ALLAMA IQBAL AND THE AFGHANS

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Abstract

Allama Iqbal (1877-1938) had a tremendous love for Afghans. Afghans or Pakhtuns are exceedingly gratified about their national and racial traits. They love their homeland, religious and customary canons, ancestral values and independence. Opinions vary on their strict adherence to these individualisms. Some people are of the view that it is the result of consistent foreign invasions. On the other hand, some analysts opine that since they remained independent for ages, barring some occasional invasions by world forces, therefore they held these traits close to their hearts. Iqbal was certainly impressed by these peculiarities of Afghans, so he not only showered praises on that resilient race but also took some practical steps including paying visit to Afghanistan in 1933. He contributed both intellectually and financially to the independence and welfare of Afghans. He attached great hopes with the Afghans and considered peaceful Afghanistan a prerequisite for the tranquility of the entire Asia. At the same time he warned that if there is any turmoil in Afghanistan, it can engulf the whole continent. Iqbal fell in love with Afghans at a time when almost all the Muslim world was under the control of colonial powers, and Afghanistan stood up as independent Muslim state against them. Moreover, the bravery and attachment to Islamic values of Afghans fascinated him a lot. It is worth mentioning that the love of Iqbal was not only confined to Afghanistan. He had equal affection for the tribes of NWFP. He paid a visit to Peshawar once (1933) and thrice to Dera Ismael Khan (1899, 1901 and 1903). In Peshawar, his stay was short but in Dera Ismail Khan, he stayed for a couple of months. During all three visits to D.I.Khan, he stayed with Sardar Ahmad Khan Leghari, father of Sardar Abdur Rashid, the former Chief Minister of NWFP.¹ In this paper, an attempt has been made to give an analysis of Allama Iabal's incredible love and affection for Afghans.

Key words

Allama Iqbal, Afghanistan, Asia, Amanullah Khan, Nadir Khan, Afghans.

Introduction

Allama Sir Muhammad Iqbal was born to Sheikh Noor Muhammad on 9th November 1877 in Sialkot. After receiving his

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education up to intermediate level at his native city, he was shifted to Lahore in 1895. He obtained bachelor and master degrees in philosophy from illustrious Government College Lahore in 1899. After that, he taught Persian at Oriental College Punjab University and afterwards in Government College. In 1905, he proceeded to England where he studied at Trinity College Cambridge and was called to London Bar. In 1907, he proceeded to Germany and got PhD degree from the University of Munich in 1908. On return to Lahore during the same year, he started teaching and legal practice. During that time he composed many poems and published books, to be mentioned later. In 1922, the British government bestowed upon him the title of "Sir".²

Besides teaching, legal practice and composing poetry, Iqbal started taking part in philanthropic and political activities. He joined the educational welfare organization Anjuman Himayat-e-Islam in 1919 and became its general secretary. In 1926, he was elected as member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. He defeated his rival Khan Bahadur Malik Din Muhammad with a big margin.³ Besides playing active role in the assembly, Iqbal became ideological guide of the All India Muslim League. His phenomenal address of Allahabad in 1930 is considered to be the charter of the Pakistan Movement. It was Iqbal who convinced Muhammad Ali Jinnah to terminate his exile in England. His letters written to Jinnah in 1936 and before, are witness to that persuasion.⁴ The great Allama breathed his last on 21st April 1938 in Lahore and was buried at the stairs of Badshahi Mosque Lahore. Ideal wrote two books in prose and 11 in poetry. Of the 11 poetry compilations, 7 are in Persian and 4 are in Urdu.⁵ The following table shows the detail:

S.No	Title of the book	Prose/poetry	Language
1	The Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts	Prose	English
	in Islam		
2	The Development of Metaphysics in	Prose	English
	Persia		
3	Bang-i-Dara	Poetry	Urdu
4	Bal-i-Jebreel	Poetry	Urdu
5	Zarb-i-Kaleem	Poetry	Urdu
6	Armaghan-i-Hijaz	Poetry	Urdu
7	Isra-i-Khudi	Poetry	Persian
8	Ramuz-i-Bekhudi	Poetry	Persian
9	Payam-i-Mashriq	Poetry	Persian
10	Zabur-i-Ajam	Poetry	Persian
11	Javed Nama	Poetry	Persian
12	Pa che Bayed Kard	Poetry	Persian
13	Armaghan-i-Hijaz	Poetry	Persian
Source:	International Igbal Society. Lif of Al	lama Iabal, ava	ilable at

Source: International Iqbal Society, *Lif of Allama Iqbal*, available at <u>http://www.iqbal.com.pk/iqbal/life</u>. Accessed on 15th February 2019

Through these books, Allama Iqbal demonstrated himself as statesman who was well versed in philosophical sophistications of politics and poetry. He is acclaimed as poet philosopher not only in the Subcontinent but also in other parts of the world. He is especially recognized and venerated in Iran, Afghanistan, Germany and Central Asia. In the case of Pakistan movement, his poetry, lectures and concrete input galvanized the struggle.

Iqbal's view of Afghanistan and its notable figures

Afghanistan has common borders with China, Iran, Pakistan and three Central Asian States Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. It is simultaneously located in Central and South Asia. Its history and geostrategic location has made it as the most sought after destination for invaders. In most parts of the $19^{\rm th}$ and $20^{\rm th}$ Centuries, Afghanistan remained a playground for the Czarist Russia and Great Briton.⁶

In the 20th Century, Afghanistan proved to be a graveyard of superpowers. In 1919, Great Briton received humiliating defeat there, while in 1988 Soviet Russia had to end its invasion inconclusively. On the defeat of Soviet Union, Mr. Iltaf Hasan Qureshi wrote in his *Urdu Digest* that it was a miracle of the 20th Century. The defeat was inflicted on a mighty Communist army by the poor Afghans.⁷ So the romance of Iqbal with that fearless nation was not out of place. History bears testimony to the fact that the happenings in Afghanistan has always affected outside world. It was in that context that Iqbal dedicated his Persian couplets to Afghanistan as:

Translation:

The continent of Asia is like a body made of clay and water and Afghanistan lies like a heart in that body. In case there is peace in Afghanistan, there will be tranquility in the whole of Asia. But if there is chaos in Afghanistan, there will be disorder in the entire Asia.⁸

What prophetic verses these were! The subsequent decades proved beyond any iota of doubt that Afghanistan always affected regional as well as international peace. The hitting of twin towers in World Trade Centre New York on 11th September 2001 and subsequent War on Terror in the leadership of USA brought the world to the brink of an international conflict. That war continued for more than 16 years, making it, perhaps one of the lengthiest campaigns in the history of warfare.

The Allama was a well-wisher of Afghans. In one of his Persian poems titled "*Khitab ba Aqam-i-Sarhad*" he advises the people of the frontier as:

Translation:

O (Afghan!) You have concealed yourself in your own self, you should uncover yourself because concealment is forbidden in Islam. You must know as to what is the secret of Prophet's religion, in this religion seeing one self is being royal. What is Din (religion)? Ask this question from your secret being, life is like death if you don't behold yourself. A Muslim who sees himself, distinguishes himself from the whole world. He comprehends the very nature of the universe, He is like a sword which screams "Nothing exists but Allah". So long as his heart is a secret out of the secrets of God, alas if he sees not his own self. A true person is heir to Prophets, he is not one of the objects of this world. In order to create a new world, a true person shatters the old one. A living person is free from fealty to others than God, there is always a lamp inside him, lit by the ego.⁹

Before analyzing Iqbal's relation with Afghan king Amanullah Khan, it is appropriate to give his brief biographical sketch. Amanullah Khan was the son of Amir Habibullah Khan. He was born in Paghman in 1892. He replaced his father after assassination of the latter in 1919. He was dethroned by Habibullah Bacha Saqao (son of a water career) in 1929. He fled to Italy and finally breathed his last in Switzerland on 26th April 1960.¹⁰

Allama Iqbal generally held kings and conquerors coming from Afghanistan with high esteem. They included Zaheer Uddin Babur, Sultan Mohammad Ghori, Nadir Shah, Alauddin Khilji, Sher Shah Suri, Mahmud Ghaznavi and Ahmad Shah Abdali. As for as Afghan intellectuals were concerned, he mentioned Jalauddin Balkhi Rumi, Syed Jamaluddin Afghani, Hakim Sinai Ghaznavi, Khushal Khan Khatak, Data Ganj Bakhsh, Fakhruddin Razi and Nuruddin Jami in his poetry.¹¹ However he liked the personality and struggle of Amanullah Khan immensely. According to Shehzad Shamim, when Allama Iqbal composed his book on poetry titled, Payam-e-Mashriq, Amanullah Khan was the king Afghanistan. The Allama was extremely impressed with the bravery and resilience of Amanullah Khan which the latter demonstrated against the British, in order to maintain independence of Afghanistan. That was the reason that Allama dedicated the Pavam-e-*Mashriq* to him.¹² The dedication of the book is in the form of lengthy poem titled "Peshkash" comprising of 81 couplets. Few couplet are:

ملت صد پاره داشیر ازه بند بدید از شاہنشان داری بسے لعل ویا قوتِ گراں داری بسے اے امیر! ابن امیر! ابن امیر ہدیداز بے نواے ہم پذیر ¹³

Translation:`

O successful head of a glorious monarchy, although you are young but sagacious. You are an inspired implementer of the art of kingship, and your heart is full of wisdom. Your will power is stronger than mountains, and you can face hurdles. Your organizing power has brought together the warring tribes. Kings have always presented you with precious gifts like silver and gold, however, O king! Son and grandson of kings! Accept from me this modest gift.¹⁴

Amanullah Khan's successor, Nadir Khan was so close to Allama Iqbal. The general was born in Dehra Dun, Northern India on 9th April 1883 to Sardar Muhammad Yousaf Khan of Muhammadzai tribe.¹⁵ He was a general in the army of King Amanullah Khan. With the defeat of Amanullah Khan by Habibullah alias "Bacha Saqao", he came to India. With support from tribals and his faithful soldiers, he stormed at Kabul in October 1929. By dethroning Bacha Saqao, he ascended to the throne of Kabul on 16th October¹⁶. It may be noted that Habibullah Bacha Saqao was a 38-year outlaw from Kalakan area and was the son of a water carrier.

Allama Iqbal had warm relations with Nader Shah. Both of them met each other in India as well as Afghanistan. In his Urdu poetry book *Bal-i-Jebreel*, Iqbal has praised Nadir Shah in the following manner:

سر شک دیده نادر به داغ لاله فشاں چناں که آتش اوراد گرفرونه نشاں

Translation:

Laden with pearls departed from the presence-hall of God That cloud that makes the pulse of life stir in the rose-bud's vein And on its way saw Paradise, and trembled with desire That on such exquisite abode it might descend in rain. A voice sounded from Paradise: 'They wait for you afar, Kabul and Ghazni and Herat, and their new-springing grass; Scatter the tear from Nadir's eye on the poppy's burning scar, That never more may be put out the poppy's glowing fire!¹⁷

Although Ahmad Shah Abdali lived long before Allama Iqbal's era, but he showed reverence for that great warrior and king. Ahmad Khan or Ahmad Shah Abdali was born in 1722 in Multan. His father, Zaman Khan Abdali, was the Governor of Herat when he was few months old. He belonged to Sadozai section of Abdali tribe. When came into power in 1747, he assumed the title of Durrani. He is considered to be father of the modern Afghanistan ¹⁸His empire spread from Afghanistan to Punjab and Kashmir. He stormed at India in 1761 and defeated Marhatta in the battle of Panipat¹⁹

During his visit to Qandahar, the Allama offered fateha at the tomb of Ahmad Shah Abdali and composed a poem. Few verses of that poem are reproduced below:

Translation:

(I am) at the grave of the enlightened king, because of him, (Afghan) nation arose. Like the victor of Constantinople, he struck the coin in the sphere of poetry, may angels shower blessings on his grave.

With his splendid heart and pear-scattering hand, he acquired an empire and then gave it away without taking any thought.

Khushal Khan Khatak (1613-1679) was another high profile Pashtun for whom Allama Iqbal had a great regard. Iqbal termed poetry of that illustrious Pashtun poet as "marshal poetry." In a letter to his Jalendhar-based Pashtun friend Niaz Ahmad Khan, the Allama appreciated the taste of literature in the latter's family. He said that had he understood Pashto, he would certainly have translated the marshal poetry of the North-Western province into Urdu and Persian. ²¹ While in Europe, Allama Iqbal studied the English translations of Khushal Khan's poetry especially the one compiled by Carde with the title of "The Poems of Khushal"²² In 1928, the Allama wrote a note on 18 poems of Khushal Khan in the "Islamic Culture" magazine published from Hyderabad. Commenting on Khushal Khan's poetry, the Allama wrote:

"Throughout his poetry, the major portion of which was written in India, and during his struggles with the Mughuls, breathes the spirit of early Arabian poetry. We find in it the same simplicity and directness of expression, the same love of freedom and war, the same criticism of life,"²³

In his Urdu poetry book *Bal-i-Jebreel*, Iqbal has given the following will of Khushal Khan

In the above will, Khushal Khan Khatak advises the various Afghan tribes to amalgamate in one unit of the millat, only in that case,

the name of Afghan nation will shine. He loves those youth who fly high so much so to grab stars in the skies. At the end of will, he says that he likes a grave where winds cannot bring dust of feet of Mughul soldiers. In other words, Khushal wanted his final abode in an area fully independent.

Allama Iqbal has composed another poem in with the title of Mehrab Gul Afghan. In fact it was an imaginary character, however, most of the experts on Iqbal opine that the character was attributed to Khushal Khan Khatak.

> ر ومی بدلے، شامی بدلے، بدلا ہند وستان تو بھی اے فرزند کہ ستاں! اپنی خودی پہچان این خودی پیچان اوغا**ف**ل افغان موسما جها، یانی وافر ، مٹی بھی زرخیز جس نے اینا کھیت نہ سینجا، وہ کیساد ہقان این خودی پیچان اوغافل افغان اونچی جس کی لہر نہیں ہے، وہ کیسادریا جس کی ہوائیں تند نہیں ہیں، وہ کساطوفان این خود ی پیچان اوغافل افغان ڈھونڈ کے اپنی خاک میں جس نے پایا پناآ پ اس بندے کی دہقانی پر سلطانی قربان این خود ی پیچان اوغا**ف**ل افغان تیری بے علمی نے رکھ لی بے علموں کی لاج عالم فاضل بيچر ہے ہيں اپنادين ايمان این خودی پیچان إ دوغافل افغان

Translation:

The Rumi changed. The Shami changed, India also changed. You, too, O the son of mountains, Know thyself! Know thyself! O ignorant Afghan! Good climate, abundant water, fertile soil, What farmer is he, who does not irrigate his field! Know thyself! O ignorant Afghan! What a river, waves of which don't rise high! What of a cyclone, winds of which don't flow fast! Know thyself! O ignorant Afghan! Your ignorance has honored the ignorant, The learned one sells his religion and faith, Know thyself! O ignorant Afghan!²⁵

Allama Iqbal's veneration for Khushal Khan Khatak belies the groundless propaganda of some elements who give the wrong impression as if Allama Iqbal copied the theme or poetry of the great Pashtun poet. In reality, both of them were genius poets and statesmen but being predecessor of Iqbal, Khushal Khan Khatak certainly influenced the Allama. The Allama did not hide the love and reverence he had for Khushal Khan Khatak.

Iqbal's visit to Afghanistan

Allama Iqbal visited Afghanistan in in response to an invitation by Afghan king Nadir Khan. During his journey, Sir, Ras Masud, the Vice Chancellor of Ali Garh Muslim University and Sved Suleman Nadwi the chief of Nadwatul Ulama, Allama's secretary Barrister Ghulam Rasool and servant Ali Bakhsh also accompanied him.²⁶. Khalid Khan wrote that this visit was aimed at ascertaining the views of Allama Iqbal about establishment a University in Kabul and other aspects of higher education. It is believed that Allama and his companions sketched out a plan for improvement of the newly established University in Kabul a couple of years ago in 1931.²⁷ Eminent scholar Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Awan disclosed during his speech at Cultural Centre of Iran at Peshawar, that in the beginning of their 14day tour to Afghanistan, the three stalwarts stayed at Dean's Hotel Peshawar.²⁸ Following is detail of the journey and various engagements:

S.No	Date	Engagement
1	20 th October 1933	Arrival at Peshawar, stayed at Dean's Hotel
2	21 st October 1933	Arrival at Jalalabad from Peshawar and stay
3	22 nd October 1933	Departure for Kabul
4	23 rd October 1933	Arrival at Afghan capital Kabul. Arrangements for their stay were made at the State Guest House, Darul Aman.
5	26 Th October 1933	Meeting with Afghan king Nadir Shah
6	27 Th October 1933	Jumma prayers at Pul-i-Khishti mosque. Held

		meeting with Afghan religious leader Mullah Shor	
		Bazar	
7	28 Th October 1933	Sightseeing in Kabul. Attended two functions in	
		Kabul. The one, organized by the Literary Society	
		Kabul. The other was a dinner hosted by the	
		Defense Minister	
8	29 Th October 1933	Visit to Bagh-i-Babur. Sardar Faiz Muhammad	
		Foreign Minister held a meeting with the visiting	
		delegation. Farewell meeting with King Nadir	
		Shah.	
9	30 Th October 1933	Departure for Ghazni. Besides other activities,	
		offered fateha at the tomb of Senai	
10	31 st October 1933	Departure from Ghazni to Qlat Ghilzai	
		-	
11	1 st November 1933	Arrival at Qandahar	
12	2 nd November 1933	Arrival at Chaman, Balochistan. Journey to Quetta	
		and night stay	
13	3 rd November 1933	Boarding on train to Multan and Lahore.	

Source: Muhammad Ikram Chughtai, *Iqba, Afghan and Afghanistan*, Sang-e-Meel Publication, Lahore, 2004, P.423

On 26th October, when Allama Iqbal met king Nadir Shah, the latter presented him a copy of the Holy Quran. Iqbal was overwhelmed by joy and said:

"In the eyes of the Muslims, there is no other thing more valuable than this. In this Holy Book, the Almighty God has indicated the way of leading successful life. This Book embodies a programme for the perfection of life in all spheres. By acting on teachings of this Book, Hazrat Ali acquired the strength, as a result of which he conquered the impregnable fort of Khyber"²⁹

Allama Iqbal was a peripatetic person. He visited many countries. However, visiting Afghanistan was a dream for him. The reason was obvious. Afghanistan was the only country which was offering resistance to a colonial power. Moreover, the customs, tradition and poetry enthralled him a lot. So he waited for some years to receive an invitation form King Nadir Shah. Since situation in Afghanistan was not stable, therefore it took a couple of years for the Afghan king to extend that invitation. The visit was extensive and eventful. The government and people of Afghanistan exhibited unparalleled hospitality and listened to Iqbal's advises regarding higher education and literary pursuits. The visit helped in adding some noteworthy poems to his poetry especially *Mathnawi Musafar*.

Reciprocal Love for Iqbal

In response to Allama Iqbal's love for Afghans, Pakhtuns on both sides of the border demonstrated unrestrained love for him. Afghan kings Nadir Shah and Zahir Shah had personal relations with him. In 1967, Iqbal Council Karachi held a seminar on the Allama. The King of Afghanistan Zahir Shah sent the following message:

"Iqbal, during his life carried a struggle for the awakening of the nation of the East and the Muslims. The Muslims of the world consider him as one of the wise leaders of Islam and a man of graceful personality. Allama Iqbal loved Afghanistan and its people and as he will eternally live in memory and hearts of the people of this country. They consider themselves as participants in the meeting commemorating the memory of Allama Iqbal and pray for his soul"³⁰

Afghan writers Salahuddin Saljuqi, Sarwar Khan Goya, Shehzad Ahmad Ali Khan Durrani, Qimuddin Khadim, Ghulam Hasan Mujadidi, Muhammad Sikandar Khan, Gul Badsha Ulfat, Betaab, Abdullah Bakhtani, Muhammad Ibrahim Khalil, Faiz Muhammad Zakria, Abdur Razaq Farahi, Habibullah Olasyar, Abdur Rauf Benawa, Khalilullah Khalili, Sultan Muhammad Sabir, Muhammad Din Zwak, Abdul Hadi Dawi, Abdussalam Azimi, Sayed Qasim Reshtia, Dr. Sayed Makdoom Rahim, Abdul Haye Habibi, Dr. Rawan Farhadi, Habibullah Rafi, Zalmay Hewadmal, Sayed Bahawuddin Majrooh, Shuhrat Nangyal and many others compiled books and research papers on Allama Iqbal while few of them paid poetic tributes to him.³¹

His books were translated in Pashto. The following table shows his books translated in Pashto by scholars whose names are given:

S. No	Book Title	Translator
1	Israr-i-Khudi	Samndar Khan Samandar
2	Zabur-i-Ajam	Taqweemul Haq Kaka Khel
3	Bang-i-Dara	Rahat Zakeli
4	Zarb-i-Kaleem	Taqweemul Haq Kaka Khel
5	Payam-i-Mashriq	Sher Muhammad Khan
		Mainosh
6	Bal-i-Jebreel	Qazi Abdul Haleem Asar
7	Javed Nama	Hamza Shinwai
8	Pas Che Bayed Kard	Abdullah Jan Aseer
9	The Reconstruction of	Syedul Abrar
	Religious Thoughts in Islam	
10	All Persian books of Allama	Mulana Said Nawaz
	Iqbal	

Source: Ikramullah Shahid, *Iqbal Aur Afghanistan*, M.Phil thesis submitted to Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, 1998, pp. 114-130

Besides the above translations of Allama Iqbal's works, numerous books, monographs, research articles and columns have been written about him, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In the Pashtun area, Iqbal is deemed to be synonymous with intellectual excellence and farsightedness.

Conclusion

Allama Iqbal and Afghans, is a thematic area which has attracted many writers. So far, several books, research papers and other write-ups have been produced on the subject. These write-ups contain different material and style. Nevertheless, all the writers agree on the cause of attraction of Allama Iqbal to Afghans and their homeland. The cause was that Afghans were remarkably gratified about their national and racial traits. They loved their homeland, religious and customary canons, ancestral values and independence. Iqbal was certainly impressed by those peculiarities of Afghans, so he not only showered praises on that buoyant race but also took some practical steps including paying visit Afghanistan in 1933.

As mentioned, Allama's love for Afghans was not only restrained to rhetoric but he generously donated funds to Afghan rulers during 1919 and later, in their struggle for protecting their independence. Of all the personalities of Afghanistan, he had an extraordinary friendship with King Nadir Shah. Both of them frequently met during Nadir Shah's exile to India. So it was Nadir Shah who invited Allama Iqbal to visit Afghanistan in 1933. His visit benefitted both the sides like Iqbal availed the opportunity to visit his favorite country, and Afghanistan learned a lot from him.

The love of Allama Iqbal was reciprocated by Pashtuns living in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Dozens of Afghan writers wrote on him while Pashtuns on the Pakistan side of the boarder, translated all his books into Pashto. These translations helped the Pashtuns to have a firsthand information and knowledge about Allama Iqbal.

Perhaps little has been written about Allam Iqbal's three visits he paid to Dera Ismail Khan, the southern city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 1899, 1901 and 1903 respectively. During all three visits, he stayed with Sardar Ahmad Khan Leghari, father of Sardar Abdur Rashid, the former Chief Minister of NWFP. An investigation and then compilation of a comprehensive monograph based on it, is need of the hour. It could be a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge on Allama Iqbal.

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²⁵ Muhammad Iqbal Zarb-i-Kaleem