



Where Iqbal liv

SAJID ABBAS visits the Bhaatee Darwaaza and the bazaar, but is not happy the house wher Allama Iqbal lived once

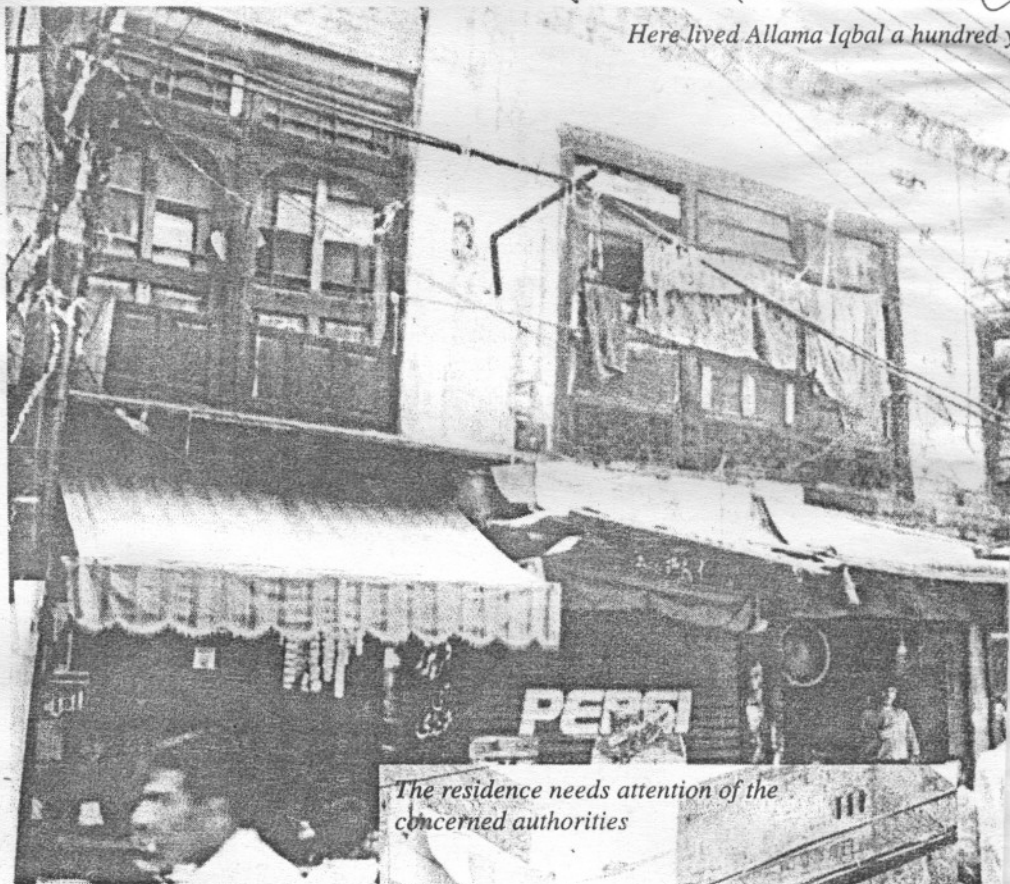
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The place next to the south-west corner of the walled city of Lahore happens to be one of the busiest spots of the city. A very large number of bus routes converge here carrying passengers to and from the old city and the mausoleum of Syed Ali Hajveiry, popularly known as Data Sahib. The place has become one of the noisiest, too, though it was not so when it was developed as a part of the modern Lahore about a century or a century and half ago. The Revenue and District Courts were relocated here, the first modern School and College of Lahore, rather the land, too, were established near this spot. In those days the place was the abode of the elite of Lahore. It had been so since a few centuries, much before the English arrived here, and remained so even after the Independence.

In the good old days, Bhaatee Darwaaza precinct was the diplomatic quarter of the City. The zone of the City in which it is situated, had it's own importance. In this sector was located the revenue administration, the mint, the residences of ministers and top civil servants and functionaries of the Court, it was the traditional power centre of those days. The Physician Royal resided here as did other physicians and surgeons, so the street between Tehseel Bazaar and Bhaatee Darwaaza, which is rich in history otherwise, got to be called by the name of *Bazaar-e-Hakeeman*, — it still is known as such.

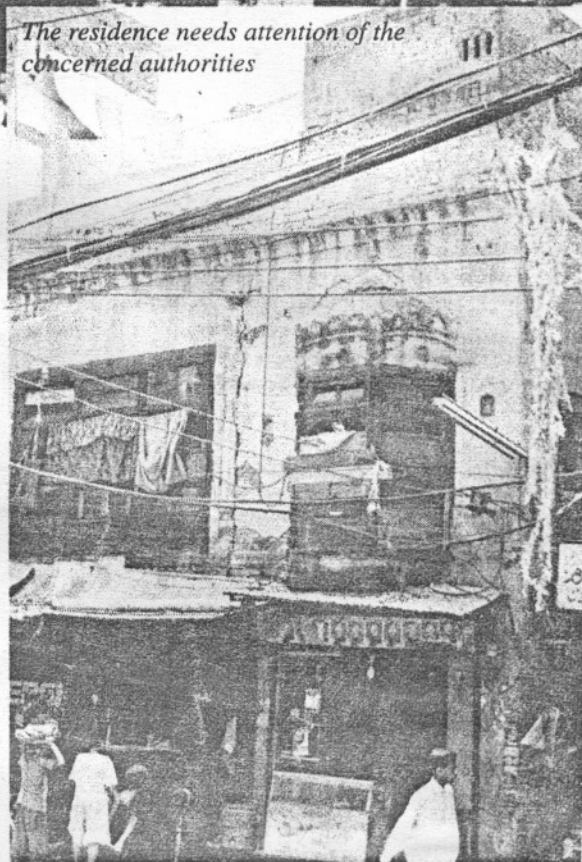
It wasn't the civil servants and physicians only who lived there, many a *littérateur* of those days, too, lived here, such as, Sir Abdul Qadir, a former judge of the High Court, later member of the Legislative Council and then member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, and a founder of a literary journal. Sir Shahabuddin, a former speaker of the



The residence needs attention of the concerned authorities

Punjab Assembly and a poet of the Punjabi Language in his own right. Agha Hashar, the renowned playwright. Syed Nazir Hussain, the well known composer of *Marsias*. Many of the present generation of Pakistanis who are pursuing literary and cultural activities have some association with this place, for instance, the father of Salima Hashmi, the late Faiz Ahmed Faiz and her uncle, the late M.D.Taseer had links with this area through their elders.

Besides, one of the most notable figures of the country, too, had his residence here when he started life as a young lecturer, that was Allama Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the poet of the east, revered so greatly not only by us but also by our neighbours and well-wishers



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Iqbal lived!

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Nation 14-7-02 Lahore
ved Allama Iqbal a hundred years ago



especially Iran where he is known as Iqbal-e-Lahoree.

Entering the Bhaatee Darwaaza and walking for about one hundred twenty-five paces, one would come to an old house on one's left with a jharoka projecting from the first floor, white washed on the outside in yellow. That is the place where the Allama lived for sometime before he left for England and Germany, and where he wrote one of his first memorable works and that is something like one hundred years ago. There is a small stone fixed, too, saying that Iqbal lived here, but it is difficult to see it, for, it is on top of the shop on street level and hidden most of the time by an awning. The place here widens a bit than the lane but

the house presents a rather dismal view. One wonders why the authorities could not spend a little bit of money and renovate it. That could help improve the looks of the place and perhaps the tourist trade. Furthermore, it could be saved from the danger of collapsing in driving rain and become lost for ever.

In this quarter one can see other places of interest. There are atleast two treasure houses. In one there are relics belonging to the Holy Prophet^(pbuh) and his family that are in the family collection. These relics have travelled a long and circuitous way from Medina to Lahore via Damascus and the Khanates of Central Asia. Briefly the relics were in the custody of the family of the Holy Prophet^(PBUH)

when they were forced to leave Medina for Damascus. Around 1400 A. D Taimur acquired these, they remained in his family till Babur brought them along with him when he came to settle down in the South Asian Sub-Continent. The relics changed hands when the fortunes of the Moghul dynasty were on the wane. A portion of the collection of the relics fell into the hands of the Sikhs and the rest was purchased by Faqir Syed Nooruddin which has been housed in a special building, the Darbar-e-Aalia. The other part is in the relics room of the Badshahi Mosque. It would be of interest to the readers to know that the Moo-e-Mubarik in Hazratbal, Kashmir, is also part of this collection, so was the valuable shawl of Hazrat Bibi Fatimah (may Allah bless her) housed in Cherar Sharif.

The other depository of relics and memorabilia is "The Fakirkhana Museum". It accommodates relics

Another view of the house



and antiques belonging to the Fakir Family. The collection was founded by their ancestor — Faqeer Syed Noor-ud-Din — and has been growing ever since. The pieces on show in the museum are a smaller part of the collection which the family has gathered

and accumulated during the last two or two and a half centuries or so. Some of the collection is in boxes due to constraints on space to display properly. Some of them can be found on display or otherwise in the Lahore Museum.

The exhibits though, presenting a variegated assortment at first look, can be classed into definite divisions, genera and eras. Broadly, one can see that the objects, are in general, either, relics, or examples of calligraphy, water-colours, plain and chased metalwork, inlay work, carpets and wall hangings, *objets d'art*, carvings and sculptures, etc., etc. Quite a few articles belong to the Moghul, Sikh and Pahari Schools, or pertain to period of English ascendancy here. We also have illustrations or examples from the Safavi and Ottoman periods and of, course, there are artefacts of the Gandhara period.

Readers will agree that these are the treasured places of Lahore which need the attention of the citizens to preserve and maintain them for the benefit of not only future Pakistanis but other people of the world.