

Iqbal Nirbachito Kobita

(The Selected Poems of Sir Muhammad Iqbal)

(Translated into Bengali by Farrukh Ahmad, Published by Islamic Cultural Centre, Rajshahi, Bangladesh, June 1980)

Allama Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the renowned philosopher and poet was born on November 9, 1877 in Sialkot, located in present-day Pakistan. Iqbal had his early education in a Madrasah and obtained his "First of Arts diploma" in 1895 from Sialkot's Scotch Mission College. He then studied philosophy, English Literature and Arabic at Government College (Lahore) and also obtained his Bachelor of Arts and Masters Degrees. He was appointed to a Readership in Arabic at the Oriental College in Lahore. He later travelled to United Kingdom. He studied in Cambridge and obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Trinity College (Cambridge) in 1907. He also studied Law at Lincoln's Inn and qualified as a Barrister in 1908. Iqbal then pursued his doctorate degree in Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität at Munich and published a thesis titled *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. At the end of productive and eventful life, Iqbal died in Lahore on 21 April 1938.

Although Iqbal's legacy in the field of politics earned him respect as a visionary of Pakistan, his writings on Islam and the future of the Muslims have inspired generations of Muslims all over the world. Iqbal worked for unity among Muslims and was convinced that Islam should provide the basis for our individual and national life. He advocated that Muslims should follow the path of Islam in every sphere of their life. His work, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, was an attempt to revive Islam and reinvigorate the Muslim Ummah.

Iqbal's poetic works were written in Persian and Urdu. They included *Shikwa (Questions)*, *Jawab-e-Shikwa (Answer to the Questions)*, *Tarana-e-Milli (Song of the Nation)*, *Asrar-e-Khudi (Secrets of the Self)*, *Rumuz-e-Bekhudi (Mysteries of Selflessness)*, *Zabur-e-Ajam (Persian Psalms)*, *Gulshan-e-Raz-e-Jadeed (Garden of New Secrets)*, *Bandagi Nama (Book of Slavery)*, *Javed Nama (Book of Eternity)*, *Payam-e-Mashriq (The Message of the East)*, *Zinda Rud (A Stream Full of Life)*, *Bang-e-Dara (The Call of the Marching Bell)*, *Tulu'i Islam (Dawn of Islam)*, *Khizr-e-Rah (Guide of the Path)*, *Bal-e-Jibril (Wings of Gabriel)*, *Musafir (Traveller)* and *Armughan-e-Hijaz (The Gift of Hijaz)* were some of his famous works of poetry.

Iqbal's poems have been translated into all the major languages of the world including English, German, French, Russian, Italian, Arabic, Turkish and Indonesian. A number of writers and poets tried to translate them in Bengali. They included Shahadat Hussain, Ghulam Mustafa, Abdul Qadir, Ahsan Habib, Mohiuddin, Taleem Hossain, Abul Kalam Mustafa, Abdul Hafiz, Munir Chowdhury, Mufakhkharul Islam, Neamal Bashir, Syed Ali Ahsan, Sufia Kamal, Monir Uddin Yusuf, Amiyo Chakraborty and Farrukh Ahmad. However, it seems Farrukh Ahmad's translation of Iqbal was very special as he tried to capture the flavour and emotional charge of the original poems. This was

probably because Farrukh shared the same vision and for this reason he was hailed as the poet of Muslim renaissance in Bengal. Both poets had similar messages and they used the same vehicle to convey their messages. Like Iqbal, Farrukh's poems explored the glory of Islamic past and he called for a awakening of the Muslim Ummah. His poems reflected the Arab and Persian legacy in Bengal and as such they are replete with Arabic and Persian words.

Farrukh Ahmad (1918-1974) was a great poet and writer. He is held in high estimation by the Muslims of Bengal for his literary contribution. He was born in Majhail village of Sreepur upazila of Magura district. His father, Khan Sahib Syed Hatem Ali, was a Police Inspector. Farrukh Ahmad matriculated from Khulna Zila School in 1937 and completed his I.A. from Ripon College, Kolkata in 1939. Then he enrolled at Scottish Church College to study for a BA (Hons) Degree in Philosophy and English Literature, but was unable to complete his studies.

In his professional life, Farrukh Ahmad served as I.G. of Prisons, an Officer in Civil Supply Department, an editor of the monthly magazine "*Muhammadi*" and as a Director of the-then Radio Pakistan, Dhaka Centre, directing the popular weekly programme for children, "Khelaghar". Famous among Farrukh's poetical works were *Lash* (1944), *Satsagarer Majhi* (1944), *Sirajun Munira*(1952), *Naufa-O-Hatem* (1961), *Muhurter Kavita* (1963), *Hatemtai* (1966) and *Habida Marur Kahini* (1981). His works for children included *Pakhir Basa* (1965), *Harafer Chhada* (1970) and *Chhadar Asar* (1970). He died in Dhaka on 19 October 1974.

Farrukh Ahmad was awarded the Bangla Academy Award (1960), President's Award for Pride of Performance (1961), Adamjee Prize (1966), UNESCO Prize (1966), Ekushey Padak (posthumously, 1977) and Svadhinata Puraskar (posthumously, 1980) in recognition of his literary contribution.

In *Iqbal's Nirbachita Kobita* (The selected poems of Iqbal) which was published in June, 1980 by the Islamic Cultural Centre (Rajshahi), Farrukh translated a total of 29 famous poems by Iqbal including *Shikwa* (Questions), *Jawab-e-Shikwa* (Answer to the Questions), *Asrar-e-Khudi* (Secrets of the Self), *Masjide Cortuba* (Mosque of Cordoba), *Munajat* (Prayer), *Morde Momin* (Brave Believer) and *Gbrael-aur-Shaytan* (Gabriel and Satan).

Through his work, Farrukh hoped to introduce Iqbal's Pan-Islamic ideas and thoughts to the Bengali speaking readers. If Iqbal with an ocean of modern Islamic thought, then Farrukh wanted to connect the Bay of Bengal to that universal worldview. This is a very important collection of poems written by a great Muslim thinker and it has been translated by an outstanding Muslim writer and poet of Bengal. This collection deserves wide readership.

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