ahsan notes that it was the 'religiosity, piety and philosophic magnificence' of Iqbal that moved several Bengali writers to translate and interpret Iqbal, to introduce him to the Bengali people. The Bengali Muslims are generally God-fearing and devout people and Iqbal's exposition of Islam, his great faith in the Prophet and the future of Islam was able to rouse the religious fervor of the Bengali Muslims to the level of a climax.

But the most important reason for Iqbal's popularity in Bengal was political. "We gave him spiritual and political leadership," observes Ali Ahsan in the same article, "when he clearly stated that Indian Muslims were different from the Hindus ethnologically, culturally and above all from the point of view of aspirations."[168] It was Iqbal's vision that offered a solution to the political deadlock in India. In his presidential address to the All-India Muslim League in 1930, Iqbal's call for a separate homeland for the Muslims of India ultimately led to the Pakistan Movement, which culminated in the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

Syed Ali Ahsan's understanding of Iqbal is profound. He realizes that while in the nineteenth century Bengal, many poets and writers like Mir

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[168] Syed A. Ahsan, 'Influence of Iqbal on Modern Bengali Poetry' in *Essays on Bengali Literature*, Karachi: Department of Bengali, University of Karachi, 1960, p.43.

Musharraf Hussain, Muzammel Huq, Kaikobad, Ismail Hussain Shirazi, and others had used Islamic history as the background of their writings, it was left to Nazrul Islam in the twentieth century to demonstrate to the Bengali Muslims that Islam, Islamic history and Muslim heroes could be used not merely as a backdrop, but as a perennial reservoir from which all living values of the Muslim society should spring, and from which a better life could come into being. Iqbal was able to supply all that and also what was missing in Nazrul Islam. In Syed Ali Ahsan's words:

> In Nazrul Islam's poetry, there was something which appeared to be missing, and that was 'Towhid' and reflections of Islamic beauty and conviction. There is a vivid picture of agony born of misery and there are fiery notes of revolt, but for want of self-analysis there has not been determined an antidote for the sense of wretchedness and frustration. Iqbal has painted the picture of lethargy and disappointment of the Muslims in a very able manner, and for this state of downfall and stagnation, his feelings are very profound. The indication of the route that we find in *Jawab-i-Shikwah* gives the proof of his deep appreciation of eternal struggle of Islamic values. He has asked every Muslim to hold fast to the eternal truth of Islam and to the never-failing life-giving sayings of the Holy Qur'an. Thus he said in one place: 'In times of crises in their History, it is not Muslims that saved Islam, on the contrary, it is Islam that saved Muslims.'[169]

Iqbal's poetry has been widely translated in Bengal, especially since his death in 1938. It appears as if his *Shikwah* ('The Complaint') and *Jawab-i-Shikwah* ('The Reply to the Complaint') are the favorite ones among his Bengali readers. Of the half a dozen or so translations of *Shikwah* Ashraf Ali Khan's version has been appreciated most by Syed Ali Ahsan and others. Mizanur Rahman translated both *Shikwah* and *Jawab-i-Shikwah* in 1943. Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah translated them in 1954, Sultan Muhammad in 1959 and Kavi Ghulam Mustafa in 1960. Ghulam Mustata translated several other poems of Iqbal and can be said to have brought Iqbal closer to Bengali Muslims, especially during the East Pakistan period.

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[169] *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

Kabir Chowdhury, a distinguished Bengali literary critic, and a former Professor and Head of the Department of English, University of Dacca, shows a deep understanding of the poetry of Iqbal, whom he calls 'a poet of renaissance, a poet of re-awakening'. Chowdhury pays homage to Iqbal for revitalizing 'a decaying people with his inspiring messages conveyed through the medium of powerful poetry'.[170] He observes that while Iqbal should be celebrated for bringing a message of hope, courage and brighter future for the people of India, and the Indian Muslims in particular; he has a message for the whole of humanity. In his *Asrar-i-Khudi*, when Iqbal speaks of the self and expounds the doctrine of personality and the 'perfect man', his message that the potentiality of the human self is boundless, is certainly for the whole of humanity. Kabir Chowdhury brings out the difference between the philosophy of Iqbal and that of Nietzsche, in that, while for the German philosopher power is its own reward, for Iqbal it is only a means to do good for people:

> In Nietzsche's philosophy, there was no place for a higher moral order operating, there was no check by way of a noble, all-pervading influence exercised by comprehension of [the] religious and hence his philosophy of the superman could easily degenerate into a monstrous doctrine where power was not a means to something great but an end in itself. Iqbal's concept of the fully developed personality did not provide for the Neitzsehean [sic] superman but for what may be called the *Mard-i-Mu'min* (the true Muslim), the viceregent of God on earth, who always owes his allegiance to Allah but whose soul, through prayers and good deeds, has reached a stage where even apparently impossible achievements are possible of accomplishment.[171]

In Iqbal's philosophy, the religious is looked upon as a force that is all-pervading and ever-existent. Iqbal's unique human individual wants to be strong and powerful not with a desire to destroy the worlds, but to be able to do the most good by most effectively serving God through serving humankind. And this, in Iqbal's view, can be achieved only through *love*.

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[170] *Kabir Chowdhury*., p. 48.

Kabir Chowdhury [171], 'Iqbal and Appreciation', *Matters of Moment* (Dacca: The Bureau of National Reconstruction, 1962), p. 27.

Kabir Chowdhury also sees the difference between the great Persian philosopher Omar Khayyam and Iqbal. Both of them were dillusioned by the state of the existing social order in the world and both of them desired to have it reconstructed, but while Khayyam thinks of man as a plaything in the hand of Fate and proposes to conspire with Fate to bring about the desired change in the social order, for Iqbal it is man himself who can bring about such a change by changing himself. Man, for him, is the master of his own destiny, and the creator of his own fate.

Begum Sufia Kamal, the most distinguished female poet of Muslim Bengal, has expressed her admiration and love for Iqbal in a beautiful and inspiring poem on Iqbal in which she calls him *Kavi mrittunjoy* ('the poet who has conquered death'). She calls Iqbal 'the good fortune of the nation'– a word play on his name *Iqbal* which means good fortune and excellence.

You are the good fortune of your nation, poet Iqbal

You name it yourself with your Name,

Leader unafraid,

You sang the noble song of independence

While Time looked on.

You asked God

Why is Muslim so degraded today?

Where did he fault?

You received the answer in your soul

And accepted the challenge.

The nation was asleep, bewildered,

You had the power to wake it up with your song.

You pledged your life to a struggle, unending.

You had the dream of Truth…

You dreamed of a free land for your people

Your message was for everyone:

He who has faith in his self and

He who serves in selflessness

For him is fulfillment…[172]

This poem was written by Begum Sufia Kama in the sixties, when Bangladesh was East Pakistan. During the East Pakistan period the 21st of April was celebrated all over the country as the Iqbal Day. Bengalis looked upon Iqbal as the herald of a new dawn and the occasion marked the expression of this sentiment. For instance, Justice Moudud of the East Pakistan High Court in his inaugural speech at the Iqbal day symposium organized by the Nazrul Academy, Dacca, in April 1971 called him 'A Luther in the world of Islam'. He expressed his admiration for Iqbal as one who had raised his voice in protest against the inequities and injustices of a capitalistic society, and said that in his view, Iqbal was an ardent pilgrim in search of a faith based on reason, who had tried with rare success to reinterpret essential aspects of Islamic thought as a historic phase of world thought. For this, Iqbal is part of the Muslim Bengali struggle toward a better future. Iqbal is the visionary whose dream of independence for Muslim India came true in 1947.

We were in Bangladesh some time ago and as part of our research for writing this paper we talked to some opinion leaders and found that the Bengali people are as religious, as devout, and as God-fearing as ever. In fact, they say that Iqbal is now not only the Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan, but the great Muslim poet who belongs to Bangladesh in a very special way. After the partition of India, when a group of people started saying that Rabindranath Tagore belonged only to India as he was a Hindu, the Muslim Bengal protested and did not give up Tagore as an Indian. They claimed Tagore as their own poet, as one who had sung for them in their own language, about their own joys and sorrows, beauty and power. Now they are not about to give up Iqbal to the Pakistanis. Iqbal still is their poet, their own Muslim poet, who wrote for them as well as for the whole world. Thus Iqbal and Tagore in this century are the best of the heritage of the Bengali people. Iqbal is forever for Muslim Bengal.

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[172] Begum Sufia Kamal, 'Kobi Mrittunjoy', *Prososti-o-Prarthona* (Dacca: Shahadat Hussain, Mirpur Bazar, 1968), p. 55

We agree with Syed Ali Ahsan when he says that it is difficult to 'achieve an intimacy with the experiencing self of Iqbal', but that this will change and 'a time will come when there will be, not a mere comprehension, but a full realization of Iqbal's experience.'[173] We will add to this that we hope that Iqbal's thought will increasingly influence the shape of things to come across the world. He has a great deal to offer to the emerging world order.

[173] Syed Ali Ahsan, *op. cit.*, p. 50.