

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.