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IQBAL AND RUMI: A SPIRITUAL AND LITERARY BRIDGE BETWEEN TAJIK-PERSIAN AND SOUTH ASIAN CIVILIZATIONS

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Abstract

This article explores the intellectual, spiritual, and literary connections between Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) and Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–1273), emphasizing Iqbal's deep engagement with Persian/Tajik/Dari literature and Sufi thought. Drawing upon his studies in Europe and his mastery of Persian, Iqbal was profoundly influenced by Rumi's philosophy, particularly the concept of khudi (selfhood) and selflessness, which became central to his own poetic and philosophical vision. The paper highlights the role of Tajik and international scholars—such as Habibullah Rajabov and Annemarie Schimmel—in interpreting and disseminating Iqbal's works, as well as the enduring significance of Iqbal in Tajikistan's literary culture. Through

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seminars, translations, and academic research, Iqbal's legacy continues to serve as a bridge of cultural diplomacy between Tajikistan and Pakistan, reflecting the shared heritage of Eastern and Western intellectual traditions. The article underscores the timeless value of Rumi and Iqbal's contributions to humanity, their call for self-knowledge, and their vision of love as the foundation of human refinement and unity.

Keywords:

Muhammad Iqbal, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Persian literature, Khudi (selfhood), Sufi philosophy, Tajik-Pakistan, cultural relations, Annemarie Schimmel, Payam-i Mashriq, Cultural diplomacy, Eastern and Western thought

We need to look at the world through the eyes of wisdom in order to better understand its truth and grace. Thus, the great scholar and thinker of the century Muhammad Iqbal, during his studies in England and Germany, drank from the pure source of the Persian/Tajik/Dari language and became aware of the realities of human life, which enabled him to freely and peacefully convey his thoughts to his audience.

Iqbaliyat and Urdu/Hindi scholar of Tajikistan, Professor Habibullah Rajabov, described Iqbal Lahori's visionary spirit in one of his poems as follows:

Рӯҳи Иқбол дод бар мо болро,
Рост бинмуд чун алиф ин долро.
Бишнава эй зодаи асри навин,
Дардҳои синани Иқболро.

The spirit of Iqbal provided us flying wings,
Making us to be straight as Alif in place of Dol.
Listen, O child of the new age!
To the inner pains and feelings of Iqbal.¹

It was this eloquent and pleasant language that enabled him to find and fall in love with his beloved and friend of literature, love, and enlightenment, as well as his noble teacher and guide. He proudly remembers Mavlono and states his admiration:

Нуктаҳо аз Пирӣ Рум омӯхтам,
Хешро дар роҳи ӯ восӯхтам.
(I learned the points from the Pir-e Rum,
And burned myself on his way.)²

Thus, through this sweet and poetic language, he learned about the realities of the Western world and the realities of life there.

The guidance and instructions of Mavlono Rumi influenced the heart and mind of Muhammad Iqbal and led him to the search for truth. He accepted Mawlana Rumi as a wise guide and declared himself his disciple. Thus began the story of the pir-o-murid (master-disciple) relationship between Rumi and Iqbal, and his famous works were published under the titles *Asrār-i Khudī* (Secrets of the Self) and *Rumūz-i Bēkhudī* (Mysteries of Selflessness). Iqbal always calls for a

person to first seek to know his nafs (self) and correct its shortcomings and weaknesses. Self-knowledge occupies a prominent place in the teachings of the thinker, and he expresses this meaning with the term "khudi" (self).

With such creativity, he addresses humanity that self-knowledge is a key element of society, and its correct understanding is the basis for the prosperity of every nation and people, according to his spiritual master Mawlana Rumi:

Чаҳа кун дар бехудӣ худро биёб,
Зудтар, валлоҳу аълам биссаваб.
(Strive to find yourself in selflessness,
Quickly, by God's will you'll succeed.)³

Muhammad Iqbal later expressed his views on the realities of Western life in *Payam-i Mashriq* (The Message of the East) in response to the German poet and philosopher Goethe. Iqbal emphasizes that the German philosopher was also a lover of Tajik-Persian literature and language, and expressed his thoughts in light of it, becoming fond of its styles. Thus, in response, Muhammad Iqbal presents to the West the reality of Eastern civilization and literature in his own words.

It should be noted that in fact, Muhammad Iqbal, in the light of his master (ustad) Mavloni, perfected his ideas and informed the West about its truth. In fact, the Masnavi of Mavloni is an enlightening charter for mankind, the essence of which still remains in the hearts of people.

Writer Khoja Irfoni in his book Sayings of Rumi and Iqbal mentions that E. G. Browne,⁴ a Western professor and one of the first commentators on the Tajik-Persian language and literature, considers Mawlana to be one of the greatest Sufi poets and his book Masnavi one of the best poetic achievements of all time.

Thus, the famous European scholar R. A. Nicholson considered the Masnavi to be "the only eternal perspective of all times."⁵ Another scholar, A. J. Arberry, considers Mavloni to be one of the great men who enriched the grace of humankind through poetry and literature throughout the East and West.

Thus, Mavlono and Allama Muhammad Iqbal Lahori are two prominent scholars and thinkers of the Eastern world, personalities who were under study and special interest of Professor Annemarie Schimmel (1922-2003).⁶

Professor Schimmel is known as one of the most respected researchers of "Mavlono" and "Iqbal" and translated several important works of these two great personalities into German, English, and Turkish. One of Schimmel's most important books about Mavlono is 'The Triumphal Sun, a study of Mavlono's works and thoughts, which was later translated into Persian by Hasan Lahuti with an introduction by Jalal al-Din Ashtiyani.⁷

One of her first poetic translations into German was the book Javid Nama by Muhammad Iqbal Lahori, with an introduction by Hermann Hesse, including the biography and research on the works and social, political, and religious thought of Muhammad Iqbal.

Undoubtedly, Muhammad Iqbal studied the life and works of Western scholars, including Kant, Bergson, Goethe, Schopenhauer, and others, but the Masnavi of Mawlana impressed and influenced him more profoundly, as a result of which he was able to understand the truth of life and reality.

It should be noted that Iqbal-i Lahuri was one of the first scholars of the East who, like Nicholson, became the best commentator and interpreter of Mawlana's work and personality. He studied it by heart and taught its truth and reality to others.

By reading Iqbal, the reader can understand the truth of his poems and his close communication with Mawlana, as he says:

Гӯфт, Румӣ хезу гоме пеш ниҳ,
Давлати бедорро аз каф мадеҳ...
Ҳар чӣ пеш ояд, тӯро ай марди ҳӯш,
Гир андар ҳалқаҳои чапму гӯш.
Чапм агар биност, ҳар шай диданист,
Дар тарозуи ниғаҳ санҷиданист.

(He said, "Rumi, get up and go ahead.
Don't lose the vigilant state...
Whatever happens, you smart man,

Through the rings of eyes and ears.
Even the eye is blind, but can see everything,
And can be checked by vision's scale.")⁸

It was this truth and mystery that Muhammad Iqbal Lahuri, through his spiritual connection with his master and guide Mawlana, came to understand the path of love and enlightenment, explaining life's reality to human beings as he says:

Зиндаги ро шаръу ойин аст ишқ,
Асли таҳзиб аст дин, в-ин аст ишқ.

(Life's law and religion is love,
The essence of refinement is faith, and this is love.)⁹

In short, the time, place, life, and death of Mawlana and Muhammad Iqbal Lahuri were very different, separated by about six centuries. Mawlana was born in 1207 in the Balkh region of modern-day Tajikistan and died on December 17, 1273, in Konya, Turkey, while Iqbal was born on November 9, 1877, in Sialkot (modern Pakistan) and died in 1938 in Lahore.

However, Iqbal Lahuri learned the realities of life from Mawlana and understood the meaning and level of human perfection, proclaiming its foundation and originality to all mankind. In his own words:

Дар ҷаҳон равшантар аз хуршед шав,
Соҳиби тобонии ҷовид шав.

(Be brighter in the world than the sun,
Be the owner of eternal bliss.)¹⁰

According to Mawlana Rumi, friends should not harbor resentment in their hearts but should instead drive away impure desires and appreciate one another:

Биё, то қадри якдигар бидонем,
Ки то ногаҳ зи якдигар намонем.

(Come, let us know one another's worth,
Lest we suddenly lose one another.)¹¹

Finally, it should be noted that both of these great men hold high status in the history of Tajik/Persian/Dari culture and literature and contributed significantly to the development of language, literature, and human civilization. Their works continue to enjoy special fame and prestige among all nations, particularly in both Eastern and Western cultures, where they are respected and valued through the eyes of wisdom.

Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) was one of the greatest Asian poets of the twentieth century and among the most beloved poets of Tajik-Persian literature. His work *Payom-i Mashriq* (Message of the East) was published in Tajikistan in 1966 by the late Tajik writer Mirsaid Mirshakar. Twelve years later, Tajik scholar Abdullojon Gafforov published a complete edition of the poet's works entitled *Voice of the East*. Finally, in 2008, after thirty years, Tajik scholar Qiyomiddin Sattorzoda translated the complete *Kulliyat-i Farsi* of Muhammad Iqbal into Cyrillic script for Tajik readers.

Traditionally, as a symbol of friendship, seminars and special events related to Iqbal's works and activities are held annually in Tajikistan on November 9 (Iqbal's birthday) and April 21. The renowned Tajik scholar Rasul Hadizoda was one of the founding members of the "Iqbal Association" in Tajikistan.¹²

Presently, through the special initiative of Professor Habibullo Rajabov (doctor of philological sciences), the Tajikistan-Pakistan Friendship Society, and the Pakistan Embassy in Tajikistan, "Iqbal Day"¹³ is held regularly with the active participation of Tajik scholars including Karamattulo Olim, Umar Safar, Kurbanov Haidar, Ali Mohammadi Khurasoni, Idibek Zia, the late Tajiddin Mardoni, Zamira Ghafforova, Komil Bekzoda, Saifiddin Akram, Sufizoda Shadimohammed, Sanavbarbonu Vahidova, and Mirsaid Rahmonov.¹⁴ All these forums and articles related to Iqbal and his ideas strengthen the literary and cultural diplomacy between Central Asia and South Asia, particularly between Tajikistan and Pakistan.¹⁵

Allama Iqbal died after a long illness on April 21, 1938, and his grave is located near the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan. Lahore has been declared a sister city with Dushanbe since 1973.¹⁶ In conclusion, the commemoration of this luminary and bridge-builder of language and literature strengthens and develops

the cultural and historical relations between Tajikistan and Pakistan, creating a foundation for the revival of people's diplomacy between these nations.

Notes and References

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