

BOOK REVIEWS

Lt.-Col. (Rtd.) K.A. Rashid, *Historical Dissertations, Vol. H.* Lahore: Progressive Books, 1978. Derry 8vo., 165 pages. Rs 35.00.

Lt.-Col. (Rtd.) K.A. Rashid ranks high among thoughtful researchers of Pakistan. He has held many important military as well as civil assignments, and side by side this he has written books and articles in English, Persian and Urdu. His *Tadhkirah-i Talib 'Amili* (Urdu), *Tadhkirah-i Shu'ara'-i Punjāb* and articles on Iranian artists have been sources of attraction for the Persians. Besides, he has been personally associated with a few Iranian scholars, e.g. the late Professor Saeed Naficy (d. 1966). It is also said that Lt.-Col. Rashid possesses a good personal library.

The first volume of the book under review was published by the Pakistan Historical Society, Karachi, in 1962. It contained thirteen articles. The present volume has sixteen articles. The articles included in these volumes have already appeared in various periodicals of Pakistan. In the first volume the author had noted the periodicals in which the articles appeared, but this information has not been given in the present (second) volume. However, all the articles have, as the author also tells, already been published in different periodicals. I read the first article on Ranikot Fort in Sind, which is the largest fort in the world, in the quarterly *Iqbal Review* of April 1965.

The volume under review has articles on coinology, archaeology, painting, calligraphy, medieval as well as con-temporary history. These research articles have not only been supplemented with authentic sources and references but also with necessary pictures and sketches, and this places the *Historical Dissertations* among the rare works published in Pakistan.

Col. Rashid had participated in military archaeological excavations in the Middle East during World War II perhaps this added to his interest in

archaeology. *Historical Dissertations* contains three articles on archaeology. The volume consists of author's two interesting visitations to Maulānā Abul Kalām Āzād and Maulānā 'Ubaid ullah Sindhī. Articles on calligraphy are also informative and research-provoking.

Article fifteenth in the book is captioned: 'Allamah Iqbal and the Ancestry of Napoleon Bonaparte". It has only four pages but this very article suffices to show the deep interest Col. Rashid has in research. Iqbal had once told his son Jāvīd Iqbāl (now Dr Justice) that Napoleon Bonaparte's ancestors originally hailed from Arabia. Col. Rashid mentions his own visit to Iqbal in 1936 alongwith Sayyid Nadhīr Niyāzī and others when the 'Allāmah had said: "Spain had been conquered by the Muslims before Tariq landed at Gibraltar and this General's strategy was to go through Corsica in which an Arab tribe called Banu Faras had made advance guard. ... Napoleon was a descendant of this tribe." Col. Rashid narrates his efforts to make the 'Allāmah's point vivid. He had been consulting many books and scholars, both in Asia and Europe, for about three decades. He confirms in this article that Spain was conquered by Muslims, led by Ṭarīf before Ṭarīq b. Ziyād entered that land and Napoleon came from Corsica however, the origin of the French leader's ancestry is still to be pursued, though signs are there that his forefathers belonged to Banū Fāras tribe of the Arabs. Napoleon is said to have been born in Bonibascio, the capital of Corsica, and Col. Rashid rightly refers to the etymological harmony of the words Bonibascio, Banū Fāras and Bonaparte. The last, sixteenth, article entitled "Islam and Islamic History" shows the writer's deep concern with Islam and Muslims.

Historical Dissertations has been printed with a nice get-up. The volume is surely a solid contribution to Islamic culture and all those interested ought to have it in their personal collection of books. It is a must for research libraries of the country.

—(Dr) Muhammad Riaz

Lt.-Col. (Rtd.) K.A. Rashid, *Iqbal, Qur'an and the Western World*, Lahore: Progressive Books, 1978. Demy 8vo., 100 pages Rs 25.00.

Lieut.-Col. (Rtd.) K.A. Rashid is a renowned non-professional scholar and writer. He is the author of a number of books and research articles. He has compiled his already published articles in English and Urdu in the form of books.

Iqbal, Quran and the Western World contains seven articles. The first detailed article entitled "Iqbal and the Role of Philosophy in Religion" has been divided into two sections. On the whole, the book is a valuable contribution to Iqbal studies and also to scientific observations. The remaining six topics are as under: "Iqbal on Modern Theories of Science," "Recent Advances in Science and Concept of Life and Death," "Quranic Cosmogony," "The World of Islam and the Western World," "Iqbal and Ouspensky," and "Iqbal and Martin Buber".

The first article is based mainly on Iqbal's *Development of*

Metaphysics in Persia, and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. The first part of the last paragraph of this readable treatise is reproduced below:

"What is required today is an independent study of the Quran and not speculative and traditional thought ; for the Muslim nation has withdrawn from the true teaching of the Quran. It is far removed from the true meanings of the Quran. In order to progress in this cosmic age, we need to follow the Quran more closely and try and understand the meaning of such verses which are as yet unestablished (Mutashabihat)."

It may be noticed that the writer advocates to try to understand the meanings of mutashābihāt verses of the Qur'ān whereas God has warned us

not to do so (iii. 6) and He says that the true comprehension of the meanings of the established verses (muḥkamāt) are sufficient for the eternal guidance of the believers.

In one article, the author has compared a few thoughts of Iqbal with his Russian contemporary, P.D. Ouspensky. Iqbal has referred to him in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Ouspensky was a pupil of G.I. Gurdjieff. Iqbal was attracted by his views on *Space and Time*. It would have been worthwhile to add his detailed life account too in this article.

Martin Buber (1878-1965) was another contemporary of Iqbal: he was a well-known philosopher, and Iqbal has quoted him in a number of his writings. Col. Rashid has very ably traced the resemblance of the thought of both the philosophers in a number of topics.

Buber had studied in various universities of Germany for ten years; during his study decade in Germany, Iqbal was also there as a re-search scholar; however, it has not yet been established that the two philosophers ever met. Col. Rashid writes about the Jewish philosopher:

"Martin Buber, who is classified as an existentialist, does not like being called one. Iqbal on his part never mentions himself in that category. Buber is a great believer in God and human freedom, and he takes existence as Creator's non-repetitive art, and I am inclined to liken him to Iqbal and class them both as non-Deterministic Theistic Existentialists.... It is a strange phenomenon that although ranked as the greatest Jewish philosopher, the Jews disclaim him (with rare exceptions) and discount him as an eccentric. Perhaps this is due to his attitude towards the Palestine problem. Just before his death, he criticised the Israeli leaders for not reaching an agreement with the Arabs" (p. 97).

Col. Rashid's one remarkable article included in this anthology is entitled "Recent Advances in Science and Concept of Life and Death". It has appeared in the January 1978 issue of the quarterly *Iqbal Review* (Lahore). It

also contributes mainly to Iqbal studies. I remember that Chaudhary Muzaffar Husain, Director, All-Pakistan Islamic Educational Congress, Lahore, had touched this topic well in Urdu once, but Col. Rashid's dealing is quite exhaustire for the English readers.

All the seven articles of the book are thought-provoking. The book is a valuable contribution to the study of the Holy Qur'ān, Iqbal, scientific fields and East versus West. It is a must for scholars interested in deeper studies.

—(Dr) *Muhammad Riaz*

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