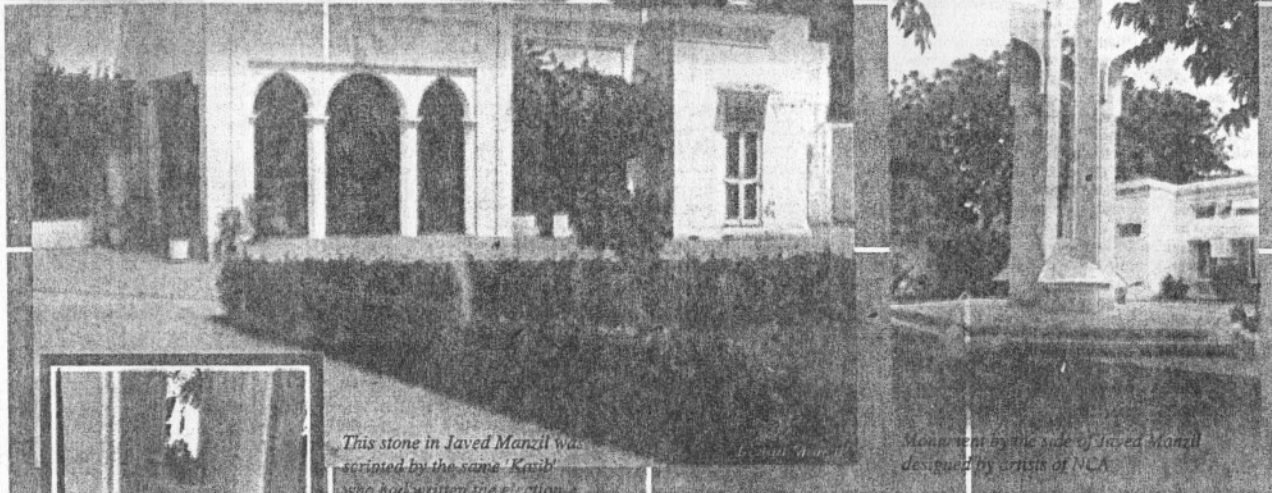




The house that Iqbal built



Yesterday, the nation remembered one of the most illustrious sons of this land, for, it was a little over six decades when Allama Muhammad Iqbal breathed his last on April 21, 1938, in the house that he had built only about three years before his passing away. The house, opposite the Railway Hospital, is located on the Allama Iqbal Road, formerly the Mayo Road, the way linking the Railway Station and the Lahore Cantonment. The edifice is now the Iqbal Museum.

Prior to building his house, Iqbal mostly lived in places that were let by their owners. If one walks, in the walled city, through the bazaar beyond the *Bhatee Darwaza* and the Police Station, one will reach a relatively open place near *Mohalla Jalotian*. Here, opposite the open space, on one's left, one can see an old house, now in not so good repair, with a *jharoka* projecting out. If one looks closely one can find a stone tablet, three or four metres above the street level, telling that Iqbal used to live in that house in the beginning of the twentieth century.

That place is said to be his first residence in Lahore where he stayed while he was employed as a lecturer at the Government College and before he left for studies in England and Germany. Nevertheless, that is not exactly true. Though, Allama Iqbal was residing there when he started on his travels abroad, strictly speaking, his first residence in Lahore was the boarding house of the Government College, where he had sought admission as an undergraduate student after passing his Intermediate exams. Readers will recollect that till then he had lived in Sialkot.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal belonged to Sialkot. He was born in a family descended from Kashmiri Brahmins. His forefathers had accepted Islam, as their faith, some two hundred and fifty years earlier. Here, this scribe would like to remind readers that there is some disagreement amongst chroniclers about

Iqbal's correct date of birth. In some accounts and documents in the Museum, it is mentioned as February 22, 1873. Nonetheless, November 9, 1877 is accepted as his birthday.

His father, Sheikh Noor Muhammad, was reputed to be a pious and God-fearing man who paid more than normal attention to the education and upbringing of his son. One of his friends and the teacher of Iqbal, Syed Meer Hassan is said to have moulded the mind of young Iqbal in his early days of

schooling. Perhaps it was he, who in a way, created an interest in the youngest in Philosophy. Iqbal spent his schooldays in Sialkot till he was old enough to pass his Matriculation and Intermediate exams. After doing his matriculation he had attended classes at the Murray College of the Scottish Mission, Sialkot. He moved to Lahore and sought admission to the Government College for graduation. He got his degree in 1897. Two years later, in 1899, he got his degree of Master of

This stone in Javed Manzil was scripted by the same 'Knab' who had written the election poster of Allama Iqbal



Short history of Allama Iqbal in the Iqbal Museum

Monument by the side of Javed Manzil designed by artists of NLA

SAJID ABBAS visits Javed Manzil and other places where the Poet of the East is said to have lived at different times

Arts in Philosophy.

For six years, between 1899 and 1905 he lectured in Arabic, History, English and Philosophy at the Government College and, by some arrangement, at both the Oriental College and Islamia College. In 1905 he left for Cambridge. There he got admission to the Trinity College to read Philosophy. While abroad, he took the opportunity to travel to Munchen, Bavaria and submit a thesis on Metaphysics in Iran to earn a Doctorate degree. On his return to London he lectured at the London University, teaching Arabic and officiating in the absence of Professor Arnold whom he had met earlier in Lahore and had worked with him. In the meantime he was called to the Bar from Lincoln's Inn.

Allama Iqbal returned to Lahore in 1908 but then gave up teaching and started practising law. In 1923 he was knighted in recognition of his literary work, became Member of the Punjab Legislative Council in 1926 and attended the Round Table Conference in 1931-32.

Allama Iqbal while presiding over the Session of the Muslim League in Allahabad, proposed on the twenty ninth of December 1930, the setting up of a separate State for the Muslims. He said, "I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self Government within the British Empire, or the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State, it appears to me the final destiny

of the Muslims at least of the North-West India".

When Allama Iqbal returned to Lahore in 1908, he lived in various places. He is said to have lived in Anarkali and on McLeod Road, too. His residence for thirteen years, 24A McLeod Road was abandoned by the owner at the time of Independence. It was purchased by the government and declared a protected monument in September 1958, to be converted into a Museum, what happened to the project, one does not know.

The place on Mayo Road, seven kanals in area, was purchased by Allama Iqbal in 1934 and the bungalow was completed the following year. There was some misfortune, for, Iqbal lost his wife, Sardar Begum, the mother of Javed and Munira, seven days after moving in the newly built house.

The house was purchased by the government and converted into a museum, the Iqbal Museum. The Museum was inaugurated by the then Chief Justice of Pakistan, Sheikh Anwarul Haque on December 1, 1977. As one enters the Museum one finds oneself in a room where one learns about the parents of Allama Iqbal and sees a painting of him praying in Spain. Then one can see (copies of) his manuscripts and degrees in the next room. Then there is a room where photographs and copies of some correspondence is displayed followed by models of the educational institutions which he attended.

Some personal belongings are displayed in another room. His bedroom has been set as it was when he left for his permanent abode, the clock in the rooms has its hands stopped showing the time when he breathed his last. The drawing and dining rooms show how they looked when Allama Iqbal was living.

There is a beautiful monument on the north of the building, designed by the artists of the National College of Arts.

Undoubtedly, Iqbal's poetry and ideas powerfully inspired Muslim Nationalism which, in its own time, won Pakistan. The works of Iqbal include, *Bang-e-Daraa*, *Bal-e-Gibree*, *Zarb-e-Kaleem*, *Urmughan-e-Hijaz* (Urdu part) all these in Urdu, *Israr-o-Romooz*, *Piyam-e-Mashriq*, *Zaboore-Ajam*, *Javed Nameh*, *Pas Che Bayad Kard o Musafir* and *Urmughan-e-Hijaz* (Persian). ■