

MARYAM JAMEELAH HER LIFE AND SERVICES FOR ISLAM

*Raheela Sadiq

Maryam Jameelah formerly Margaret Marcus converted to Islam from Judaism and contributed a lot in the struggle for Islamic renaissance with her writings in the form of eleven full length books and more than twenty pamphlets. After embracing Islam, she migrated to Lahore from a suburb and prosperous area of New York (U.S.A.), and still lives in Sant Nagar, Lahore. She impresses any visitor with her decent style, simple dressing, polite humble and co-operative manners. She observes *purda* strictly and follows the teachings of Islam with interest and devotion. One can not avoid from paying homage to her for her services for Islam after reading her books.

Biographical Sketch of Maryam Jameelah:

She was born on the 22nd of May 1934 in Westchester, the U.S.A. Her ancestry was German and her family had become entirely assimilated to American life. Her great grand parents migrated from Germany to America more than a century and a half ago seeking brighter economic opportunities. Although of Jewish origin, neither her father nor her mother was observant. Their "Jewishness" being purely nominal, thus she was raised in a typical American secular environment. ⁽¹⁾

Her childhood was uneventful, she vehemently reacted against

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’عن عمر بن الخطاب رضى الله عنه، قال :

قال رسول الله ﷺ :

إنما الأعمال بالنيات، و إنما لكل امرئ

ما نوى ، فمن كانت هجرته إلى دنيا يصيبها أو

إلى امرأة ينكحها فهجرته إلى ما هاجر إليه“

"Umar bin Al-Khattab (R.A) said; I heard Allah's Apostle(PBUH) saying, "The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So whoever emigrated for worldly benefits or for a woman to marry, his emigration was for what he emigrated for"

- 21- "Homage to the poet: Iqbal Day in Cairo," *The Times of Karachi*, April 24, 1956; "Iqbal Day in Cairo," *The Morning News*, Karachi, April 24, 1956; "[Iqbal Day] in Cairo." *The Morning News*, Dacca, April 25, 1956.
- 22- "Symposium on Iqbal held at Jeddah," *The Morning News*, Karachi, March 28, 1957.
- 23- "Iqbal Day in Damascus," *The Civil and Military Gazette*, April 26, 1957.

- 14- "Iqbal Day in Damascus," *The Times of Karachi*, April 24, 1954; "Damascus," *The Morning News*, Karachi, April 24, 1954.
- 15- "Iqbal's death anniversary: More tributes from abroad, Baghdad," *Dawn*, April 25, 1955; "Iqbal Day abroad,... Iraqi tribute," *The Times of Karachi*, April 26, 1955; "Baghdad celebration of Iqbal Day," *The Khyber Mail*, April 26, 1955; "Iqbal Day in Baghdad," *The Pakistan Standard*, April 26, 1955; "Iqbal Day in Baghdad," *The Pakistan Observer*, April 27, 1955.
- 16- "Iqbal Day home and abroad: Jeddah" *The Pakistan Standard*, April 25, 1955; "Iqbal's death anniversary: More tributes from abroad, Jeddah," *Dawn*, April 25, 1955; "Iqbal Day observed abroad, Jeddah", *The Morning News*, Karachi, April 25, 1955; "Iqbal Day abroad: In Jeddah", *The Times of Karachi*, April 25, 1955; "Iqbal Day observed abroad: In Jeddah," *The Morning News*, Dacca, April 26, 1955 and "Iqbal Day in Jeddah," *The Civil and Military Gazette*, April 26, 1955.
- 17- *Ibid.*
- 18- Foreigners' homage, Damascus," *The Pakistan Standard*, April 23, 1955; "Syria," *The Civil and Military Gazette*, April 23, 1955; "Nation observes Iqbal Day: Tributes also from other countries. Damascus", *Dawn*, April 23, 1955; "In Damascus," *The Times of Karachi*, April 23, 1955; "Iqbal Day observed abroad; in Damascus," *The Morning News*, Dacca, April 26, 1955; "Iqbal Day celebrated at Syrian university," *The Pakistan Observer*, April 24, 1955.
- 19- *Ibid.*
- 20- *Ibid.* "Mid East celebrates Iqbal Day," *The Khyber Mail*, April 24, 1956.

- 2- "Iqbal Day in Jeddah," *The Pakistan Times*, April 24, 1950; "Iqbal Day at Jeddah," *The Khyber Mail*, April 25, 1950.
- 3- "Iqbal Day observed in Cairo & Ankara", *The Morning News*, April 27, 1951; "Iqbal's 13th death anniversary in Cairo," *The Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, April 25, 1951; "Egypt pays tributes to Iqbal," *The Civil and Military Gazette*, Karachi, April 25, 1951.
- 4- *Ibid.*
- 5- "Fuad I University observes Iqbal Day: Altaf describes Iqbal as poet of mankind", *The Sind Observer*, April 12, 1951.
- 6- *Ibid.*
- 7- *Ibid.*
- 8- *Ibid.*
- 9- "Iqbal Day at Jeddah," *The Civil and Military Gazette*, Karachi, April 20, 1951; "Iqbal Day in Jeddah", *The Khyber Mail*, April 21, 1951; "Iqbal Day observed at Jeddah," *The Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, April 21, 1951.
- 10- "Iqbal Day observed in Baghdad," *Dawn*, May 4, 1951. Nasim Hijazi, the well known Urdu novelist had a special devotion for Allama Iqbal. For detail, see Tahira Naz, "*Nasim Hijazi par Allama Iqbal kay Ashrat ka Jaiza*," Unpublished M. Phil Iqbaliat thesis, Allama Iqbal Open University, 2001.
- 11- "Iqbal Day in Iraq," *The Khyber Mail*, April 20, 1952; "Iqbal Day in Baghdad," *The Morning News*, April 27, 1952.
- 12- *Ibid.*
- 13- "Cairo", *Dawn*, April 23, 1954; "Tributes from Cairo," *Dawn*, April 23, 1954; "Cairo tribute to Iqbal," *The Pakistan Times*, April 23, 1954.

writing for the last ten years. Several papers on the various aspects of Iqbal's poetry and philosophy were also read. ⁽²²⁾

The Civil and Military Gazette reported that at Damascus, the Iqbal Day was celebrated in a befitting manner. Radio Damascus broadcasted a thirty minutes programme on Allama Iqbal. Local papers published articles on his life and philosophy. A meeting attended by 300 persons was arranged under the auspices of the Syrian University that was presided over by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education. Prominent Syrian educationists read papers and *qasidas* at the gathering. ⁽²³⁾

Even a cursory glance on the above paras would reveal that Allama Iqbal being the originator of the idea of newly formed state enjoyed a special status among the Arab intelligentsia. A survey of English dailies of Pakistan, which existed during 1950-57, reveals that he was highly respected for his multi-dimensional services not only by Pakistanis but also by Arab scholars and his views were persistently quoted as guidelines to be pursued for curing the ailing humanity. In fact, his ideas were presented as a panacea for all the ills and rallying point for the development of a sense of unity and oneness. In reality, the character of Allama Iqbal provided an opening to introduce the recently established nation-state of Pakistan into the intercontinental circles.

References:

- 1- "Iqbal Day' observed in Cairo," *The Pakistan Times*, April 21, 1950; "Iqbal's death anniversary observed in Cairo," *The Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, April 21, 1950.

The highlight of the Iqbal Day celebrations was a special programme on Iqbal, which was broadcasted by the Syrian Radio. Almost all newspapers published specially illustrated articles on Iqbal. ⁽¹⁹⁾

In 1956, *The Khyber Mail* revealed that The Iraqi Press paid tributes to Iqbal's memory by publishing articles on his life and philosophy on occasion of Iqbal Day. The Pakistan's *charge d'affaires*, speaking on Radio Baghdad commended Iqbal's services for the cause of Islam and humanity at large and described him as the architect of Pakistan. ⁽²⁰⁾ *The Times of Karachi*, *The Morning News*, Karachi and *The Morning News*, Dacca stated that while addressing a gathering of five thousand at the Cairo University Auditorium on the occasion of Iqbal Day, Tafazzal Ali, Pakistan's Ambassador in Cairo spoke about the philosophy of Iqbal. Those present included members of the diplomatic corps, writers, journalists, university professors, and students. The University Auditorium, which was the biggest hall in the city, was packed to capacity. Later in the evening, broadcasting from Radio Cairo, Pakistan Counselor, Dr. V.A. Hamadani stressed that Iqbal's message was really meant for the whole of mankind. Its appeal is universal and it is addressed to every seeker of truth. ⁽²¹⁾

The next news concerned with Allama Iqbal and the Arab world appeared on March 28, 1957 when *The Morning News*, Karachi informed that sixteen Saudi poets and scholars participated in a symposium on Iqbal's poetry and philosophy on March 24. The symposium began with a speech by the Pakistan Ambassador, Khawaja Shahabuddin, followed by the presidential address of Prince Abdullah Faisal. Sardar Faiz Muhammad, Afghan Ambassador in Saudi Arabia, read out portions from his Persian book on Iqbal that he had been

The Pakistan Standard, Dawn, The Morning News, Karachi, The Times of Karachi, The Morning News, Decca, and The Civil and Military Gazette, Lahore, published news coverage of Iqbal Day celebration in Saudi Arabia. As per their information, Abdul Wahab Azzam, Egyptian Ambassador, presided over the Iqbal Day gathering at the Pakistan Embassy, Jeddah. Among those who attended were Amir Abdullah Faisal, Minister of Interior, heads and members of diplomatic missions and other dignitaries of Makkah and Jeddah.⁽¹⁶⁾ Omar Bhauddin al-Amin, Syrian Ambassador, spoke at length on the value of Iqbal's message to the Islamic world. Azzam gave a brief appreciation of Iqbal's poetry and pointed out the necessity of introducing Iqbal's ideas to the Arab world. He also suggested that Iqbal's admirers should hold a conference to make his work more popular in the Arab world. The Pakistan's Embassy also published on the occasion a translation in Arabic of Iqbal's poem *Masjid-i-Qurtubah* by Azzam.⁽¹⁷⁾

The Pakistan Standard, The Civil and Military Gazette, Dawn, The Times of Karachi, The Morning News, Dacca, and The Pakistan Observer reported that at Damascus, Iqbal Day was celebrated on April 21 in the Syrian University at a meeting held under the patronage of the Syrian Education Minister. The university Hall was packed to capacity and the audience included Cabinet Ministers, diplomats, ex-Premiers, and Ministers, political leaders, lawyers, professors, students, journalists and other personalities.⁽¹⁸⁾ Speeches were made by some prominent personalities. A *special qasida* was recited by the Syrian poetess, Aziz Haroon, in praise of Allama Iqbal and Pakistan. The speakers recited translations of Iqbal's poems and writings and paid glowing tributes to the poet and Pakistan.