

Islam in Modern Urdu Poetry.

A Translation of Dr. MUHAMMAD IQBĀL's *Shikwa wa Jawāb-i shikwa*.
(The complaint and the reply to it.)

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Islam plays a great part in the present political and cultural movement in India. In contrast to some other Muslim peoples as the Turks or the Persians Indian Muhammadans keep close contact with their co-religionists. In India there is no strong aversion from islamic tradition as for instance in modern Turkey and Iran. This is due to the historical fact, that penetration by modern civilisation did not face the same barriers as were set up in Turkey by a despote as 'Abdu'l Ḥamīd. No resentment against reactionary rulers with their orthodox '*ulamā*' accompanied the development of modern literature. It is more pride in the past which animates Indian Muslim society, which has had for a century good opportunity to lead its own cultural life. Since Persian was replaced by Urdu as the official language, this latter has been becoming more and more an important vehicle of islamic thought and attracts the attention of modern Islamology.

The first attempts to write Urdu by imitating European prose coincide in time with the same phaenomenon in Turkey in the middle of the 19th century. (See Sir 'ABDUL QADIR: Modern Urdu Literature. In: Indian Arts and Letters. Index to vol. XIII. N.S. 1939. [The India Society. London. 3, Victoria Street.], pp. 102-113.) Since the highly esteemed GHĀLIB in the first half of the last century the most important writer was the late Dr. MUHAMMAD IQBĀL (1876-1939). (See Dr. MULK RAJ ANAND: The poetry of Sir M. Iqbāl. In: Indian Arts and Letters. Index to vol. V., pp. 19-39; SYED 'ABDUL VĀHID: Iqbal, His Art and Thought. Shaikh M. Ashraf. Lahore. 1944. 265 pp. "On his return [i. e. 1908 from Europe] IQBĀL wrote some epoch-making verses like *Shikwa*, *Jawāb-i Shikwa* ..." [p. 18].)

Living together with Indian Muhammadans showed me his eminent influence upon the mind of this community. It is especially his great poem *Shikwa* and its supplement *Jawāb-i Shikwa*, which are read again and again by all Indian Muslims, among whom interest for classic poetry is still more in vogue than in Europe. Orthodox as well as liberal-minded people praise it for its poetical beauty and depth of thought. The progressive elements like it by reason of the frank criticism which does not stop before the idea of God