THE PERSIAN POEMS OF IQBAL

Sir Abdul Qadir

Introduction

Sir Abdul Qadir (1874-1950) was a distinguished litterateur and an intimate friend of Iqbal. He played an important role in introducing Iqbal to the literary world by publishing his poems in his famous literary magazine, Makhzan.

At one time during the early days of his stay in England, Iqbal resolved to give up writing poetry and to spend the time thus saved on some "more useful work". It was Sir Abdul Qadir who dissuaded him from doing so by assuring him that his poetry had a magnetic quality capable of inspiring new life in the Muslim's. Sir Thomas Arnold also agreed with Sir Abdul Qadir. Iqbal accepted their advice.

Sir Abdul Qadir happens to be the personage who wrote the Foreword to Bāng-i Darā, the first collection of the Urdu poems of Iqbal, which appeared in 1924.

Iqbal had great regard for Sir Abdul Qadir. The poem dedicated to him by Iqbal in Bāng-i Data is a living proof of this.

A collection of English writings of Sir Abdul Qadir about Iqbal was published under the title Iqbal, the Great Poet of Islam. The paper entitled "The Persian Poems of Iqbal" was delivered at a meeting of the Punjab Literary League in 1930, It is not included in that collection. Hence, it is being reproduced here for the benefit of the students of Iqbalian studies. The

discussion that followed and the presidential remarks regarding it are given after the text of the paper.

The Punjab Literary League was founded in 1930 to champion the cause of art and literature. Its aims and objects were :

(1) The advancement of learning and literature, (For this purpose its members were expected to devote themselves to creative or research work in different branches of literature.)

(2) To knit together all "disinterested servants of literature' into one brotherhood. (For this purpose its members were expected to "know only one distinction and to recognise only one caste or religion—that of literature alone.")

(3) To promote catholic taste among the literary men in particular and public in general.

The League did not allow itself to be dragged into controversy over such debatable questions as "Hindi versus Urdu," "Punjabi versus Urdu" or even "English versus Vernacular".

It was not meant to be a champion of one and one language only or one vernacular either. It had for its motto one of Iqbal's famous sayings : "As words are only symbols for our ideas and emotions, therefore, language is comparatively of little importance." It wanted to go to the heart of things, that is, to discover what people were actually thinking, feeling, desiring and dreaming. For cultivating liberal ideas about literature, the League organised many useful lectures on a variety of subjects and in different vernaculars. These lectures were published in the form of pamphlets for the benefit of lovers of literature. During 1930, it organised two lectures about Iqbal : one by Sir Abdul Qadir under the chairmanship of Dr Gokal Chand Narang (the present lecture); and the other, entitled "Mysticism and Tagore, the Sufism

and Iqbal," by Professor H.K. Bhattacharya under the chairmanship of Mr Justice Agha Haider.

In the meeting held in I930 Pandit Brij Mohan Dattatriya Kaifi also delivered a lecture entitled "Revolt in Urdu Poetry". It was presided over by Iqbal.

The League intended to start a journal with the name of "Punjab Literary Review," but the idea did not materialise. Among its office bearers were the following:

Patron-in-Chief

Sir Geoffrey F. DeMontmorency Governor of the Punjab

President

A.C. Woolner, Esq.

Vice-Chancellor, University of the Panjab

Vice-Presidents

Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal Sir Jogendra Singh

Mr Manohar Lai, Bar-at-Law K.L. Gauba, Esq.

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—Afzal Haq Qarshi

India has produced a number of poets who have made valuable contribution to Persian literature and have written charming poetry in Persian which is one of the sweetest languages of the world. It was commonly believed at one time that the long line of distinguished Indian writers of Persian came to an end with Ghalib, when Girami, an unassuming poet of the Punjab, surprised the Persian-reading world by reproducing in this country the sweet melodies of Shiraz. Many thought that he was the last of the Indian masters of Persian, when Dr Muhammad Iqbal gave us an agreeable surprise by showing that he could wield as facile a pen in Persian as he had already done in Urdu. It is to the Punjab again that the credit of producing a poet like Iqbal be-longs, Sialkot being his birth-place as well as the scene of his early life and education. Sialkot has given us some eminent scholars in the past, among whom the famous theologian, Maulvi Abdul Hakim, may be specially mentioned. In our own time we have had the late Shams-ul-Ulama Maulvi Sayyid Mir Hasan, who devoted the whole of his life to the teaching of Arabic and Persian and who achieved remarkable success in doing so, by giving his students a grounding in those subjects which led them to distinction. Several pupils of Maulvi Mir Hasan have succeeded in various walks of life, but none of them has attained the height to which Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal has risen in the literary world. Having passed his Intermediate examination from the Murray College, Sialkot, he came to Lahore and joined the Government College and took his M.A. degree in Philosophy. He had a natural bent of mind for poetry and began by writing Urdu poems. His fame as a poet, whose verse combined charm with thought, soon began to spread and in a few years his name as a writer of Urdu poetry came to be known as a household word, not only in the Punjab and the United Provinces, but also in other parts of India, wherever Urdu was understood or appreciated. After he finished his studies he was appointed as Assistant Professor of Philosophy in the Government College, Lahore. In I905 he left for England, and was there for three years, as an advanced student of Philosophy at Cambridge. He also qualified for the Bar during the same period. While in England, Iqbal wrote some verses in Persian which

elicited admiration from those who heard them. He probably felt that the sweet language of Sa'di, Hafiz and Khayyam was better fitted to serve as a vehicle of high thinking than the newly developing Urdu language, and he took to Persian as the more suitable medium of expression. The Persian poem that he began to write after his return to India in I908 and which first saw the light in 19I5, is called Asrar-i Khudi or "The Secrets of the Self". It is a small book of about I50 pages but it made a profound impression on the mind of all those who read it and brought its author into prominence in literary circles in and out-side India. As a writer of Urdu he enjoyed a wide reputation throughout India, but his Persian verses carried his fame beyond the boundaries of our country, to Persia and Afghanistan, and to Turkey and parts of Russia, wherever there were people who could read classical Persian. In I920 Professor Nicholson, the well-known Orientalist of Cambridge brought out his English translation of this book, with an interesting preface, showing his great appreciation of the worth of "The Secrets of the Self". This translation introduced the Asrar-i Khudi to scholars in the West and was perhaps, to some extent, instrumental in informing the British Government in India of the literary eminence of Iqbal and of bringing him the richly merited distinction of "Knighthood".

The Asrar-i Khudi was followed by another small book called Rumuz-i Bekhudi, i.e. "Hints on Selflessness," which had an equally good reception. Both the poems have gone through several editions, the latter being a combined edition of Asrar and Rumuz, in which the former appears for the fourth time, while the latter for the third.

The Payam-i Mashriq or the "Message of the East" was published' after the Rumuz, and is not a poem with a continuous theme like the first two, but is an interesting collection of miscellaneous short poems, which have been written as a response to the greetings of the West, embodied in the Divan of Goethe, the immortal poet of Germany. The fourth and so far the last book of Iqbal in Persian is the Zabur-i-`Ajam, or "The Psalms of Persia," which again is a collection of beautiful little poems, each of which is

complete in itself. I propose to deal with these four books, one by one, in the order in which they appeared and to place before you, as briefly as I can, my views on them.

The poems of Iqbal differ-from one another in some respects but possess some features which are common to them all, and bear, as it were, the special impress of the genius of their author. The special feature which distinguishes Iqbal not only from his contemporaries, but also from most of the earlier writers of Persian poetry, is that he is a man who has a distinct message to communicate to his fellow-beings in general, and to his brethren in Islam throughout the world, in particular. It is this message that is inspiring him and he is discharging a great duty in conveying it to the world, in language that makes a direct appeal to the heart. This message breathes through every one of the four books that have been published so far and is given to the world in varying forms of thought and expression, but it is the main theme of the Asrar-i Khudi. It is a message of action, as opposed to contemplative inactivity, which has long characterized the East and which the author thinks has been particularly harmful to the world of Islam. These poems have been regarded by many critics as representing a reaction against Sufism and all that it stands for at present. There are a number of passages in these poems, showing that the poet considers Sufism as the bane of Islam, and holds that it has had a very pernicious effect on the minds of Muslims, and is, to a large extent, responsible for their decadence. I must say, however, that perhaps Iqbal has been misunderstood on this point. As I read him, he appears to draw a distinction between real Sufism and the prevalent pseudo-Sufism of these days. While condemning the latter in unmistakable terms, I think he has a great deal of respect for some of the eminent Sufis of old, whose achievements are recounted by him in the books under review. To the world-renowned author of the Mathnavi, Maulana Rum, he refers as the source of his own inspiration and adds that, compared with the resplendent flame of the Maulana, his own light is but a spark. Of Sayyid Makhdum Ali of Hujvir, the Sufi saint, whose last resting place in Lahore is known as the

shrine of Data Ganj Bakhsh, he says that "he sowed the seed of Divine worship in the soil of India, revived the glories of the day of Caliph Umar, and the sound of truth rose to its height through his words". Those whom Iqbal holds in contempt are a different class altogether. It is the pretenders whom he denounces, who make a paying trade of their cult. As regards such his description is quite true. He observes:

"Every one who has long hair dons the woollen garment of saintliness;

Alas, these traders who sell their religion."

The misapprehension as to Iqbal's real meaning arose on account of the way in which he originally referred to Hafiz of Shiraz. In the first edition of the Asrar-i Khudi our poet's reference to Hafiz was in very disparaging terms. He said that the poetry of Hafiz had the effect of an opiate on the minds of its readers and he warned his readers against yielding to the magic of the verse of Hafiz. This passage in his book was rather severely criticised by a large number of the admirers of Hafiz, especially by those of the Sufi persuasion, who go into ecstasies when the poems of Hafiz are sung to them. In the second edition Iqbal suppressed the lines referring to Hafiz to which strong exception had been taken. It is difficult to say whether he really modified his views concerning Hafiz in the light of the criticism which the passage in question elicited or he simply tried to avoid giving offence to any class of people after having once expressed his opinion frankly as to the effect of poems like those of Hafiz on the minds of Muslims. My own personal view is that Iqbal was unfair to the famous poet of Shiraz in his earlier criticism and felt that it was due to the latter that the harsh observations made against him be withdrawn. It may, however, be said, in fairness to our own poet, that his attitude towards Hafiz, as expressed in the first edition of his book, was not harsher than the attitude which, it is said, was maintained by the Moghal Emperor Aurangzeb on this subject. We are told that Aurangzeb was very fond of Hafiz and constantly kept his Divan

under his pillow and used to enjoy reading it in his moments of leisure, but at the same time he was against the common people having access to it. If this story is correct, the reason for this attitude is obvious. He must have felt that there is a good deal of sublime poetry in the verses of the singer of Shiraz and for the mature and the thoughtful there are valuable lessons in his poems, but on the young and the unwary their effect is enervating and soporific. Similarly, Iqbal must have felt that he could not very effectively convey his message of "action" to a nation whose imagination had been fed, for centuries, on the writings of poets like Hafiz and he deemed it necessary to draw pointed attention to the existing literary propensities of his people and to wean them away from the hobbies they had so far pursued. Having thus freed his readers from the trammels of their past inactivity he gave them his life-giving message, with all the emphasis at his command, in the Asrar-i Khudi.

The lines with which this inspiring theme is started read as follows in the admirable translation of Professor Nicholson : "The form of existence is an effect of the Self ;

Whatsoever thou seest is a secret of the Self,

When the Self awoke to consciousness,

It revealed the universe of Thought.

A hundred worlds arc hidden in its essence:

Self-affirmation brings Not-Self to light."

The word "Self" in this book stands for the realisation of one's potentialities. The poet preaches that man should first awaken in himself the full consciousness of his God-given powers and then create the desire of pursuing a definite purpose, with the help of those powers, for his own development as well as for the good of humanity.

This noble ideal is placed before us in the following beautiful words:

"Life is preserved by purpose;

Because of the goal its caravan-bell tinkles. Life is hidden in the process of seeking, Its origin is hidden in desire."

This idea is developed in a number of verses, supported by many arguments, and illustrated by a variety of beautiful similes.

Take for instance the following two lines, as translated:

"Desire is a noose for hunting ideals,

A binder of the book of deeds.

Negation of desire is death to the being,

Even as absence of burning extinguishes the flame."

Having emphasized the need of an awakened self, followed by a keenly felt desire to achieve a definite end, Iqbal proceeds to, lay stress on the necessity of self-discipline. The chapter dealing with this aspect of the question must be read in full and assimilated, to enjoy the beauty of the seemingly paradoxical arguments under this head, but I would content myself with giving a few of them, as translated:

"Endeavour to obey, 0 heedless one;

Liberty is the fruit of compulsion.

By obedience the man of no worth is made worthy, By disobedience even fire is reduced to straw.

Whoso would master the sun and stars,

Let him make himself a prisoner of Law.

The wind is made fragrant when kept in prison by the rose, Perfume, when confined in the navel of the deer, becomes the musk."

With this equipment of self-realization and self-discipline, combined with a noble aim and purpose, Iqbal wants his man of action to delight in creation and conquest, to create a new world, "to dig the foundations of the universe" and "to cast its atoms into a new mould". He says : "Life is power made manifest" and

"its main-spring is the desire for victory". The chapter from which the above maxims are culled ends with a very significant verse, which runs:

"0, man of understanding, open thine eyes, ears and lips! If then thou seest not the Way of Truth, laugh at me!"

It is significant that this verse is a modification, nay a direct antithesis, of a line occurring in the Mathnavi of Maulana Rum, which is given below:

"Shut thine eyes and lips and ears,

If then thou dost not see the secret of God or Truth, laugh at me."

The advice of Rumi was meant to lead man to God by contemplation and by keeping the mind off from the things of the world and concentrating its attention on things Divine. It had also a direct reference to a well-recognised practice among the mystics and the Yogis of old to cultivate spiritual strength by shutting their eyes and ears and by bating their breath. Iqbal has taken hold of the old line, and, by reversing the process, has given the key to the conquest of the physical world around us. He is aware of the wonders that have been worked by a proper use of the eye and the ear in observing the laws of nature and turning them to our use. He insists,

therefore, on our using our eyes and ears and then properly using our lips in giving to the world the Truth perceived by the eye and the ear. As an apostle of this reform he boldly preaches this new doctrine, which he thinks is particularly needed, and is in keeping with the circumstances of the present day.

The limited time at my disposal does not allow me to dwell at greater length on the Asrar-i Khudi, but I hope you have got from what has been said already some idea of the aim with which this book has been written and if you will read or re-read it in the light of these observations, I am sure your perusal of it will repay itself.

Coming to the volume entitled the Rumuz-i Bekhudi, it would appear at first sight that our author had committed a literary somersault by singing the praises of "Selflessness," after taking so much trouble to awaken in us a consciousness of the "Self," but when you read the book, any impression that the poet has taken two inconsistent positions is completely removed. He divides life into two parts, individual life and national life, using the word "national" in its broader sense, which would include the idea of internationalism. The first book aimed at teaching the individual the ways of giving strength, while the second one teaches him the methods of national strength. Just as according to our author weakness is death to the individual and strength means life, similarly for the welfare of a nation, it is necessary that the individual should merge his existence in that of the community and personal interests should give way where general national interests are concerned. This message begins with the following lines.

These may be translated as under:

"To the individual, the organisation of the community is a blessing,

His qualities gain perfection through the community.

Be a friend of the community to the best of your ability, And be a source of strength to the struggles of the liberal minded."

Again, further on, the same point is emphasized with a variety of imagery, characteristic of our poet. He says:

"The word that falls out of the verse in which it was housed, Breaks the pearl of significance which it had in its pocket. The green leaf that falls out of its tree,

Loses the string of hope which connected it with spring time. The individual by himself neglects ideals, `His power inclines towards disintegration.

It is the community which familiarizes him with discipline, And teaches him to tread softly like the morning zephyr'."

I need hardly add that the word community or Jama'at in the above passages is used in the generic and broad meaning and not in its narrow sense. After laying stress on the merging of the individual into the nation, Iqbal proceeds to give his definition of a nation from the Islamic point of view. The community that Islam contemplates is not based on any narrow geographical divisions but embraces the whole of humanity, who can be made one, by the bonds of a common faith in one Creator. He observes:

"The fate of nations is bound to countries inhabited by them; The structure of nations is raised on their descent from their ancestors;

Why should one regard domicile as the basis of nationality, What is the use of worshipping the wind, the water and the earth?

It is silly to be proud of one's descent,

That touches only the body and the body is transient; Our nationality has a different foundation,

That foundation is enshrined in our hearts."

I have often heard it said by some of the admirers of Iqbal's earlier poems, which were in Urdu, and which have been collected and published in a volume called Bang-i Dara (i.e. the voice of the caravan-bell), that there was a definite ring of patriotism and nationalism, in its ordinary accepted sense in most of those poems, but that the Persian poems represent a definite break from the past and that the poet has consciously or unconsciously drifted into Pan-Islamism. I am not inclined, however, to regard the Persian poems as representing a revolution in our poet's ideals but I believe them to be a natural evolution of his thought. It is true that in his Urdu poems there is the well-known song called Hindustan Namara, as the poet naturally has a love for the land of his birth and the land of his ancestors. Though a Muslim in faith, he is a Hindu and a Brahmin by blood, his family having embraced Islam some generations ago. A thinker and a philosopher like him, however, could not remain content very long with the restricted love and he realized that while by the accident of birth his body belonged to the soil of India, which was consequently dear to him, his spirit as a Muslim could fly beyond the - shores of India and could sing with equal truth verses running as follows:

"China is ours, so is Arabia, and so is India, We are Muslims and the whole world is our home."

It is noteworthy that this broader sympathy and love has not brought with it a negation of the earlier and limited love. He would not have been the great poet he is, if he had allowed his mind to be curbed by the limited nationalism which absorbs the attention of most people. In the heart of our poet there continues a tender corner for India and Indians, but there is room there for spiritual fellowship with others of different colours and climes and his heart yearns for breathing in the freer atmosphere of international good-

will, which he believes may prove the cure of many of the evils of the existing civilization. Those who have studied the trend of modern thought among the advanced nations of the West know very well that even in those countries which were the chief inspirers of the idea of nationalism there is a marked and growing tendency towards internationalism, which is probably going to be the creed of a happier humanity of the future. Iqbal in these poems appears to me to be preaching inter-nationalism, though not in the abstract, but in the concrete, as already practiced by the great mass of those professing the religion of which he is at once a firm believer and exponent. I know that opinions will differ on this aspect of the question and I do not deny that they can differ with a good deal of reason, but I have simply ventured to place my view of the question before you for consideration. Before concluding my remarks about the Rumuz-i Bekhudi, however, I may say that I regard the language of this book as simpler and sweeter than that of the first, which was a title more difficult and abstruse though in the sublimity of its philosophic thought the Asrar-i Khudi occupied a high place which is all its own.

We come now to the Payam-i Mashriq or the "Message of the East". There is a brief but interesting introduction to this book written by the author himself, which explains the circumstances under which the idea of writing the short poems, collected in this book, arose in his mind. The inspiration came through his touch with the literary productions of German Orientalists. It may be mentioned incidentally that during his sojourn in Europe Iqbal learnt German and was in residence for some time in a German University, where he got his degree as a Doctor of Philosophy. The influence of his studies of German literature is clearly perceptible in his writings and particularly so in the message contained in the Asrar-i Khudi and in many poems of the Payam-i Mashriq. The book begins with a poem addressed to King Amanullah Khan, who was on the throne of Afghanistan when it was published. In that poem Iqbal draws a touching comparison between Goethe and himself, two lines of which appeal to me particularly:

"He, a flower in a garden born and bred,

I, a wild flower grown out of a dead soil.

He, like a nightingale giving forth in a garden melodies that please ;

I, in the wilderness crying, like a caravan bell."

This last is a favourite metaphor of Iqbal. In his Urdu poems as well as Persian poems he refers to himself, again and again, as a bell that is warning the wayfarers whether they heed it or not. There is a predominant feeling in his mind that he is very much ahead of his times. So he calls himself "a poet of the morrow" and complains that his contemporaries have failed to grasp the true meaning of his message. It is a grievance with him that even those who are familiar with him have not understood him or benefited by his teaching and that he is a singing bird who is a stranger in his own garden.

I think it is difficult to select any lines from the "Message of the East". It is full of literary apothegms and gems, which must be read and enjoyed by those who can read them in original. The first eighty pages of this book are devoted to quatrains, most of which emphasize, each in four telling lines, the lessons inculcated and reasoned out at length in the two previous books, while others compare favourably with the quatrains written by Persian poets like Khayyam.

After the quatrains come short lyric poems, which could be sung to the accompaniment of music in the sweet tunes the charm of which it is difficult to excel. The peculiar feature of this book is that the greater part of it is more easily intelligible to the ordinary reader than the two previous books or the poems that followed it. The language is chaste and simple and its flow very natural and spontaneous. The poet must have been in his

happiest mood when composing some of the beautiful verses in the "Message of the East". What could be prettier, for instance, than the inimitable melody of his poems on Kashmir. They are obviously the result of his visit to that fascinating Eden of India and probably composed when the spell of Kashmir was on him. To the poet's admiration of the natural beauties of the country was added the feeling that his ancestors originally came from Kashmir. The poem in which he has depicted the beauty of the Nishat Bagh is simply splendid and may be said to be a perfect picture in words, showing what a fine artist we have in Iqbal.

Coming to the Zabur-i `Ajam, the latest Persian poem of Iqbal, I understand he regards it as the most important and probably the best of his works. There is no doubt that it is the ripest fruit of his labour and as such must be particularly dear to him. The pieces collected in it are mostly lyrical. The author's command of the Persian language has been distinctly growing since the publication of his first book and he seems to be using it with-out the least effort. Similarly, the melody of his verse has grown with every fresh effort and abounds in the Zabur. However, this work being more serious than the "Message of the East," its melody does not present the same variety as that of the former. I must confess, however, that the philosophical thought in the Zabur is above the heads of ordinary readers and as such this book has not, perhaps, made the same appeal to the popular mind, which has been made by the Rumuz and the Payam. In the Zabur the author assumes, more clearly than before, the role of a seer and a religious leader. The name of the book indicates that tendency and so does the line which serves as a motto for the book:

"I passed by the outside of the door, and have spoken of the inside of the house.

In the bold fashion of a Qalandar Darvish I have spoken of things which no one had spoken of before."

His language is that of a mystic, The fact is that Iqbal is inclined to mysticism by his nature. This tendency he inherited from his father, who was a man with a deeply religious and sufistic mind. Therefore we find an under-current of mysticism in all the writings of Iqbal. It has risen to a great height in the Zabur, in which the mystic in Iqbal has expressed itself.

Addressing the reader of this book, Iqbal says:

"Sometimes a blade of grass becomes a veil for my eye, at other times I have seen both the worlds at one glance."

It may be added, however, that we are not to suppose from the mystic style of expression adopted in this book that Iqbal has forgotten the message with which he started his Persian poetry. He is adhering to his mission as strongly as ever. His is a message of hope for Islam and the East in particular, and for humanity in general. He takes an optimistic view of the future of the Orient, as well as of the world at large, though to the nations of the Occident he gives a warning that their outlook on the material side of life must undergo a complete change if the world is to remain a peaceful and happy world. Iqbal is a great protagonist of the poor and the downtrodden, wherever they may be, and he believes that in the great struggle between labour and capital, on which the world is entering today, it would be labour that would come out triumphant and any people, who are taking undue advantage of their power or influence in any sphere of life to oppress the poor, will eventually come to grief. He predicts a day when the old order will give place to the new and there will be a freer and a happier world.

Discussion

The following is a brief summary of the discussion that took place after Sir Abdul Qadir had read his paper.

Professor Majid, M.A., of the Islamia College, Lahore, asked the lecturer whether the word Jama'at as used by Iqbal in the passages quoted in the lecture could not be better translated by the word "community" instead of the word "nation". The lecturer in reply agreed with Mr Majid that community was, in fact, a better translation and had been originally used by him in his paper but for certain reasons he had preferred the word "nation"' on this occasion.

Mr. Majid also pointed out that the philosophy of Iqbal, as expounded in his Persian poems, was based on the teachings of the Qur'an and could hardly be dissociated from it. The lecturer admitted that there was force in that remark but pointed out that the interpretation of Islam in the writings of Iqbal differed to some extent from that of ordinary Muslim theologians.

Mr. A Wadud Khan Qamar, of the Medical College, said that he would like to know what the lecturer thought was the attitude of Iqbal towards democracy and pointed out that it was a vital point and the lecturer had omitted it altogether.

Sir Abdul Qadir replied that his paper did not purport to be exhaustive and that he had to omit many important points, this being one of them. It seemed that Iqbal's sympathies were entirely in favour of the masses, as opposed to classes, but he did not appear to have much faith in the efficacy of a democratic system of Government.

Professor Muhammad Shafi Bhatty, M.A., of the Forman Christian College, wanted to know whether the importance of action as preached by Iqbal in his Persian poems included an admiration for the "mailed-fist" or not. Sir Abdul Qadir replied that the poet had preached that the acquisition of strength was necessary to the individual as well as to the nation as an essential condition for its existence but it did not appear that he advocated any aggressive adoption of the "mailed fist" as a means of progress. He

seems certainly to believe that if one was threatened by the "mailed fist," it was necessary for him to be ready to meet it in kind.

Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman, in winding up the proceedings, made a few remarks about Iqbal's poetry. He considered Iqbal as the greatest Muslim poet of the day, who had infused a new life into the so called dead bones of the Muslims of India. He had gone for inspiration to that period of Islamic culture when the Arabs emerged from their native land and spread all over Western Asia and Egypt. Iqbal had unfortunately no access to the original and ancient literature of his own country, otherwise he would have found some inspiration from the Vedas themselves, as distinguished from the later Hindu literature, were a source of inspiration and inculcated a life of activity and enterprise as distinguished from the life of indolence and so-called resignation preached in the later literature of the Hindus.

Iqbal's philosophy, according to the Chairman, could be summed up in a few verses of his own. He has described his body as a rose from the rose-beds of Kashmir, his heart as derived from the Hejaz and his voice as borrowed from Shiraz. Iqbal, according to Dr Narang, was a poet of dissatisfaction and discontent' with the existing state of affairs. It was for this reason that he had run down poets like Hafiz and philosophers like Plato, the latter being compared to an old goat. He had in fact shown his discontent even with Creation and found fault with God Almighty in a well-known verse of his in which he addressed God, calling upon Him to wipe out the existing creation and to produce a better type of man, as it was beneath the dignity of God Almighty to produce clay figures like the present mankind.

Iqbal, according to Dr. Narang, seems to be disgusted with the democracy of modern times as is shown by his well-known verse in which he said that two hundred donkeys could not produce the brain of one man and

if one were wise one would shun democracy. He has also railed at patriotism of a territorial kind and has considered it inconsistent with the true spirit of Islam. In doing this, however, Iqbal has stopped midway, having erected, as it were, a halfway house and has not risen to the heights to which Dr Tagore has done, inasmuch as Iqbal has not tried to replace narrow territorial patriotism by universal brotherhood and has confined himself to the brotherhood within Islam. This is a point on which he hoped Sir Abdul Qadir would throw light on some other occasion.