

## Reflections

### Complaining to Iqbal: Dialogue with the Dead

**Mohd K. H.\***

O Iqbal!

The spring of 2002 beckoned my soul and body:  
to witness the Muslim remains of Alhambra,  
Cordova and Sevilla,  
to retrace your noble steps and feel the  
vibrations of your ecstasy,  
to feast my aging vision on the haunting  
grandeur of Alhambra and  
relish the matchless beauty of  
Moorish art....  
I glided through the cold ruins, searching for  
the secrets of the humiliating  
downfall of al-Andalus....  
The flowing fountains of *Jannat 'ul-'Ārif*  
(Generalife) continue to narrate the  
melancholy of Muslim follies...  
How, they succumbed to the same diseases  
which brought down the mighty  
Roman Empire.  
They wrote all over al-Andalus "*Lā Ghāliba  
Illā Allāh* (There is no vanquisher  
except Allah).  
But they began to worship the  
*matā' al-dunyā* (pleasures of  
the world),

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and traded their souls for gold, glory, women, and  
 wine,  
 only to end like stray donkeys, kicked around by  
 the boots of Ferdinand and Isabella.  
 Today, pigeons nestle and make love in the ruins,  
 their droppings strewn all over the walls,  
 Western tourists pour out of buses and planes,  
 frolicking in romance, obliterating all pain,  
 while Muslim architectural glory continues to boost the coffers  
 of Catholic Spain.

I stood, O Iqbal,  
 on the hill of Alhambra, "a stranger, gazing at things gone  
 by, dreams of another age."

O Iqbal!

Your dreams of Islamic renaissance are in tatters,  
 In your time the tyrant was Frankish colonization,  
 Today the Slave Master dons the cloak of globalization,  
 Piercing through the iron curtain, the bamboo  
 curtain, the sahara and the  
 tropical jungles carrying a civilization of  
 McDonalds, KFC's and Coca Colas,  
 While eight hundred million people languish in famine and squalor.

You predicted the collapse of godless and materialistic Europe,  
 But today she is more united and mightier than the Muslim world.  
 Today, O Iqbal, the West is supreme and capitalism triumphantly  
 arrogant.

Islam is the new enemy; in your time it was Bolshevism,  
 and today every Muslim is a potential terrorist.

You are either with the West or you are against it.

If you conform, the Slave Master's mercy  
 will descend upon you, offering  
 bread and dust and blankets  
 (lest you shiver in the thunderstorm  
 of the New Alliance rage).

Today the Musalman is languishing  
 in the trap of the New World Disorder,  
 a New Slavery in a Borderless Prison.

O Iqbal!

I wish you have heard the guns  
of Israel,  
the cries from Deir Yassin, Shabra, Shatilla  
and Jenin,  
the savage rumblings of Sharon's tanks,  
the merciless bull-dozers tearing  
into Palestinian homes,  
the explosions of teenage suicide bombers,  
the ruthless retaliations of Zionist terrorism  
(no, no, no, you cannot call it a terrorist state!)

O Iqbal!

You would weep if you know that Pakistan is now  
bleeding, Kashmir is bleeding,  
Chechnya is bleeding, Moroland is bleeding  
and Aceh is bleeding!  
And Indian Muslims are burned alive!  
A Muslim holocaust is in the making.  
Do you know that you cannot call the Slave Master  
and his friends terrorists?  
Only the victims who fight back  
are terrorists,  
Never mind if the Zionist media  
terrorizes truth or Palestinians or Muslims.  
Do you know that those who preach pluralism cannot give space  
to the *dīn* of Islam?  
Those who preach democracy in Europe cannot accommodate it  
in Indonesia, Algeria and Turkey,  
lest Islam would be liberated.

O Iqbal!

Do you know that Islam is to be tolerated by the New Slave Master  
only if it is Protestantized, Liberalized,  
Secularized or Westernized?  
Only if it is confined to the mosque, to mysticism,  
Only if it preaches that all religions are the same.

O Iqbal!

Have you heard what George Tenet said the other day:

“The United States is mightier than  
the Roman Empire and Israel  
is our friend.”

If you want “peace” you have to lick our shoes,  
or else you will be terrorized  
in the name of “peace”.

Or else, we will send the thugs and robbers  
to loot your banks

And then blame you for “lack of transparency”  
and “poor corporate governance.”

O Iqbal!

Sixty-four years after you returned  
to the mercy of *al-Rahmān*,

The world of the Musalman is still in disarray.

As beggars, we wait for crumbs  
to fall from the Slave Master’s plate.

Like hungry wolves, we bark and bite one another  
and plunge at one another’s throat  
in the name of *jihād*,

Killing more of our kind than the real enemy,

Kafirizing more than we can Islamize,

Monopolizing the Paradise of *al-Rahmān*  
to one’s own *Jamā‘ah*,

While the Slave Master and his friends rejoice  
at the Muslim tragedy, acting out their script.

O Iqbal!

Don’t turn in your grave if I tell you  
that the Muslim world is the champion  
today in corruption and illiteracy.

Or, that our rulers are among the smartest in deceiving the masses,  
Having mastered the art from Machiavelli’s Prince.

Or, that some of our elites  
are the greatest drinkers of the wine of *Kāfirūn*,

Intoxicated, they try to sell cheap  
versions of it in their stores,

Beguiling the local youth as they deconstruct

the blessed *Zam-Zam* to make it taste like beer and wine,  
 And succeeding in making the young worship celebrities as divine.  
 Or, that the Muslim Malay community  
 excels in *fitnah memfitnah*,  
 pouring the poison of hatred  
 where love once stood.

O Iqbal!

Where is the *'ishq* that used  
 to drive you to divine ecstasy?  
 Where is the *nūr* that illumines  
 the heart and obliterates man's egoism?  
 Where is the *maḥabbah* and *raḥmah*  
 that forge the bonds  
 of love and *salām*  
 Where is the *hidāyah* that destroys insincerity,  
 hypocrisy and greed?  
 Where is the *'ilm* that elevates  
 the soul to its True Master?  
 Where is the *taqwā* that  
 imbues thought and action with righteousness?  
 Where is the *bal-i-jibrīl*  
 that will deliver us from this earthly misery....  
 Can the *khairu ummatin* ever emerge  
 from robots, rubbles and bubbles?

O Iqbal!

Behind this veil of melancholy,  
 I see a ray of hope,  
 In the palaces of today's Pharaohs  
 many Moses are being born,  
 out of the gospel of Trinity into the glad tidings of *tawḥīd*,  
 Among the ruins of Cordoba, I met Sister Tamara,  
 a blend of the tulip of the Occident  
 and the rose of the Orient.  
 Many more Tamaras are blossoming  
 in the wasteland of modernity and post-modernism,  
 lighting candles in the dungeons of hedonism.  
 Many more Bilals are growing up in Harlem  
 to proclaim the rise of 'Īsā, son of Maryam.

From the minarets of New York, London and Paris,  
He will preach the true meaning of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh*  
*Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh.*

Yes, O Iqbal, the sun will rise in the West  
As Mūsā (*'alaihi al-salām*) rose in the palace of Fir'aun.