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News and Notes

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Sir Muhammad Iqbal.

The following is the report on the death of Sir Muhammad Iqbal
in the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore.

Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the well-known Scholar and Poet, died at his
residence on Mayo Road, Lahore, on Thursday
April 21st at the age of 61.

His health had been indifferent for three or four years and he had
completely retired from public life, in which, at one time, he
filled a most conspicuous position. He suffered from cardiac
asthma, which became aggravated about three months ago. The
malady took a grave turn at about four o'clock on Thursday morning,
and Sir Muhammad breathed his last at 5-30 a.m. Besides his devoted
servant, who has tended him all these years, there were at his bedside
when he died three of his close friends.

Although he knew that he had not long to live, he did not give
up his literary activities altogether. Only a few days before his death
he engaged the services of a man to work at his dictation on the
manuscript of a book which he was writing. That book, which was on
the Holy Quran, is unfinished.

Sir Muhammad Iqbal was confined to bed during the last few
weeks. On Wednesday night he was quite cheerful and talked at length
with Baron von Veltheim, an old friend from Germany. They discuss-
ed philosophy and politics until about midnight; then the visitor left
and Sir Muhammad Iqbal went to sleep. He woke up at about 2 a.m.
and complained of a swelling in his left leg. Soon after he developed
symptoms of nausea, but he remained collected. In fact, up to the
very end his mind was alert and he made philosophical observations
which showed his mental strength and serenity.

When asked to take his medicine, he remonstrated with the few close friends near him and refused to take it.

The last words uttered by Sir Muhammad Iqbal were: "I am a Mussalman. I don't fear death. I shall welcome it with a smiling countenance."

The poet leaves a young daughter six years of age and two sons, one of whom is a barister-at-law. The other is still at school.

Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal was born at Sialkot in 1877. He belonged to a family which had descended from an ancient family of Kashmiri Pandits, who had embraced Islam about 200 years ago. He finished his school education at Sialkot and passed his Intermediate examination from the Scotch Mission College. During this time he met Syed Mir Hussain, a profound Arabic scholar, who created in him a devotion to Islamic culture and ardent appreciation of the literature of Islam.

From Sialkot he came to Government College, Lahore, where he took his B.A. and M.A. degrees. In his M.A. examination, which he took in Philosophy, he stood first in the province and won a gold medal. While at College he wrote poetry in Urdu and he was a well-known figure at "Mushairas."

After finishing his University career, he became a Lecturer of History and Philosophy in the Oriental College, Lahore, and subsequently became Assistant Professor in English and Philosophy in the Government College, Lahore.

In 1905 Sir Muhammad went to Cambridge, where he took his degree in Philosophy. His thesis on Persian Philosophy, presented to the University of Munich in Germany, obtained for him the degree of Ph.D. of that University. After a visit to Germany, he returned to London, and passed his Law examination at Lincoln's Inn. He also joined the London School of Economics and Political Science to study Sociology and Politics. By this time he had become a renowned man and his reputation secured for him the place of Chief Professor of Arabic language at the London University, in which capacity he acted for three months.

He returned to Lahore on July 27, 1908, when he was publicly entertained by his friends and admirers. From that time until 1934 he practised at the Bar. He was Knighted in 1922 in recognition of his great talents.

In 1926 he was elected a member of the Punjab Legislative Council from the City of Lahore and two years later he was invited to Madras to deliver a course of lectures on Islam. Sir Muhammad Iqbal also presided at several meetings of the Muslim League and the Muslim Conference.

The following note on the death of Sir Muhammad Iqbal appeared in the London *Times* :

Sir Muhammad Iqbal, of Lahore, whose death at the age of 62 is announced by a Reuter message from Lahore, was the greatest Urdu and Persian poet of his day, and his reputation in the West might have been comparable to that of his great Indian contemporary Tagore, had translations of his work into English been more frequent. He exercised an enormous influence on Islamic thought, and was an eloquent supporter of the rights and interests of his fellow-Indian Muslims.

Iqbal was greatly influenced as a student at Lahore University by that ripe Islamic scholar, Sir Thomas Arnold, and for seven years he was Professor of Philosophy at the Government College, Lahore.

He went to Cambridge in 1905 and read Western Philosophy at Trinity College, under the direction of the late Dr. McTaggart, for the philosophical Tripos, in which he obtained his degree by research work. In 1908 he was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn, and did some practice in Lahore. The Munich University conferred on him the Ph.D. for a dissertation on the development of metaphysics in Persia. He developed a philosophy of his own which owed much to Nietzsche and Bergson, while his poetry often reminded the reader of Shelley. The "Asrar-i-Khudi" ("Secrets of the Self,") published in Lahore in 1915, while giving no systematic account of his philosophy, put his ideas in a popular and attractive form. Professor R. A. Nicholson, of Cambridge was so impressed by it that he obtained the leave of the poet to translate it into English, and the rendering was published in 1920.

Western readers found him to be an apostle, if not to his own age, then to posterity, and after the Persian fashion he invoked the Saki to fill his cup with wine and pour moonbeams into the dark night of his thought. He was an Islamic enthusiast, inspired by the vision of a new Mecca, a world-wide theocratic Utopian State in which all Muslims, no longer divided by the barriers of race and country, should be one. His ideal was a free and independent Muslim fraternity, having the Ka'ba as its centre and knit together by love of Allah and devotion to the Prophet.

In his "Ramuz-i-Bekhudi" ("The Mysteries of Selflessness") (1916), he dealt with the life of the Islamic community on those lines and he allied the cry "Back to the Koran" with the revolutionary force of the Western philosophy, which he hoped and believed would vitalise the movement and ensure its triumph. He felt that Hindu intellectualism and Islamic pantheism had destroyed the capacity for action based on scientific observation and interpretation of phenomena, which distinguished the Western peoples and "especially the English." But he was severely critical of Western life and thought on the ground of its materialism. Holding that the full development of the individual pre-supposes a society, he found the ideal society in what he considered to be the Prophet's conception of Islam. In 1923 he published "Piyam-i-Mashriq" ("The Message of the East")

and addressed the modern world at large in reply to Goethe's homage to the genius of the East. Two years later came "Bang-i-Dira" ("The Call to March"), a collection of his Urdu poems written during the first twenty years of the century. This was followed by a new Persian volume of which the title stood for "Songs of a Modern David."

A poet with his gifts and his theme could not fail to influence thought in an India so politically-minded as that of our day. He took some part in provincial politics, being a member of the Punjab Legislature in 1925-28. He was on the British Indian delegation to the second session of the Round Table Conference in London in 1931. His authority was cited, not without some justification, for a theory of Islamic political solidarity in Northern India which might conceivably be extended to adjacent Muslim States.

In 1930 he publicly advocated the formation of a North-West Indian Muslim State by the merging of the Muslim provinces within the proposed All-India Federation. But his real interests were religious rather than political. A notable work published in 1934 reproduced a series of lectures by the poet on "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam." Therein he sought to reconcile the carrying out of modern reforms, as in Turkey, with the claims of Shari'at. The lectures went to show that soundness and exactitude of historical judgment were not his special endowment. The fact was that in maturity as in youth he sought to reconcile the most recent of Western philosophical systems, into which he gathered up the latest scientific conclusions, with the teaching of the Quran. Like his earlier work the book was marked by penetrating and noble thought, though the connection of his argument was somewhat obscure.

He was Knighted in 1923, and the Punjab University made him an Honorary D.Litt. in 1933. He was elected Rhodes Memorial Lecturer at Oxford University for 1935. For a long time he had been in indifferent health, and he became increasingly dreamy and mystical.

In accordance with Muslim rites, the ceremony of *Khatam-i-Quran* (complete reading of the Qur'an) was performed at the grave of Sir Muhammad Iqbal, every Thursday until the fortieth day after death. On the first Thursday the arrangements were in the hands of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, Premier of the Punjab and on subsequent Thursdays prominent Muslims among whom were Syed Amjad Ali, Nawab Muhammad Shah Nawaz Khan of Mamdot and Khan Bahadur Ahmad Yar Khan took part. The grave is in a grassy plot near the steps of Badshahi Mosque.

Muslim Women not to be Photographed.

RESOLUTIONS regretting the action of some Muslim ladies in having sat for a group photograph in connexion with the Muslim Ladies' Conference, appealing to them in the name of Islam not to cross the limits by following the West, and appealing to English educated Muslim youths to adhere to their religious injunctions and social traditions by safeguarding their culture, having at least some distinct feature in their dresses, were passed at a public meeting of Muslims held on Monday evening at the Wallajah Mosque, Triplicane, Moulana Syed Rauf Padsha presiding.

The meeting also passed a resolution urging upon the Mahomedan Educational Association of Southern India to give scholarships only to such girls and ladies as would give an assurance that they would not over-step the limits imposed on a true Muslim woman.

Another resolution stressed the need to impart religious instruction and requested the Mahomedan Educational Association of Southern India to make arrangements to impart compulsory religious instructions to those boys and girls who got scholarships from the Association.

—*Madras Mail.*

Book Review.

STUMBLING BLOCKS, by Rev. J. Christenson of Mardan, N.W.F. Prov. 64 pp., Six as. C.L.S. Madras.

The author, a missionary to Muslims of long experience, deals in this booklet with three outstanding stumbling blocks for the Muslim mind—the Incarnation, the Atonement and the Trinity.

Recognising that in the past there have been four distinct methods of approach to Muslims, *viz.*: the philanthropic, the social, the morally excellent and the theological, the writer here gives us his own presentation of the latter method, because Indian Muslims, as a whole, are theologically-minded. He contends that even though the westerner may find this approach irksome, nevertheless he must surmount the difficulty if he would be an efficient missionary, because this peculiar mentality of the Muslim people "is the strong wall in the Fortress of Islam."

And his presentation will doubtless appeal to Muslims since he follows a method of reasoning dear to their theological doctors. Starting with some axiomatic statement or premiss the argument in each treatise is carried forward, step by step or an intellectual plane, to its logical and Christian conclusion.

L. B. J.

Muslim Replies to Sceptical Objections.

THE following is a free translation of some passages from the writings of Maulana Shibli.

"Dialectic had no trouble in refuting Philosophy, Judaism or Christianity, but the difficulty was in the refutation of Scepticism. This was a school which accepted no religion and wrangled with every religion. Although they were opposed to everything in Islamic doctrine, they most of all kept the Qur'an before their eyes. Razi in his *Tafsir-i-Kabir* has given an account of their objections to the Qur'an from time to time e.g., on the stories of Solomon and the Hoopoe and Balqis and the ants. Razi writes that sceptics have made many objections to these. How can the Hoopoe speak intelligently? Solomon was in Syria, so how could the Hoopoe go to Yaman and back in a moment? It is related that Solomon was King of the whole earth and even of the Jinn, nevertheless he knew nothing at all about a Queen like the Queen of Sheba (Balqis). How did the Hoopoe know that bowing down to the sun was unlawful and the cause of *Kufr*?

Sakaki has put at the end of *Mafatih* a chapter containing replies to the objections of sceptics to the style and eloquence of the Qur'an. In the same way we find in other works very numerous objections advanced. Tho' in natural science criticism and scepticism go on increasing beyond measure, the objections being made to-day to all religious doctrines are, however, not greater in vehemence, penetration and number than the objections these old sceptics made.

In his *Matalib-i-'Aliya*, Razi has used fifty out of sixty pages in detailing sceptical objections. In the same way in *Nihayat-ul-'Uqul* he has quoted hundreds of objections. The meeting of these objections is the chief task of Kalam (dialectical defence).

Objections of sceptics to the Qur'an are of three kinds :—

1. Facts are related in the Qur'an which are contrary to natural law. *E.g.* All sorts of unusual things, such as, animals speaking and hills singing praises.
2. Many things are related which are based on superstition (*Wahm-parasti*) e.g., the effects of magic.
3. Many things which are opposed to the findings of learning. Such are the sun sinking in a spring, earth being made in six days, rain coming from heaven, etc.

In reply to such the *mutakallimin* (Muslim scholastics) employed various methods. The special characteristic of the Ash'arite School was that it admitted these facts to be in the Qur'an and then proceeded to reply. The older *Mutakallimin* often deny these "facts" and say that objectors have wrongly interpreted the Qur'an. Some examples of this follow :—

A. In the Qur'an is recorded of Jesus "They did not kill Him and did not crucify Him." The ordinary commentator explains this to mean that Jesus was not killed or crucified but that God changed

another person into the form of Jesus. People thinking him to be Jesus raised him up on the stake. On this numerous objections can be raised.

- e.g. (a) If forms can be changed in this sort of fashion then we could never be content that the person we saw was really the person we thought he was.
- (b) If God had to save Jesus, what need was there to let an innocent man suffer?
- (c) God had appointed Gabriel to help Jesus. The power of Gabriel is well-known; but nevertheless he could not save Jesus from the hands of the Jews but had to make an innocent person in the form of Jesus and so save Him.

Razi quotes these in his great commentary (*Tafsir-i-Kabir*) and has replied thus:—

- (a) All agree that the Almighty can make Zaid and Bakr of exactly the same form and no one considers any change to have taken place in forms.
- (b & c) If God had saved Jesus in another way, it would have been a miracle which would have rendered belief obligatory. But it is not the object of a miracle that people should be compelled to believe.

But other critics have thought on the meaning of these verses and have declared that the meaning has been interpreted wrongly and it is for this reason that objection has been made. Ibn Hazm in *Milal-wa-Nihal* has said that the meaning of this verse is that Jesus was neither killed nor crucified, but when his opponents noised it abroad that he was crucified, the real truth of the case became doubtful and they doubted as to what had really happened.

B. The Quranic verse in Surah ii: 262. This is what happened when Abraham said to God "How will you raise the dead?" On this commentators have expressed their idea that the meaning is that Abraham took four birds and divided them in pieces and they became alive again. But Abu Muslim Isfahani made many objections to this comment. Firstly, "*surhunna ilaika*" does not mean cut into pieces for then it would not take "*ila*." Further the pronoun "*ad 'uhuuna*" is used for something possessing spirit. Therefore its meaning must be, "Call the birds," although the meaning according to the other commentators would have to be, "Call to the cut up parts."

A more powerful objection that these two is that if this was the object then what was the need for four birds. The cutting up and bringing to life of one bird was sufficient. What is the meaning of one or two or four in such a connection?

Abu Muslim went contrary to all the commentators and held that the verse meant that God by way of parable says to Abraham, "For example, take four birds and examine them, then let them go their separate ways. Then call to them and they will come. In this way when we call the spirits, they will come running into their bodies."

C. The hills singing with David. (Sur. xxi: 79). On this sceptics have objected that the hill is not a living thing. How can it then sing praise? The Ash'arite school said that inorganic substances and speech are not mutually exclusive, so hills etc., can speak. Thus Razi in the manner of the Ash'arites explains the text. But many skilled in interpretation and Mu'tazilites in general do not interpret the verse in this manner but say that the hills singing praise is like what God said in another place (Sur. xvii: 46). "Nor is there aught which does not celebrate His praise." "This means that all things praise God with silent tongue."

J. W. S.

NOTICE.

The regular lectures are now being given at the Henry Martyr School of Islamics at Lal Tibba, Landour, and visitors are cordially invited to attend while on holiday.

New Member.

Rev. A. W. Konrad Albanian Evangelical Mission Kortcha,
Albania.

NOTICE.

Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscriptions etc., should be sent to the Superintendent, Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, India, and *not* to the Secretary of the League. The annual subscription to the League is Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. od.).

Matters of interest to members of the League, items of news and requests for prayer should be sent (if possible, early in the month) to the Honorary Secretary:—

Rev. J. W. Sweetman,
Elcot Lodge,
Landour,
Mussoorie,
U. P., India.

