Annemarie Schimmel

ORIENT AND OCCIDENT
My Life in East and West

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Orient and Occident

My West-Eastern Life

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وما كل من سعى يصيد غزالة
ولكن من صاد غزالة قد سعى

(Arabic Text)

Not all who try hard
Can hunt a gazelle
But those who have hunted the gazelle
Have certainly tried hard.

A Life as a One-Woman-Show

Actually, I never wanted to write an autobiography. However, a short time ago I told a student about my war-time study-years in Berlin– eighteen hours lectures every week. Seminars; during the holidays forced labour in factories, no student promotional funding, no hope to travel abroad to study the languages there, nightly bombardments and many other things– the youth, quite perplexed, commented:“ But when did you find time to go to a disco”? At that moment the thought occurred to me that it might be quite appropriate to tell something about my past.

The question that arose was: Who would be interested in the life of an Orientalist? I had become aware of this question when, a few years ago, some students considered Ignatij Krackovskij’s autobiography “Bent over Arabic Manuscripts” horribly boring. However, I have not spent my life “bent over Arabic manuscripts”– no, this activity occupied only a fraction of my life. My life was, and still

is, rich in travels and encounters with people. Between Sweden and Indonesia, between the USA and Pakistan I visited innumerable countries. I met a vast variety of people from heads of states to illiterate old women in Anatolia, from Muslim theologists to Jesuits. No need to read novels or see films: these human relationships were, invariably, more fascinating than any novel. In this, also lies the answer to the question frequently put to me: "Don't you have any private life at all?" I consider my work and everything connected with it– people and travels- more than enough private life. But if I should not be travelling and hear little from friends, I turn to my best friend, to my IBM-Selectric, on which all my work takes shape, because as a One-Woman-Show, without a secretary or assistant and– horribile dictu– without a personal computer, my life is not less than filled to the brim.

Over and over again these questions were put to me, which I want to answer in this book once and for all: How come, that this little girl from a family of non-academics insists on becoming an orientalist? How is it possible to do a Ph.D. at nineteen, write an inaugural dissertation aged twenty-three? How come that a young, non-Muslim woman is made full professor at the Islamic-Theological faculty at the university of Ankara? How could she be called as full professor to the University of Harvard after her German colleagues had explained to her earlier: "Well, my dear Schimmelin,[1] if you were a man, you would be made professor"

This lifestyle of a woman was even stranger to outsiders. I experienced it on a bus-trip with my mother (I did have a driving license, but no car). I accompanied her on her last trip (she was nearly ninety then, but very active); we were

[1] "Schimmel" in German means "White House". The feminine form is applied here.

travelling to Burgundy, because since many years I had wanted to see the magnificent romance reliefs in Autun. Next to us on the bus sat two elderly women from the Vorgebirge[2] who, during meals, attached themselves to us. They did not know French; I was their translator of the menu-card. Mama and I had decided to talk about general topics and not about my work or my travels. However, they seemed to have heard some unusual things. On the third and last day we took our lunch at Verdun and I ordered Escargot– I felt a little tempted to shock these good women. Now they could not bear it any longer and asked Mama about my line of work. I knew French, apparently also a little bit of English and I travelled a lot, so it seemed. Mama asked them: “Guess!” Their foreheads showed how hard their brains went to work. Then, suddenly: “Well, with such qualifications your daughter would surely be a stewardess with Lufthansa!”
Sela Sela Sela

[2] “Foothills”, here used as the name of a particular range.

PART 1

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH
(1922-1945)

I live my life in growing rings
Which over all things are spread
I may not, perhaps, complete the last of things,
But I must go ahead.
  I circle around God, mighty tower of old,
  And I circle thousands of years long
  Yet, I don't know: am I a falcon, a storm,
  Or a great song
Rainer Maria Rilke

People sleep, and when they die, they awaken

"This one you can't ignore!" said the neighbour to my father, when my parents in April 1922, brought me home from the clinic (the clinic in Erfurt which, quite appropriate for a Schimmel, was situated in the Marstall Street (Street of the Stables).

No, Papa had no intention of ignoring me. He had wished for a girl and was the most tender father one could imagine. It was said that he changed my nappies, and in his free time he was a great playmate to me and was full of humour. Later, he taught me the names of plants and stars and a fine style of letter writing with all the refinements of protocol. He himself wrote an excellent style and was a master-stenographer. Everything that he wrote was finest calligraphy. And then he read the horoscope for his child– a little Aries– which predicted a certain measure of fame, "social popularity", and also– quite correctly - "many travels in connection with her work."

For Mama too, I was the child of her dreams. She would have loved to have many more children, but by the time I was born she was already thirty-five years old. I therefore, became the object of her intense love. Which does not mean that from time to time, I didn't get a thrashing. It didn't harm me a bit, but it shook me when, with tears in her eyes, she silently left the room.

First impressions: wind-swept petunias on the window-sill, a silken-green lamp-shade around the gas-lamp, Mama's sewing machine in the corner, on which she produced the most beautiful dresses, embroideries or sets. She never stuck strictly to the pattern, her imagination was too vivid for that. "There were no Gainsboroughs in my parental home", it would hardly have been proper for the household of an average official of the Post- & Telegraph Service. Above the sofa hung the copy of a seascape which was meant to help soothe Mama's longing for her home at the North-Sea. Then there were two original etchings by Heinrich Vogeler– they were my first encounter with art. In a small room with dark tapestry was a large bookcase with the works of the German classical writers and numerous translations of works of world literature; there were volumes of poetry and a few novels. Later, I was enthralled by Papa's school books in which I found many poems and stories. There were also three volumes of Cosmos (1910-1912) which became the source of my scientific inspirations.

We led a rather quiet life. Both my parents were not particularly interested in parties; there were a few colleagues with whom they met off and on. Mama hated ladies' gatherings and gossip; she sometimes, said, she felt like Moses: "I have a heavy tongue". And the bourgeois wives of officials from the nearby Thuringian environs would hardly have believed her tales of the travels of her family members, of the many, who "stayed back" on the

sailing boats near Cape Horn. Or, how could they grasp that she and her siblings played with the black cook of her uncle? Or, that in winter, she and her colleagues used to ice-skate for hours on the flooded Weser-fields around Bremen? No. She preferred to keep quiet, and Papa understood her. He helped extensively in the household, on Sundays he dried dishes and assisted at the great laundry-day which, in those days, was an enormous undertaking. He did not want his wife to be overstressed by household chores; she was the companion of his thoughts, the partner of his ideas.

Thus, I grew up in a beautiful atmosphere. I never noticed tensions among my parents; I enjoyed my loving environment.

We were a typically 'Prussian' family. Duty and absolute punctuality were the order of the day. As a small child I learnt to wake up Papa at "quater to thee" for his afternoon duty. But at night I was put to bed very early, so that the parents could talk about other things– like politics– of which the child was not supposed to know anything. We never incurred debts. Everything was planned and calculated, what to buy or not to buy from the not too generous salary of an official– to send me to high-school or for a piano– and to this day the thought of incurring debts is unbearable for me. May be this is the reason why I, only once, applied for a scholarship (for my first trip to Turkey); the Persian phrase *bâr-e-minnat*, 'burden of gratitude' signifies my feelings accurately. There was one mark pocket-money for me every month. I saved it meticulously in order to buy Christmas gifts from it for my parents. But every Saturday Papa brought home a little gift for Mama– sweetmeat, or Marcipan.

On Sundays we went for a walk in the Steigerwald; I still remember every nook and corner of it, where the first snow-bells broke through the earth and, a little later,

cowslips and crowfoot blossomed in rich clusters and just in time for my birthday.

When I was four I was sent to the nearby Kindergarten. Later, one of the young teachers there wrote her exam thesis on me. When in 1995, I came to Erfurt for a lecture somebody rang me up in a voice quivering with emotion. It was ‘Aunt Lotte’, the same friendly teacher. It was followed by a big hug in the town-hall, where I was entering my name in the Golden Book. And, as late as in spring 2001, she listened intently to a talk by her former pupil.

Then came school. I found it quite interesting. But I was surprised that the teachers knew more than we. It was quite funny when some teacher trainees used us as experimental rabbits and tested three girl-students having different intellectual capabilities, in a number of things. Isn’t it fun to arrange, at top speed, words in alphabetical order? I am sure this exercise promoted my skill in making, later on, uncountable registers for my books (a job, which I love, which surprises most people). The class-teacher, (I was her fan; I always had a fan among my various teachers) gave me books to read which were far beyond the grasp of a seven years’ old child, like ‘An Introduction of the Architectural Styles’.

At that time I was admitted to the school of art and craft, although the age for admission there was ten years. But I did not enjoy colouring strange forms. I rather dreamed of drawing tiny pictures between the lines of the copy-books. Nowadays, the same old school building is the seat of the Max-Weber College of the New University in Erfurt; it was a strange feeling when I was there again– this time at a meeting as member of the Board of the university.

The winter of the year 1929 was very severe and I got sick with a kidney inflammation. I was allowed to stay at home, and teachers and class friends brought me books;

Mama read out to me (among other things, Stifter's *Bergkristall*), or she invented wonderful stories like The Monkey, the Giraffe and the Orange. However, there was one book which had a decisive influence on me: A book of fairy tales of 1870 and therefore, printed according to the old orthographic rules. This gave me the opportunity to correct all the "mistakes" (an early stage of later editing work!) Among so many fairy tales from all over the world there was one which I did not find anywhere else. It was called *Padmanaba and Hassan*. It tells the story of an Indian guru who introduced a youth of Damascus to the higher wisdoms and finally, takes him through a wonderland deep down under a well. There, in a vault full of the most precious jewels, the greatest prince of the world lay in state, and on his tomb was written: "People sleep, and when they die, they awaken." The phrase hit me like a stroke of lightning. Ten years later I heard that this phrase is attributed to the Prophet Mohammad and that it was a favourite of the Sufis, the mystics of Islam. At this moment I knew– perhaps not yet in a concrete way– that this was my path, that the Orient was my destination, the Orient of mystical wisdom. And the encounter of the Indian guru with the Muslim youth pointed– as I understood it much later - to my special focus, the Indian-Muslim culture.

Erfurt was an ideal town for a child. It had about one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants and was thus, not too crowded so as not to know every nook and corner of it. It had a beautiful forest, the Steiger, and numerous nurseries. Around it were many pretty villages like Möbisburg, and when the fruit-trees blossomed many people rushed to the Fahnerschen Höhen. A bit further away was Drei Gleichen– wasn't it that once, a nobleman from Drei Gleichen had, from the Crusades, brought home an Arab woman? Legend tells that the mistress of the fort received the stranger gratefully because she had freed her

husband. The Thüringer Wald attracted nature lovers in summer and skiers in winter (my own efforts at it mostly ended with my landing in the snow). And then there were the glass-blowers in Lauscha, who produced charming things. Sometimes a woman came to the door with a wicker-basket full of glass items. My glass collection started with three tiny penguins which she called "Lupinen".

In the town the memory of Meister Eckart was alive. He had preached in the Prediger Church. Luther seemed omnipresent. People even showed the spot where he, frightened by a thunderstorm, exclaimed:" Help me, Santa Anna, I want to be a monk!" The Wartburg, not very far from Erfurt, reminds us about his work of translating the Bible. The German classical epoch was much alive, Weimar and Jena close by. Goethe met Napoleon in Erfurt. The Humboldt-brothers were part of local history and likewise, Dalberg– we were surrounded by the memories of the great ones of the past.

And then the churches: the sober Barfüsser Church, in early gothic style, but impressive even as a ruin. The Michaelis Church and a number of others. I felt that a real church must always be in the gothic style. The climax and central to all, however, were the cathedral and St. Severi; built majestically on a hill they overlooked the central market place. Earlier, a huge mosaic of Mary and the Child Jesu on a golden background decorated the western wall of the cathedral. It has disappeared, not through bombs or the rule of the German Democratic Republic (DDR), but as a consequence of a necessary repair to the roof which left no space of the dazzling picture. I recall that once– it must have been in 1937 - area- commander Saukel, who wanted to move all important artifacts to Weimar, came to Erfurt. Seeing the area- commander, whose name popular coinage had changed from area-commander Saukel to area-

commander Gaukel, the Hitler-Youth, who had been assembled to welcome him, kept shouting: “The cathedral will stay, the cathedral will stay!”

Although the cathedral and the Severi Church are Catholic, the favourite festival of the people of Erfurt took place on the Market Place, on the steps of the cathedral. On November 10th, Luther’s birthday, the children of all confessions walked with their lanterns through the town and to the cathedral. On its stairs the students of the high school with their lanterns in white, red and green formed the Luther-Rose. After short prayers we all sang in a mighty voice “Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott”.[1] Many of us went into shops and sang there in the hope of getting a Marcipan-goose.

Martini was the first day of tuning in for Christmas. Preparations for the festivities began around the first advent, but never before All Saints. On that day housewives began to bake. Stollen had to be prepared which here were called ‘slices’. This was a difficult task. During the night we had to go to test whether the dough had risen to the correct level. Very early next morning it had to be taken to the baker and by noon we could collect it from him, warm and slightly browned, and give it its final, glowing touches with a lot of butter and icing sugar. Often we saw the baker’s apprentices walk along with long boards on their heads on which they balanced six or seven Stollen. The whole town smelled of cake. Mama baked one Stollen for her friends. I was allowed to take it to them and got a sweet for it; or even a sip of port, as messenger-boys get. Papa purchased and decorated the tree. In Thuringia it was customary to look out for a thin-stemmed tree whose branches spike off evenly and straight because later, whisks

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[1] “God is our steady port”

are made from them. Mama was against this, therefore our small trees were evenly dense and beautiful.

In our home too, Christmas season began on the first Advent. From that date on, no mail was opened unless it was something official or a bill. Everything was placed for Holy Night under the decorated tree and we then opened parcels and letters– we were a family in which letter-writing was high on the agenda. Mostly we had simple, cold[2] dinner, because we wanted to enjoy the evening together with Mama. When I got a piano I surprised my parents with "Zion's daughters" and other beautiful carols. We hardly ever had a visitor. The Holy Night was ours. And this, even now, is my way of celebrating Christmas– alone with a silvery, small decorated tree and enormous amounts of mail.

My Youth in Erfurt

In 1930 we moved to a modern flat. It overlooked the flowery nursery of I.C. Schmidt and was near the Goethe High-School to which I got admitted two years later. My favourite occupation remained the same– reading books, preferably on animals or the Orient. What an event it was to listen to a lecture by Sven Hedin and to get his autograph!

In Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben* which I was given at about this time, it was Bernhard, the young Jewish orientalist who was my favourite figure, because he solely lived for his manuscripts. In the Goethe High-School I shocked my dear class teacher with my first essay on the topic 'A Letter to my Doll' in which I wrote about the boxer revolution in China– after all, my little dolls (my favourite one lived in a nutshell) were all, somehow, dressed in Oriental styles. I liked the school, although– or, just because of it– the French teacher was known all over

[2] In Germany, dinner is usually 'cold': slices of bread with cheese or sausage.

town for his strictness. But he was an exemplary teacher. I soon became the class representative and was allowed to coach the other girls in grammar and vocabulary. Three years later, I was transferred to the Luisen-School where Mr. Kraus, the Latin teacher, who almost looked like an ancient Roman, gave to each of us a Latin name and lovingly introduced us to the language and culture.

These years, however, also held serious changes for us. Even now I remember with photographic accuracy how Papa, on 30th January 1933, came home during the lunch break and turned on the radio. And how Mama called out from the kitchen, asking about the result of the election. "Hitler has become Chancellor", he said. From the kitchen a deep sigh was heard: "Oh my God!" Mama seemed to fathom what was in store for us. Generally, I was kept totally away from politics; I don't even know for whom my parents voted. And I remember, how, at the time of the Röhm-revolt, the news-paper was carefully hidden from the child. My first political recollection relates to Brüning's emergency laws of 1929 and 1930. When I saw the word 'Emergency Law' on the news-paper which I collected from outside– it was during the holidays in Carolinensiel– my steps slowed down, because I knew, how angry Papa would be on reading such news.

In the course of time I was recruited by the BDM (Union of German Girls). Some joined it because of the smart uniform: a dark-blue skirt, white blouse, dark-blue tie. The uniform was called 'Kluft' (outfit). The inventor of this term apparently did not know that this was originally a Jewish (Yiddish) word. During the group-assemblies we occupied ourselves with hobby-activities, with paper and other materials; we read and sang folk-songs. We loved these evenings, and the old song books– as far as I still have some of them– did not contain any anti-Semitic texts. It may be that the lyrics for the male youth were more

outspoken. The song ‘We are Hitler’s brown heaps’ was soon dropped from the list. Saturdays we went on outings, there were also camping nights in which I never participated. I also succeeded in avoiding most of the propaganda films which were shown in school from time to time– I don’t remember how I managed to do that. I used this time to sit together with Evchen, the only Jewish pupil in class– Evchen, with whom I not only shared the birthday but also the pleasure for languages as well as the revulsion against sports, above all, against ball games. If ever I went to a cinema house I saw films with Lilian Harvey and Conrad Veidt; I did not understand why he suddenly disappeared from the screen. “Perhaps he is a Jew”? somebody ventured to ask. But as yet we hardly knew anything about anti-Semitism; it was only when the few Jewish girls suddenly stood by themselves in the school-yard and later– so it was said– went to different schools, that we got alerted.

In 1936 we enthusiastically, followed the Olympic Games over the radio and on the news-reels. Even though my grandmother in her North-Sea village hardly knew what skiing was, she told us with shining eyes, when she heard the news over the radio: “Christl Kranz won”!

At the age of fifteen we had dance lessons which I did not find inspiring at all, because my romantic soul desired other conversational topics than small-bore shooting and exercises. During a dance lesson the news exploded that the father of my friend, who was a priest at the Barfüsser church, had been taken into protective custody. What did that mean? Luckily he was soon released, but a shadow was cast over our lighthearted time. When a group of selected, loyal BDM women leaders together with equally selected HJ (Hitler Youth) were permitted to celebrate, I was happy that I was spared this exercise. We were compelled to do a cooking course so as to become good German housewives.

This, at least, was fun and useful as well. Why not write a didactic poem on the preparation of gruel?

In October 1937, shortly after this was over I, once again, complained to my friend Dorle, how desperately I wanted to learn an Oriental language. "Oh," she said, "Uncle Kraus (our Latin teacher) knows somebody who knows Arabic". Hearing this and deciding for it was done all at once. I also heard about one journalist named Ellenberg (pet-name 'Effendi') who taught Arabic in Jena. My parents agreed to give it a try. Thus, one fine day, Mama took me to him. The hat that I wore in order to appear older, I would nowadays at my present age, consider too old-lady-style. Ellenberg, who hailed from Hamburg, was in his mid-sixties and was ready to try and see what would come of it. After the first lesson I was fully under his spell. For me, the week consisted of days before Thursday and after Thursday, the Arabic day. I was not allowed to speak to anybody about my rather un-national escapades, but my parents showed great interest in my studies. Mama, up to her last day, knew the words of the first lesson the *Great Harder*– a grammar book whose abridged version, the *Harder-Parat*, I was later, in 1967, to edit.

Effendi was just the right teacher that an enthusiastic, fifteen years old girl could dream of. He was of the school of Georg Jacob who was more concerned about realities and less about grammatical hairsplitting or about theological or philosophical problems; he also granted Turkish a proper place in Oriental studies and was enthusiastic about its culture. Each week there was not only a lesson in grammar but also an introduction into Islamic studies and history; every week he allowed me to take home one or two specialist books, which my parents likewise read with great interest. Mama was to become my best critic, who later perused all my German manuscripts and admonished me if my arguments were erroneous or the

sentences unclear. "I am the voice of the people", she liked to state.

One of the peaks of the Arabic course came when Effendi took me to Jena where he had two Arab students– they were the first Arabs that I ever met! And I had to, or rather, was permitted, to recite to them the Fateha, the first sura of the Quran, in Arabic!

In order to put breaks on my enthusiasm I planned to write something and composed a book in which I copied everything that came into my hands: there were maps of mineral deposits and vegetation, pictures of mosques between Kairouan and India, text samples from different Oriental languages which I mostly copied from one of my favourite books, a publication of the British Bible Society which contained the verse of John 3, 16 ("And thus God loved the world…") in over six-hundred languages.. I drew the portraits of the Moghul emperors of India as well as a market place in Skopje, also Persian silk-screens as well as some miniatures– in short: it was a colourful, light-hearted and informative book which I got bound nicely and called it "Land of Light". Some time during the summer of 1938 I showed it to my rather surprised teacher - and, truly speaking, today I can hardly understand how I could assemble such a book at that time.

The reason was that just at that time, I was more than busy. My father was expecting his transfer to Berlin. Therefore he requested that I may be allowed to skip one school year so that I could do my graduation in Erfurt. But everybody forgot that just then, the schooling years had been reduced to twelve years by reason of which I actually skipped two years. Unfortunately the new undergraduate class had started with English and not like us, with French as a foreign language. That meant for me, to cover seven years of English within a few months. And the texts which

we had to read were hardly inspiring– like the following text from a puritan source, whose hero wanted nothing but

A little house whose humble roof
Is waterproof

Why wasn't there some Beatrix Potter or some limericks! Thus, my poorest grade in the graduation certificate was that of English. Perhaps this was the reason why, many years later, God sent me to Harvard so as to correct this deficiency.

In my graduation class– where I felt very happy and was received cordially– I was the only one who didn't wear the coloured band, the mark of a BDM leader. But for BDM duties I really had no time (and even less inclination!) In the graduation magazine therefore, there was a large advertisement: "Who can turn an Arabic Schimmel into an obedient domestic mare?" But nobody succeeded in doing that.

Family Holidays in Ostfriesland and Thüringen

Every summer we went to Carolinensiel in Ostfriesland.[3] It was a long trip from Erfurt which involved many changes of trains and began at sunrise. Sometimes we stayed for two or three days with Mama's relatives in Bremen: the husband of her cousin was a Hanse-captain and travelled twice a year to Calcutta! How I envied him! A picture postcard of the Victoria Memorial was part of my most treasured possessions.

I liked Bremen– Roland the Giant at the town-hall of Bremen was like a familiar friend. An excursion to Worpswede impressed me a lot; at that time I was about eight years old. It was the environment of Heinrich Vogeler where Aunt Mia lived for years, and where I started to sense a bit of the spirit of his early years. After Bremen we continued the journey. Behind Jever the cornfields

[3] Part of the North– Sea coast

stretched on and on and the sea breeze gave a saltish touch to the air– and then it was holidays! Uncle Rudi, Mama's brother who owned a ship and who spun the most fascinating sailor-yarn, stood at the tiny railway station which was the border between Ostfriesland and Oldenburg. We walked to the small brick church with its free-standing tower which was surrounded by a flower-bedecked graveyard. Where else could one see so many red bulbs of begonias in blossom but here? From there we turned into the Meuse, which is now called after Aunt Mia: Marie-Ulfers Path. Grandma's low house was surrounded by some elms with wild creepers between them; next to it was a small garden with a few berry-bushes; at the one house-wall wild cress was growing while the wall facing the sun had a few rosebushes with a strong fragrance. Miez, "the most beautiful tomcat of Butjadingen" welcomed the guests, which later was done by his progeny. The low "structure" housed the toilet; next to it lived a few happy hens and in front of it was the Pütt, the well, from which we drew the precious liquid. On Saturday evening the many narrow paths around the house were raked; it was customary in the village.

I loved grandma dearly. Once upon a time the old woman must have been very beautiful with her dark hair and light eyes. A child often does no understand matters from the world of the adults; but from her emanated that dark mood which perceived a sin in even the smallest amusement. "Every sin you commit is retributed on earth"– this adage got stuck in the mind of the eight-year old child while washing dishes. Also at that time, I learnt the adage from her:

Do good and throw it in the sea,
If not the fish, the Lord will see

An adage from the Old Testament which in Islamic literature has a prominent place: “Give, without hoping for reward.”

My grandpa had died a fortnight before I was born; he must have been an extremely warmhearted and gentle person who, like all the ancestors and family members, had been captain on a sailing boat. In it, he went to Norway to bring dried cod from there and take it to Portugal and Spain from where he brought wine, while other family-members travelled to Batavia (Indonesia). At the end of a three-months voyage to Brazil where he took some precious cargo the ship, the “Anna”, by mistake of the pilot sank while negotiating the well-known, difficult entry into Porto Allegre. He was ruined. Being a good captain he was immediately offered a job as captain of a steam boat for long voyages; but he declined the offer, because he wished to remain his own master. But he was a bad businessman who would rather pay too much than too little taxes on a meager income and my grandmother, with a steadily growing number of children had a tough time. Other misfortunes struck the family: The eldest daughter– a highly talented girl, I was told– died in a gas explosion. Sometimes I wonder whether my fear of fire, which plagued me since my earliest childhood, might not be mysteriously connected to this happening which however, occurred ten years before I was born.

The first son of the grandparents who was everybody’s favourite was killed during the Herero-revolt in South-Western Africa. There were two more boys and then Mama.

The serious-minded, blond girl was born in January under the sign of Saturn. In her, the sea-faring tradition is more alive than in any of the others; on the one side she was withdrawn and sensitive and on the other, enterprising and forward looking; she also believed in ghosts and

dreams, and the Second Face guided her on her unusual and long life. After her, the charming Mia was born who, over long periods, lived in Holland and Worpswede, and later became known as a writer. From the time she wrote the festival drama *Mary of Jever*, she became known through her vernacular comedies on the North-German radio. A lot of family history has gone into her second novel, *Stormy Siel*. One room in the Harbour Museum of Siel on Carolinensiel is dedicated to her. I loved this aunt, particularly since she was *"kattenmaal",* crazy after cats. I was a bit afraid of Aunt Uli, the youngest, who had fought bravely for a position in the world of business and later, became the director of the Martin Brinckmann AG in Essen. Only much later did I understand that a certain roughness in her attitude was a defence mechanism from the struggle at her job. All the children visited the tiny village school where an enthusiastic teacher taught them things which are nowadays, hardly known to high-school students. All our family members were passionate readers. But Mama was the first girl who left the village and took up a job.

In the village, everybody knew everybody. At the end of the Meuse lived Aunt Nelly, an incredibly emaciated distant cousin. At times I met another relative at her place, Uncle Gerhard (Tjarks), the founder of the German news paper La Plata in Buenos Aires. The parrot and the fascinating minerals in his house were of course, of utmost interest for the child. I was allowed to shop in the tiny stores of the village. On my visit to the Harbour Museum in 1998, I discovered that Krishan Janssen–was still running his old store, and– now at ninety– clearly remembered the little girl with the blond plaits who, sixty years earlier, was so keen to meet him. The two bakeries competed for the best delicacies. The well-rounded Mrs Janssen cut up the fragrant black bread which for dinner, was eaten with

freshly caught, small shrimps. The other bakery sold delicious cookies, Ehstands-cakes, tasty cinnamon-Bretzels and the famous Wind of Clien, soft, small meringues which I sometimes received as a reward. To get strawberries I had to go to the nursery-gardener. I didn't like that very much, because the kindly man was deaf and dumb and therefore, somewhat awesome.

When high tide came, we walked among the fields on the outer dike to the watt looking for small, pink sea-shells and played in the low, but treacherous water. At he horizon we could see Wangeroog and Spiekeroog. Once during the holidays, it was a ritual to walk to Neuharlingersiel, seven kilometers away, and even though the way past the two windmills on the dike was, for my small feet, endlessly long, we always enjoyed the tea in one of the inns at the harbour.

The tea! East-Friesian tea must be dark and strong and is served in small cups in which there is a Kluntje, a chunk of sugar- candy which gave off a faint, crackling sound when the tea was poured; it was crowned by a Wulkje, a small cloud of cream. The tea culture was taken loving care of, and the consistency of the cream as well as the quality of the water (rainwater) played an important part in it. To prepare tea was a mysterious ritual which only well experienced older women really mastered. When my father, at his first visit to his future in-laws came to the Siel he was, so I was told, quite tipsy after his twelvth or fourteenth cup of the delicious tea. Who in Vogtland could ever have heard of such a tea or even dreamed of it! There, they drank tea of linden-blossoms and things like that which Mama, up to her last day, most heartily rejected (so did I)!

In later years I spent most of my holidays on the Fürstinnengrashaus-estate where I had met a girl who became my good friend; I, together with her and her little

brother, presented romantic dramas in the hey in which I invariably, played the kidnapped victim. We rowed in a flat, old boat on the Tief, played among the horses for half days or more and sat, all two or three of us, on the white pony Lies which suffered us without complaining.

But the cosiest time was in Grandma's living room with the red plush-sofa and some beautiful Dutch wardrobes. There also stood the model of grandpa's self-carved ship which later, we made over to the Seafaring-Museum in Bremerhafen together with the documents of the Sea-Office on the loss of the "Anna". There were books in that room and Velhagen and Klasing's monthly magazines of several years which I made it a point to read. Everything came to an end when, in 1938, grandma died. A few times we made the trip and an excurion to Borkum, where Mama's half-sister Aunt Johanna lived. The steam-voyage from Emden was magnificent.However, I suspected that the co-travellers found the small girl horrible who, when waves were violent, was thrilled and shouted: "Papa, swing more"! I loved the daintily done household of Aunt Johanna. There was one object for which I envied her: an amethyst-druse, into which a tiny church had been carved– a model of he church of Idar-Oberstein, the centre of the German gemstone cutting industry which, to this day, is one of my favourite places.

Mostly Papa had to return to duty earlier than we; the leave for officials was not as generous as it is today. When we got home several days later, he presented us with the first peaches of the season for our reception.

We did not visit Papa's, relatives all that often. Aunt Klara's husband was a baker near Osterburg in homely Weida. At he outskirts of the town there was a large garden with beehives which was maintained by jolly cousin Rudi who was much attached to Mama; cousin Lene was, like her mother, passionately dedicated to embroidery.

Everything in the house was decorated with cross-stitch, wall paintings and blankets, foot-mats and the toilet-seat cover– from everywhere in the house a visitor was greeted by cross-stitch flowers, animals and arabesques, some of them very pretty and technically perfect. Sometimes we wondered why there was no embroidery in the goat-stable. But I should not make fun of the dear, loving aunt. Under different circumstances she could have produced better and more useful things.

Father's forebears came from Reussen and were weavers. Papa's eldest brother was, like his father, director of a weaving company. We only visited him once in Zwickau, because Uncle Reinhard was a difficult man and his wife, after the death of many small children turned very religious. She became excessively pious. After World-war I, her son Alfred could not bear the domestic atmosphere any longer and migrated to America, where he got a good job. My father became his mentor who, through letters, gave him again and again, sound advice for his life. My father never learnt that Alfred named his son after him, Paul; the war cut the connection for years; Paul became an internationally known microbiologist. It was one of the most astounding things that we found each other again in Harvard, that we were accepted on the same day to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and that both Paul's daughters married Arabs and became Muslims. It was really not my doing. "It just runs in the genes", Paul used to say laughingly.

We were not a church-going family. Mama's family was strictly devoted to the Ostfriesian Lutheranism.For eight long years, she was taught, during daily religious instructions in school: "God threatens to punish all who overstep the commandments". Any fun, even the most harmless one, was a sin. Later, she often told us that it was my father who taught her that God was love. We stuck to

the traditions of Lutheranism but my parents also looked around elsewhere. After the first world-war there were a number of esoteric groups in the country; like a strange man Muck-Lamberti by name, who went around Thuringia and apparently did have some success in Erfurt; but I remember nothing but his name. My parents approached some of the movements and drew away again, like the anthroposophists. Papa was quite close to the Neugeistbewegung (new spirit movement); as a child, I off and on looked up their magazine 'The white Flag' and read the resounding but rather confusing German mantras Bo Yin Ras. Mama found her best comfort in Ralph W. Trine's 'In Harmony with the Eternal', a work of the Emerson tradition.

One of the reasons that we rarely went to church was that Mama fainted easily and could not bear church music. I probably inherited my heartfelt dislike for Johann Sebastian Bach from her. But we were well versed in the Bible. We mastered the words and figures of the Old Testament; after all, they were a part of our cultural heritage. How could one otherwise, understand European painting and the innumerable mentions of Old Testament figures and events in literature? And wasn't it that the Psalms, anytime, offered consolation? How many times did we pray, in times of stress and temptation, the 43rd Psalm, calling out:

Vindicate me, O God
And defend my cause against an unholy people;
From deceitful and unjust men deliver me!
For thou are the God in whom I take refuge;
Why hast thou cast me off?

In the preparatory class for confirmation in 1937, I was the only one who chose a verse from the Old Testament, Isaiah 40, 31:

but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall rise on wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be wary,
they shall walk and not faint

It is a verse that, to this moment of my life, has accompanied and sustained me.

We– from grandma down to me– knew the New Testament by heart; we used its words in common word games. It was the Lutheran translation which was dear and near to our hearts. I never understood why this great linguistic creation which influenced our German language so lastingly, needed ‘correction’ by perhaps more correct formulations. One may look up the wording in the Christmas story. This tendency, to translate holy texts in a very dry manner can be observed also in translations of non-Christian religions. There are boring, ‘literal’ translations of the Quran which do not convey at all how, as a model of beauty, even the sound of this book moves the believers, as Navid Kermani has aptly shown us. I am so old-fashioned as to alot the numinous an important role in religious texts. A religious text of whatever origin is something different from a news-paper or a timetable.

And then the richness of the hymn-book! I wonder what we would have done without Paul Gerhardt’s “Command thy ways”, those comforting words, which consoled and sustained us during the war nights and hours of despair! When airborne, I still find comfort in his words:

… “who gives direction, ways and paths
clouds and air and winds,
he will also show a path
which your foot can travel.”

It is one of the songs over which, while reciting it, the followers of various religions can meet. When I taught at the Islamic-Theological Faculty in Ankara and explained,

among other things, Church History to my Muslim students, I translated this song for them. Everyone found in it the expression of his faith too, the unquestioning faith in God, the all-merciful, the all-forgiving. Other church-songs too, expressed the same, like the dynamic "Praise thy Lord, the mighty King of Honour", or the powerful "Great God we sing your Praise". I believe that on this level of worship there exists a communality among the followers of all religions. For this reason I have again and again, translated prayers and hymns from one to the other tradition. One day, I found that the simple farm-women from the Vorgebirge, who shared the hospital-room with Mama, gratefully read the little book "Your Realm cometh" (in the second edition: "Your Will be done"), in which I had arranged Islamic prayers after the pattern of the pleas in the Lord's Prayer.

As a child however, I also admired figures like Krishnamurti, and the mystical piety of Islam began to fascinate me through Friedrich Rückert's translations of Rumi.

Ways to Music

Nowadays hardly anyone can imagine the impact that the first radios in our homes had on us. It made the world of music accessible to all (of course, along with the news of other peoples). I still remember, I was nine years old when Verdi's 'Power of Fate' was transmitted. What an experience for Mama who loved Verdi! She had very fine musical sensibilities and often reacted to sounds in an extraordinary way. After one concert, during which first Hindemith was played followed by Haydn, Haydn's music appeared to her like a glance into a brightly lit, beautiful hall in a sun-flooded park. On the other hand, dissonances and minor scales often made her physically sick. I personally, had fascinating experiences of colour scales when listening to very modern music, like deep red and sapphire-blue.

My first conscious experience of music came at the time of a visit to good friends of my parents who owned a gramophone. At the few times that I, as a child, was allowed to accompany my parents there I heard harp music from Mignon. But the unforgettable moment was when I heard Heinrich Schlusnus sing “Dream through Dawn” by Richard Strauss. I love this song to this day.

My piano lessons were not really crowned by success. Neither could I present Purcell’s *Rigandon* to which my first piano teacher tried to force me, nor come up to the expectations of the second teacher. The *Merry Countryman* returned home with heavy, mud-coated boots instead of happily and light-footed. I was not able to play even the smallest piece by Johann Sebastian Bach– my insides totally revolted against his music; one may even call it an allergy. Some decades later I wrote (pardon me, music fans!):

Es sagte ein Jüngling zu Bacharach:
“Wer macht mich denn mit so viel Krache wach?”
Ich trat aus Versehen
Dem Mann auf die Zehen –
Und jetzt spielt der Unmensch aus Rache Bach”
(Said a youth from Bacharach:
Who wakens me with so much noise?
By mistake
I stepped on his toes
And for revenge the monster now plays Bach)

When in 1936 we left the Dammweg and moved to a beautiful, old flat. The lodgers above us played chamber music every week, so that my parents enjoyed these private concerts from their bedroom. The two elderly ladies below us had two pianos and invited me to play with them– not as a duty, but to get acquainted with our classical music in piano transcriptions. We played on two pianos or fourhanded. I was fast in reading scores and through the

rather easy settings I learnt quite a lot of Beethoven, Schubert and Mozart. Whenever I liked a piece in particular, I practiced it for some time– particularly the easier Chopin preludes.

When later, I went to the Orient, music began to fascinate me. Even now certain pieces from the Mevlevi-ritual like *Dinle sozumu* put me into a trance– that song which is sung before the final part of the Mevlevi-ritual, at least in some compositions of the circle. I also deeply enjoy the simple melodies of the Turkish *ilahis* which end in the dhikr, the remembrance of God.

I am– the longer, the more– fascinated by Persian religious music with its powerful rhythms which are highlighted by the large tambourines. It was my Harvard assistant Brian who opened for me the gates to the classical Indian music. One should not listen to this music from recordings; its special charm lies in observing the interplay of the musicians, their sparse gestures, their swift hands, and follow the artistic structure of a raag and to learn the melodies dedicated to each hour of the day ; and above all, to listen to the breath-taking tablas, the pair of drums. The tambura, the drone, which is played in the background, seems easy to be plucked until you have tried it. I speak from experience.

One of my somewhat strange Pakistani colleagues from Boston College built this instrument for me from two wooden salad-bowls–on which I had to accompany him when he sang Indian ghazals while he turned up his eyes and rather out of tune. It appeared that the Indo-Persian poet knew him when he wrote around 1300:

"The mountains sighed
with the echo of his incessant cries."

Brian introduced me to the Karnataka music, a style which originated from southern India and seems less melancholic than the North-Indian tradition. When I first

heard this music I felt as if friendly elephants with small bells passed by white huts under palm-trees, smiling in an early morning sunshine. A dhrupad recital by the world famous Daggar– brothers in the residence of the Indian ambassador in Bonn fascinated me so much that I sat on the floor for one and a half hours without once leaning back– although the dhrupad, the oldest form of Indian music, is known to sound strange to foreign ears. And what happened at a flute recital in the house of Anita Karputala, the sponsor of Indian artists in Delhi? The contact with the artist was so intense that he played for a full hour, instead of the fifteen minutes as initially planned. The relationship between musician and audience is indispensable for the success of an Indian concert.

And what to say of Pakistani folk-music which enthuses me since my first visit to the Subcontinent! Over the years I met almost all the leading musicians; Alan Faqir, a fine actor as well, who liked a theatrical style when rendering his Sindhi folk-songs; or the wonderful singer Abida Perveen. She is a genuine interpreter of mystical poetry from Sindh and Punjab. The player of the *alghosa*, the double-flute, or the artists on the various percussion instruments– they all were part of my life, moved me and brought me joy over the years. Whenever I came to Islamabad, Karin arranged a recital for me in her home. I often recalled a Rumi-legend, which was translated by Rückert:

Once our master Jelaluddin spoke thus:
"Music is like the grinding of the gates of paradise."
One of the impudent fools answered him thus:
"I am not fond of the grinding of gates."
In reply the master spoke thus:
"I hear the gates, they open up.
What you hear are the gates
That shut!"

A House full of Poetry

Our house did not echo from the sound of music, but of poetry, of literature. My parents had met through their love for poetry. Mama, as the first girl, had left her village and took up a job at the post-office. After some years in Varel and in Bremen she, at the end of world-war I, had reported to Namur. There, a dark-haired telegraphic assistant saw the shy, slim and blond girl and soon discovered that she was not only very beautiful, but also well read and that she shared his love for poetry. After a number of post-war complications they married and moved to Erfurt where my father had been posted. Small wonder, that their love for poetry became, right from the beginning, a dominant factor in their daughter's life as well.

Mama sometimes sang songs to me in Friesian dialect. Even now I love the sad hare-song by Klaus Groth:

Lütt Matten de Haas — Little Matthew the hare
De maekt sich een Spass — Tried to have some fun

A fun which ends with the fox eating up the dance-happy hare. Sometimes I also heard funny songs like "Uns'Pastor sin Kau" (the cow of our priest), or the nonsense-song "Burlala".

When I grew bigger, Papa read to us every Sunday afternoon. Starting with E.T.A. Hoffman's Golden Bowl, we went through the whole German literature. Papa, with his warm voice, was an excellent reader. Mama preferred him to read dramas or relate plays rather than go to the theatre. In this way she cold recreate the works in her own imagination (I feel the same way).

I became familiar with the German classics; later, some French dramas were added to it. We ended up with Daudet's *Adventures prodigieuses de Tartarin de Tarascon*. The faithful camel which swims after the hero became part of my imaginary zoo.

The Nasoben, the mooncalf and the werewolf were also placed there; Morgenstern was often quoted at home. I enjoy his Galgenlieder (Songs of the Gallows) to this day. Later on I discovered the wonderful English nonsense-literature– Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll, and became addicted to the limerick.

Since Papa had a fine sense of humour, parodies were also part of our domestic pleasures. Even now I enjoy shocking serious-minded humans by reciting the Sackschen Loreley, or the 'Graniche des Ibigus' by Lene Vogt. To this day I enjoy Gumppenberg's 'Teutsches Dichterross' which is probably the most successful collection of elegant parodies.

I went through Papa's school-books in which I found poems of the 19th century which are hardly known anymore. Schiller's ballads charmed me (by the way: Schiller has been translated into Oriental languages much more than Goethe; he is more dramatic and therefore, easier to access for a foreigner). It was only some time later that I found my way to Goethe but then, very intensely so. In the course of time I discovered the reflections of the Orient in his poetry.

I don't remember much of the literature that we read in school. But I do recall one reading of Agnes Miegel. In school we read her *Women of Nidden* and the *Nibelungen-poems* which made me shiver. But then there was the *Beautiful Agnete,* one of the poems that my mother loved the most. There was also *The Legend of the Noble Manuel*, the ancient theme of dream and reality which came from Indian mythology. It became the opening for Heinrich Zimmer's wonderful book *Maya.* Many traditions know the story of the man who keeps his head under water and, within a few moments, lives a whole life which then proves to be real. The Islamic tradition has adopted the motif in order to explain to the doubters the miracle of the prophet's

heavenly journey. "Merciful God of the world, speak, what is appearance"? the king asks at the end of Agnes Miegel's ballad. Isn't it that people sleep, and when they die, they awaken? This is what I had read as a child. What kind of dream is it of which Clemens Brentano has been singing:

When the lame weaver dreams that he was weaving,
The sick lark aloft, may also dream that he was swaying
What is it then that remains?
When truth then comes along naked like a newborn
It painfully smashes the dreams to smithereens.

Whatever it might have been, whenever I travelled through the rocky world of the Hindukush, I felt I was seeing the mountain queen in her fairy castle whom in his dream, the Noble Manuel had married.

Of course Ina Seidel was among our books. We read her reprints frequently, the comforting *Lindenduft*. But I liked some of her other poems better. At that time her *Wunschkind* was a bestseller. I did not like it. I preferred *Lennacker* which is the story of a pastor's family through twelve generations. It offers a clear picture into church history and Lutheran thinking. In the first and the last chapters, the author displayed her skill in describing above all, elderly pious ladies who are met, in the ladies' home, by a young officer freshly returned from the war– "faded ladies, whom no angel had ever visited". Although, as far as he knew, they all came from pastors' homes.

At home we had Scherr's *History of the World* which I loved to read. It is now that I am taken by surprise that in this work which first appeared in 1885, the names of Shah Abdul Latif, the Sindhi mystic, and the Uzbek Shaibani-nama appeared. When I was fourteen I found for Papa's birthday in a second-hand bookstore Soergel's *Poetics and Poets of the Time* (1911) which I devoured. I still feel the thrill that gripped me when I read the verses by Alfred

Mombert "*It was at night, when the sea-horn blew…*" and how delighted I was with his fantastic imagery. I was also interested in Otto zur Linde. His most gripping poems, however, I discovered only later. Among them was that fearsome one on loneliness:

When you are deserted
The thing that makes you shudder:
Your loneliness
Becomes a ghost.
That nothing is walking beside you
Walks on inaudible soles
Always and inseperable
Next to you.
Wherever you go, there is nothing-
That what your hand clasps,
Goes untraceably silent
Next to you.
Your loneliness
(days' and nights' ghost)
Will even cross the stars
Next to you.

Mama loved the works of Helene Voigt-Diederichs. Clara Viebig's novel "*Eifel"* was, for those days, too realistic and I was therefore, not allowed to read it. I leafed through the passionate love-poems of Ricarda Huch; her ballads and the ones by Lulu von Strauss und Torney moved and frightened me. But I shall never forget a line from the work of a poetess who most probably is forgotten these days:

"Thus hear: woman
Has grown in the nineteenth century"!
She said with large eyes and shot him down.

Not very lyrical, but impressive at a time when the German woman was daily indoctrinated about her duty to produce as many blond children as possible. In the BDM

we read Börris von Münchhausen's *"Die Glocken stürmten vom Bernwardsturm"* (The Bell*s* thundered from the Tower of Bernward) and *Jenseits des Tales standen ihre Zelte,* (Beyond the valley stood their tents) obviously without really understanding their meaning. Some of Münchhausen's ballads I enjoyed reading, also his deliciously poetic description of harvest-day in Windischleuba, a typical Thuringian genre picture. I was, and still am, delighted by the *Ballade vom Brennesselbusch* (Ballad of the stinging nettle bush).

We didn't have many visitors, but at the occasional gathering, Papa liked to read out, while I heard the sound of his voice from my room. At such evenings modern poets were frequently read, like Stefan George– not his philosophical verses, but his lyrical nature poems which are still echoing in my mind:

> The hill on which we climb holds the shadow of the night
> While the other one, across, still breathes in the light…

We were all particularly fond of Rilke and often recited from the Jardin du Luxembourg; the White Merry-Go-Round Elephant; the Panther, whose boundless hopelessness "behind a thousand bars" transmits itself to the readers, also the Flamingos became a part of our thinking just like many verses from *The Hours Book* (the cult book of my parents was *The Cornet* which I never liked). When I grew older I was moved by the fact that Rilke, in some of his verses, uses a diction which seems to be taken from Islamic mysticism: "What will you do, God, when I am dead"? It might have been written under the influence of Angelus Silesius, but for an Orientalist the nearest source seems to be the great Andalusian theosophist Ibn 'Arabi (died 1240) and his belief in a God who had been created in the minds of men.

In his letters from Spain and Tunesia I perceived a profound understanding of the Islamic world. Few poets have grasped the enigma of Mohammad better than Rilke in his “Mohammad’s Calling”– “… And here was an earlier one who had read…, who already knew the divine word before Gabriel disclosed it to him. And there is nowhere a more befitting characterization of Persian art than in the “*Sonnets to Orpheus*”, where the crystalline character of Persian poetry rendered “*like Gardens set in Glass…of Isfahan or Shiraz.”* The fate of the silken thread which the great weaver puts in its place so that it may not disturb the overall design, because “*the whole, the magnificent carpet is meant*”.

Over and over again, be it in the *Notes of the Malte Laurid’s Ship* or in his poems, the occupation with his own death comes through.. Rückert too, in his songs of the D*ead Children*, sees death as the fruit of life: Rumi knows that death “has been raised under the arms of men”; the tradition mentions, that death is woven from the deeds of men.

We did not read the Duinese Elegies, but random poems, which gave comfort to our soul when we felt “expelled to the Mountains of the Heart”. But the Rilke-poem which I love above all others is at the end of the Malte:

You, whom I do not tell, that I at night
Lie crying,
Whose essence tires me
Like a cradle,
You, who does not tell me when she awakens
Because of me;
How could we suffer
So much glory in us
Silently?
Look at the lovers,
Once the confessing starts,

How soon they lie.
You make me lonely. You alone I can exchange.
For a while it’s you. Then, it is the gushing,
Or it is a fragrance without residue.
Oh, in my arms I lost one by one,
Except you, you are reborn again and again;
As I never held you, I hold you fast.

Mama’s favourite poet was the young Hugo von Hofmannsthal. For me too, during each spring season, the magic of the spring breeze that he mentions. gets repeated:

The breeze of spring runs
Through the barren alleys…

And where the changing rhythm toward the end catches the gentle movement of the buds. And then– the magic of the poem “The Two”!

I recall the day– I must have been about ten years old– when I found in an anthology the beginning of the poem

With a silvery grey fragrance the valley
Of dusk was filled, as when
The moon drips through the clouds

Hofmannsthal’s “Ship with yellow, strangely shaped giant sails” appeared again and again in my dreams. At that time I drew it in my scrap book.

I read poems and learnt them by heart. Among the poets whose voices filled my childhood and youth, one was specially important: Friedrich Rückert. Of course we all sang the *“Children’s song of the green Summerbirds*” and “*The Little Tree that wanted different Leaves*”; we knew the *Old Barbarossa* and everybody seemed to sing the song “*From the time of my youth*….” In the nineteenth century, Rückert’s “*Spring of Love*” was one of the most favourite collections of poems. Simply everybody knew Schubert’s tune of *You are the Peace,* or*, Laughing and crying at every Hour.*

In the school-books of my father I found some of the *Fiery Sonnets,* and every older anthology contained parts from the *Wisdom of the Brahman*. The beginning of his

There went a man in Syria's land
Led a camel from his band

was proverbial and often parodied.

But then I discovered Rilke's translations from various Oriental languages. A small sample from the *Makamen* by *Hariri* was not very attractive for a young girl, but when I read the entire translation of this highly complex Arabic work of art-prose I was enchanted. Decades later I held a seminar on Hariri (died 1122) and finally made the students compare their own literal, with Rilke's free translation. The German poet came out ahead and even beat the Arabic writer in clever word games without any twist to the juristic or theological ideas. However, his self-invented word game

You are just a philologist
They are called so because they twist

could be applied during the life-time of an academic to a number of colleagues.

Most of all I was fascinated by the free translations from the *Divan-e-Shams-e Tabrizi* by Maulana Jelaluddin Rumi. These translations which first appeared in 1820 are written in the Oriental form of the ghazal, i.e., with one rhyme repeated throughout. This translation introduced the ghazal in Germany and became a favourite in the nineteenth century. Just like the Persian four-liner in the form of a a x a.. Although Rumi's ghazals were mostly based on the translations by Hammer-Purgstall in his History of the Fine Art of Oratory in Persia (1818), they are closer to the original in spirit than most of the later attempts to-date. But the "translators" hardly understand anything of Persian imagery and even less of Islamic mysticism. Rückert knew both, and he remained my constant companion. His central statement: "World-poetry is World - Reconciliation" lent

me wings. I was happy when on his two-hundredth birthday in 1988 I published (Insel Publications) a two-volume working edition and a small biography (Herder-Publications). Since my youth I have tried again and again to highlight, particularly in the Islamic world, the work of this untiring mediator between Orient and Occident. Neither in Yemen nor Iran, in Bengal or Pakistan, the audiences could comprehend how a poet, who had never seen an Arab, Iranian or Indian by face, was able to penetrate the spirit and form of an alien people so deeply, that he was able to render their poetic peculiarities as in a mirror. Once, when I lectured in Bangla Desh on Rückert's translations from Sanskrit I recited the charming verse from the Gitagovinda:

Under the fragrant branches
and Jamuna's breeze
the wreathed one was waiting…

At that moment one of the audience who did not know German, stood up and recited the full verse in the original– he had recognized it from the rhythm.

This is not the place to discuss the enormous number of Rückert's original verses and his translations from dozens of languages; the best– unfortunately incomplete– translation of the Quran comes from him. I agree most sincerely with his reflections on language and translation. What IS translating?

You delicately, try to listen to the spirits
How they, weaving invisibly, change the robes of words.

The poet's word is a robe and one must not– so easily done– though change the precious silken gown of a Persian verse into rough wool or a modern mini-skirt! Again and again, Rückert's verses brought me comfort:

A philologist and poet in one, like my poor self
Can do nothing else but translate, like me.

The philological errors you ascribe to the poetic freedom,
And the poetic art you present to philology.

Everyone is touched by the sweet mourning of the "*Dead Children's Song" (Kindertotenlieder)*. There are more than five-hundred of them, not just the few set to tune by Mahler. Their pain is expressed in gentle images. How many times later in my life, have I repeated that poem which tells of the transitoriness of happiness:

Heart, now old and yet not wise
Hoping from day to day,
What was not granted you by blossoming spring
Autumn will bring.
The playful breeze bends the bush
Teasing it always in its hold,
His touch in the morning the buds unfolds
In the evening it scatters the roses.
The playful breeze does not spare the bush
Till down come the last leaves
All, oh heart, what we loved and dreamed
Is a wind and a breeze.

In 1965 I received the first-ever Rückert prize of the city of Schweinfurt. In subsequent years I often participated in such celebrations there, in the festively decorated town-hall; and it made me happy whenever I met some of his descendents.

The Rückert-prize was not to remain the only literary award: in 1974 the Academy of Language and Literature bestowed on me the Johann-Heinrich-Voss prize for my translation-work. Some time later I received the Hammer-Purgstall medal in Graz, on the occasion of the two-hundredth birthday of the great sponsor of Oriental studies, Sir Hammer-Purgstall from Steiermark, to whom Goethe owed a lot and who was Rückert's mentor.

National Service in Moordorf

"Moordorf"! Mama became red and pale as if someone had hit her across the face. Moordorf had been founded by Frederic the Great as a settlement for prisoners and gypsies. Its reputation was accordingly. A poem in low- German dialect by Moritz Jahn reflects the dismay of the people there about this sinful Babel. And it was here that I was to do my national service for six months! Without rendering such service one could not ever hope to get admission to a university. Heidegger in 1934, had written: "The first bonding is the one of the people's community. This bondage is cemented and takes roots during student-life through national service."

We took a deep breath and surrendered to the unavoidable.

The barracks were arranged in rectangular shape around a patch of grass. We, the working maidens, were accommodated there in large dormitories. Our 'residence' consisted of a bed with a straw-filled mattrass and a wardrobe. The girls came from different areas of the country and from different backgrounds; for some of the simpler girls this period was quite welcome because they saw places and faces which otherwise, they would never have seen. There was fat Anna who, while scrubbing the floor with utmost energy, sang in her loudest voice:

And she jumped, filled with despair

Into the depth of the water-pipe.

There was warm-hearted Maria from the coal-mining area. There were graduates with ambition in sports or with psychic problems. But Helen from Arnsbach exceeded all of us in wisdom and charm. She was the only one who could make demands on the leader because nobody could ever be angry with her. We soon became friends which grew into a deep relationship of trust for over sixty years till she died. Helen became an inspired medical doctor,

outstanding in diagnostics; her house in Nürnberg where she lived and practiced with her equally loveable husband was a refuge for me every time I had problems. Her friendship was the real gain from the time of national service.

The day began with early morning sports and the flag-ceremony. Leader No. 2 loved Nietzsche and croaked pathetically: “Better an edgy Something than a round Nothing.”

She WAS an edgy something but better than what …? After breakfast we cycled to our various places of assignment, to Aurich or some of the villages in the marshy areas.

There we were placed as household helpers. I doubt that I was of any use. My book-clasping hands were soon worn, because I had to wash dirty masons’ laundry on the scrub-board in cold water (there was no warm water). Therefore, they locked me into the ironing room where, after the first fiasco with a burn in a white blouse, I had to iron striped sleeping suits for six weeks. The worst, however, was, that they removed my Arabic grammar from my wardrobe– how can a German girl study Arabic! I immediately asked my parents to send me another Arabic book. In a moment of despair I wrote a letter to the Imam of the Berlin mosque who came from Lahore, if he could help me in getting to Lahore and into a Muslim family where I would for one year, improve my Arabic and learn more about Indian Islam. I was asking for too much from the poor man. None of us at that time could fathom that, in 1982, one of the most beautiful avenues in Lahore, along the canal, would be named after me: Khayaban-e-Annemarie Schimmel. On the other side of the canal runs the Goethe-Avenue.

The days went by, in the evenings we sang songs or discussed. At one time we were to tell our favourite book.

Helen said '"The white gods" by Eduard Stucken (more so as to shock the leader than from real interest). I of course, gave a title from the world of the Orient. I give credit to the group leader that she told the girl who claimed *Mein Kampf* was her best book, that she would never believe that.

Sometimes on a free afternoon I slipped out and sat in the heather to read poems, preferably Rilke. Once we succeeded in travelling to Borkum and visit Aunt Johanna, whose dainty household meant for us such a soothing contrast to our common days. Mostly, our routine continued with cleaning and washing. The East-Friesian Hausfrau wished to see her coal or peat-fired hearth sparkle from scrubbing. Polishing became also part of our duty. At times the pigsty had to be cleaned out. But my priority were beans– pluck beans, split them; pluck beans, cut them; pluck beans and line them up on strings for drying– to provide for winter. And with every plucked bean the hour of our release came nearer.

This is what I thought.

But on the morning of first September, 1939, we were called back to the camp and, relaxing there on the grass, we heard the declaration of war. Later, I was asked repeatedly whether we were jubilant, as we were told about the soldiers at the beginning of world-war I, at which time even gentle poets like Rilke wrote heroic poems Jubilate? Oh no, not in our camp. The girls, worrying and fearing, thought of their brothers and friends, of their future; and I thought of my parents whose furniture was just at that moment, accompanied by the sounds of the war declaration, thrown onto a truck in Erfurt, because just on that day my father was transferred and had to start his duty in Berlin.

Of course we loved our country and had often been singing Rudolf Schröder's hymns:

Holy motherland, when in danger,
Your sons stand by you.

But for us, at least for the people that I knew and with whom I lived, Germany was simply the homeland, poetry, music and painting. And, as far as our home was concerned, the big wide world was also a part of it. The German language was our most precious asset; it was the market-place, as Goethe once said, on which the literatures of the world met. We were ready to defend our homeland but not aggress others. How were we to know that our idea of homeland was being manipulated, was being filled and perverted with matters unknown to us youngsters?

We sat there petrified, till the voice of the “edgy Something” sounded: “Well, girls, now you may serve our Führer even longer.” Who of us would want that? We graduates were desperate to be allowed to start our university courses. The medical students among us were given permission to leave for their war-important studies; Helen was among them. But what could an Orientalist do?

Mama found a solution. In Berlin, she contacted Emil Dovifat, who was professor of journalism. She knew him since her youth. He advised to study sciences. This is what saved me. My grades in science subjects had been excellent and I immediately started dreaming of studying Arabic scientific manuscripts, above all on mineralogy, a subject that I loved above all others. The stratagem worked, and to the annoyance of the group-leader I took my leave after stuffing a less than perfect certificate of dismissal into my bag. Perhaps it was this certificate together with an equally unimpressive certificate from the BDM in Erfurt that I at eighteen, unlike most of the other girls of my age-group, was not being admitted to the Party automatically. “Who knows what good it may serve” said Mama, wise as ever.

Berlin– Studies during the War

Luckily the Philosophical Faculty at Berlin’s university included both, the arts as well as the science subjects. This made it possible for me to register for the six duty lectures

in Physics and Chemistry and at the same time, look out for Oriental subjects.

First I went to Walter Brame. He, however,was not interested in “a virgin who wanted to study Arabic”; I never met him again. The remark of Richard Hartmann in his best Swabian dialect “now we shall read Abu Yusuf” was also not very inviting, as the Kitab-al gharaj of the early Islamic jurist did not really attract me. Thus I chose Modern Newspaper Prose and during this winter-semester of 1939 I found myself, every morning at eight, alone with Walter Björkmann. Björkmann who, one and a half decades later was to become my colleague at Ankara, was an excellent, totally reliable philologist, totally without imagination but also without falseness in him, rather too innocent for the intrigue-laden academic atmosphere. Even forty years later, he remembered how sad he was when I did not recognize a difficult grammatical form. My entire love, however, I bestowed on the lectures of Ernst Kühnel on Islamic Art. During the winter trimester 1939, shortly before Christmas, I dared approach him and requested his advice. I recall it as if it had been yesterday, that I wore a self-knitted, red sweater with a white collar. I had taken along my hand-drawn book “Land of Light”. Kühnel smiled at the seventeen year old: “Miss Schimmel, forget about the nonsense of sciences! Register for Arabic, Persian and Turkish and for my lectures, and after your Ph.D. you will be my assistant”! This sealed my fate.

Now I had to register for Abu Yusuf, but also for exciting medieval travelogues by Arabic merchants from Europe. I learnt Persian with a specialist in middle Persian which didn’t give much chance to modern Persian. During the subsequent trimester I started reading Turkish. Even students better prepared than I had problems with the style of Evliya Chelebis, the far-travelled scholar of the 17th century. At that time began my friendship with Hanna

Sohrweide (who, over a decade later, opened many doors for me in Istanbul). We began to read in Arabic, sources of the history of the Mameluks in Egypt (1250– 1517). I loved the depictions of daily life and the political chaos in the works of Ibn Taghribidri and Ibn Iyas. Toward the end of the summer trimester Richard Hartmann suggested that it was time now to start on my Master's thesis. Which subject would I choose? He at once agreed to my choice: The position of the religious dignitaries and Mameluk society and the problem of coordination between the Turkish speaking military class and the Muslim elite.

My first love-story ended in an ugly way; but the intensive work was– like often at later times– my best cure.

But there was now no chance to get down to work on the thesis: there was, once more, national service in a factory– unpaid, of course– so that some women could avail additional paid leave. I was posted to a telephone factory: six days a week, ten hours per day. First, I had to punch. Rasor-sharp iron bands were slipped through a flap while the foot pressed a lever so that iron rings came out. The prescribed production time for piece work was a thousand pieces per hour. I still gratefully remember the foreman who comforted me during the lunch-break while blood was oozing out of my fingers: "Just wait, little miss– after lunch I'll take your place"! Not all jobs were so tough and the contacts with the working women were very cordial. Three times I worked during the vacations in the same factory; in summer 1941, a considerable number of girl students were recruited– and paid. From my first salary I bought Maulana Rumi's Mathnavi. My oral examination date was being advanced so that I got my dismissal earlier than originally planned. On that occasion my colleagues gave me a present, the most beautiful, newly appeared German translation of the Turkish novel 'Yahan', *The Stranger*, by Yacup Kadri.

At that point in time the war with Russia was already on. I shall never forget that oppressive June-day of 1941! We went to the forest area, the Grunewald. I had with me Goldziher's *Lectures on Islam*. The air was like lead; we felt its pressure almost physically. If some people in 1939, had dreamed of a quick victory– now they felt the impending disaster; perhaps my parents or other people thought of Richard Dehmels poem, written anno Domini 1812:

Over Russia's desert of corpses
The high night its pale hands folds
With the final lines:
Shines the dark-red, crooked moon
A bloody sickle of God.

What were the study conditions in those days? Many thought that endlessly, Nazi propaganda was showered upon us. This was not the case, at least not in the Berlin Oriental seminar. A few Iran and Indo-Germanic scholars were happy with the emphasis on the Arian, Nordic spirit and became enthusiastic supporters of the regime. Semite scholars had problems with it. And how could a scholar of Islam have studied without the ground-breaking works of Ignaz Goldziher and several other Jewish scholars?

My teachers were very different from each other but complemented one another in a way which was ideal for us. Richard Hartmann who came from the tradition of the Tübingen Foundation was an exquisite expert in Islamic history and geography. His publications of *The Religion of Islam* which appeared as late as 1944 (published again in 1987) is still one of the best introductions, sober and thoughtful. Hartmanns' wife was the daughter of a Dutchman and a Syrian woman; therefore, anti-semitism did not exist there. Only after the war we heard that both his sons had died fighting. He never uttered a complaint. He was a model teacher, calm and patient with the few who

laboured through complex Arabic and Ottoman-Turkish texts. On top of it he knew the Orient from own experience; he wa one of the, or THE first, German Orientalist who had visited the new Turkey in 1926. His book *In the new Anatolia* gives a splendid picture of life after Ataturk's reforms; it deserved a reprint.

Hans Heinrich Schäder was completely different. Tall, with shining dark eyes under hair that had greyed too early, he made an impact simply by his appearance. He was a blessed speaker who, with his polished eloquence put his audiences into a state of ecstasy. He at times, used phrases which later led to the reproach of being very close to national socialism. His tutorials in modern Persian were fascinating; it was not only Persian history from its beginnings, which he sometimes unfolded before the rapt listeners from a single word or a grammatical form; no, suddenly we were with Plato, then into Chinese poetics, later with medieval music. Many years later he introduced me to T.S. Eliot and the Metaphysical poets. He was much too demanding for normal students: "Miss Schimmel, close your manuscript– I want to hear what you know and not, what you have written." In this way he taught me to speak freely. Due to my Arabic lessons in Erfurt I had a good background of Islamic history. If someone was ignorant, he might advise: "Mr. X, go cycling, it is better for your health than learning Persian". Schaeder felt in extremes; when he respected a person he might praise him to the heavens. The result was often, that inadvertently he caused the object of his admiration damage, at other times, he got deeply disappointed in him. Some Swedish colleagues told me later, that he may have exposed himself through some excessive political phrases. But one should not forget that two of the most prominent German migrants to the USA respected him deeply– Franz Rosenthal and Gustave E. von Grunebaum. During a tour of the city at my first visit to

Los Angeles in 1965 I had to tell Giselle von Grunebaum endlessly about Schaeder. She wanted to know, who the scholar was whom her husband admired so deeply. I did not know then that Schaeder's sister Hildegard who was a specialist on the Eastern Church, had been, since 1943, in the concentration camp of Ravensbrück. When she visited me in Marburg in 1949 she presented me with her book *Easter in the Concentration Camp*, a deeply moving memorial to Christian life and faith which, in 1995. was published in an enlarged edition.

There are no words for my admiration for Schaeder. I understood only much later– and it was good that way– that Islam for him had, a priori, the function of bringing the classical philosophy to Europe. He had never been to an Islamic country and had never applied the languages, whose remotest roots and wide-netted branches he mastered. For him, the Orient was part of an immense world-image which had its centre in the classical and Christian tradition.

One would omit something important if one did not mention Schaeder's wonderful wife, Grete, a talented scholar of German in Vienna. She was strongly bonded to him through his work, and by their shared love of Goethe to whom she dedicated a work that deserved more recognition; and through their both' admiration for Hugo von Hofmannsthal. This admiraton is also the key for Schaeder's friendshp with Carl Jacob Burckhardt.

Hans Heinrich Schaeder came from a family of Lutheran theologians which dates back to the reformation period. He was critical about the dialectical theology which thrived after the war. Once he told me: "As a good Protestant one has only two choices: one should either become a Muslim or Catholic." He decided for the latter solution and his dedication to it supported him during the last years of torturous illness.

Franz Kühnel was very different; he knew how to plant the beauty and charm of Islamic art into our hearts: the world of the carpets, the fayance, palaces and mosques and particularly, of my beloved calligraphy. Unforgettable is my last trimester when, every Saturday, I was allowed to work alone in the Islamic department of the museum in Bodestrasse, to prepare my talk on Mameluk building epigraphs. For Kühnel it was as frustrating as for me that after my Ph.D, I was placed in the foreign office instead of the museum; but at that time, the only accepted work was the one that promoted the war efforts.

Annemarie von Gabain was among my beloved teachers. I read Turkish Studies with her. We were only three students: a Ukrainian, an Hungarian and myself. We pleased our teacher by our good translations which, however, were the result of our balanced cooperation. The beautiful, dark-haired daughter of a general was one of the first who, after studying Chinese, turned to the world of the Turko-people which were researched thoroughly during the 1920s, particularly in Germany. She was a patient teacher who implanted in me the love for Turkish in its various shadings. However, Maryam Apa (elder sister) as she soon allowed me to call her, was always worried about the welfare of my soul. “Singlim, don’t get absorbed by Islamic mysticism, deal with it soberly, scientifically”. For her, a pious Catholic, my translation of Yacub Kadri’s dervish-novel *Noor Baba* which appeared in 1948 under the title *Flame and Butterfly* was obscene; how could one combine religion and eroticism thus?

When in 1985, the novel re-appeared (Diederich) in revised form, the readers found it so utterly un-erotic that they almost rejected it.

Once Myriam Apa admonished my mother: “You should stop your daughter from writing poetry– her reputation is at stake”! Mama’s reply was short: “Since

God has given her this talent she must use it". Myriam Apa was a wonderful woman. After the war she had great problems in the academic community because she had been a party-member; but whosoever was engaged in Turkish Studies loved and adored her; for a young Orientalist she was a shining example.

The Berlin-circle of Orientalists was widespread.. In the seminar for Oriental languages we heard a very boring lecture by Sebastian Beck on capitulations in Iran; but we often managed to divert his attention when he, in his immaculate calligraphy, wrote something on the blackboard. After the war he died a miserable death in the German Democratic Republic. We listened to modern Turkish history which was documented by Gotthard Jäschke in his useful historic calendars. M. Zakarya Hashmi from Aleppo taught me practical Arabic; he not only taught us a fluent script, but, during weekly lessons, we learnt to write short essays in Arabic, on the Berlin Zoo or a figure from early Islamic history. Add to this programme some general compulsory lectures. I opted for Eduard Spranger's courses on psychology and Emil Dovifat's spirited introduction to journalism which, between the lines, contained plenty of regime criticism. These years, in other ways so depressing, were often crowned by the meetings of Orientalists which were organized by Helmut Scheel, where the young Orientalist always offered to write the protocol and met all the stars of the sciences of Oriental studies.

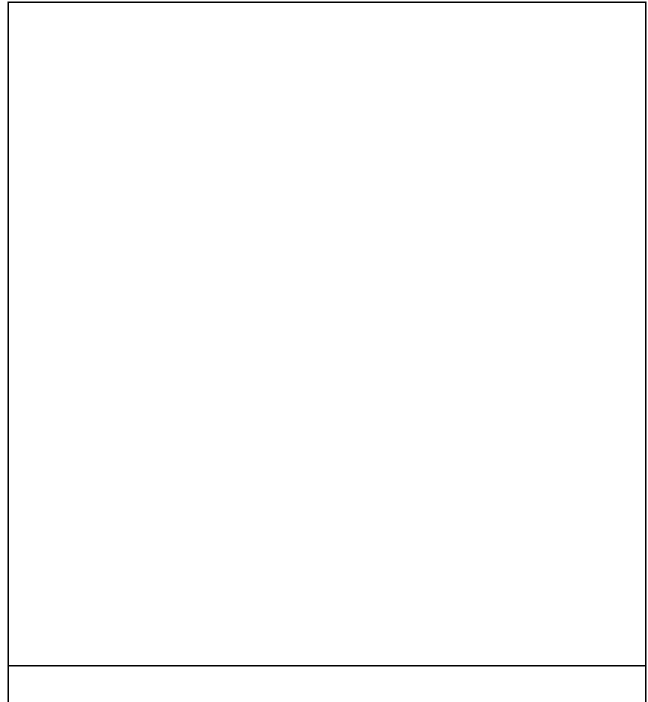
A new element entered my normal work. In October 1940 I asked Schaeder, whether I should read Rumi's *Mathnavi*. He advised against it, but recommended to read Reynold A. Nicholson's small selection from Rumi's *Divan*, his lyrical poetry. He also advised me to work through Louis Massignon's mightly French work *La Passion d' al Hallaj*. When I held the Divan in my hands,

something like a lightning struck me; I was gripped by the sound of the poem. Although in those days, I hardly knew anything of Persian metrics and rethorics, I understood the texts directly, some of them, as if on their own, changed into German verse without my doing anything to it.

دو چشم گشته شنیدم که سوی جان نگری
چرا بجان نگری چون بجان جان رفتی
دلا چه نادره مرغی که در شکار شکور
تو با دو پر چو سپر جانب سنان رفتی
گل از خزان بگریزد عجب که شوخ گلی
که پیش باد خزانی خزان خزان رفتی
زآسمان تو چو باران ببام عالم خاک
بهر سوئی بدویده بناودان رفتی
خموش باش تو از رنج گفت وگوی مخسب
که در پناه چنان یار مهربان رفتی

(Arabic Text)

Ich hörte, die Augen gewendet
du blicktest zur irdischen Seele.
Was schaust du? Denn du bist doch selber
zur Seele der Seele gegangen!
Du bist eine mutige Rose!
die Rose entflieht sonst dem Herbste:
doch du bist beim Nahen des Sturmes
zum Herbst, in den Herbstwind gegangen
So, wie vom Himmel der Regen,
die staubige Erde zu tränken,
herabrinnt von allen Seiten:
so bist du ins Ew'ge gegangen.
Sei still nun vom schmerzvollen Sprechen
und Reden; doch schlafe nicht! Siehe,
Du bist in den Schutz eines Freundes,
der liebend dich hütet, gegangen!



Two pages of my translations from Rumi;s Divan. Christmas 1940

I copied the whole book of Nicholson with all annotations– in those days of course, there were no photocopiers. And on Christmas I surprised Schaeder with a small volume of translations plus text, among them also some translations from the *Divan* of the martyred mystic al Hallaj, in beautiful calligraphy and decorated with arabesques. Some of the translations I never changed. I seemed to understand Rumi straight and remained faithful to him. I often made a pilgrimage to his grave, walked in his footsteps in East and West and always returned to him. I think that no other mystic has interpreted the Quranic word

I heard, eyes turned away
You looked at the earthly soul.
What are you looking? It's you yourself
Who to the soul of souls went!

You are a courageous rose!
Other roses flee the autumn
But, with the approaching storm
Into the autumn and autumnal storm you went.
Just like from heaven the rain,
To quench the thirst of the dusty earth
Pours down from all the sides,
Thus to the eternal you went.
Now, rest from painful speech
And talk, but do not sleep! See,
Into the protection of a friend
Who tends you lovingly, you went.

(Sura 41:53) better than he: "Soon We will show them Our signs in the furthest regions of the earth and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth".– the true believer sees God and His doings in the world, from history and from his own experience.

At the same time I struggled through the two thick volumes of Massignon's work which shows the reader in complex French the life and sufferings of Hallaj, of that man, who had said *an al-Haqq*, "I am the divine truth" and who, since, occupies a central position in Islamic mysticm. I often discussed the work and its hero with Papa who explained me a number of things in the thinking of this mystic who, dancing in his chains, walked to the place of execution. If, as a child, the word "People sleep and when they die, they awaken" had touched me deeply, now it was the passionate death-cry of Hallaj

Uqtuluni….. Kill me, oh my friends,
For only in death is my life.

This verse I found hundreds of times in Rumi's work. At that time Schaeder succeeded in discovering in a prose work of Hallaj, the source for Goethe's poem *Selige*

Sehnsucht, "Blissful longing" with its image of the butterfly dying in the flames.

In October 1941 I handed in my doctorial thesis, *Caliph and Qadi in late-medieval Egypt*. On twentieth November I passed my orals with distinction (magna cum laude).

I was nineteen years old. The fact that in 1943 it was printed in *The World of Islam* proved that it was not really bad although it was not as voluminous as now-a-days' mighty, doctorial thesis' or even, master dissertations are.

On first December 1941 I was appointed by the Foreign Office in place of my colleague Franz Taeschner who was transferred back to his chair. My task was to decipher Turkish telegrams. We academics were placed into superior official service and carried the wonderful (?) title "Scientific assistant worker". However, salaries in the superior service were paid after the age of twenty-three only. Since I was only nineteen, I lost four years of due remuneration. The work was not so exciting or dashing as one might have thought. The Turkish diplomats apparently had no detailed insight into the situation or they withheld it so that we learnt barely anything beyond normal information. We were a small group working in Dahlem, in the Dol, under the Turkologist J. Benzing. Whenever the workload was light, we worked on Turkish Studies subjects.

Apart from duty hours I had other plans. Right after my exams Richard Hartmann suggested to me to prepare the long overdue index of the chronicle of Ibn I*yas* (three thick volumes of five-hundred pages each) which had been the main source for my dissertation. This became evening entertainment for me over which I had a lot of fun. When the heavy index boxes with thousands of index cards in it were, in 1942, sent to Istanbul, Hellmut Ritter, the publisher of many great works of Islamic Studies, was so pleased that he wanted me to work for him in Istanbul.

But I could not talk myself into leaving Berlin and my parents to work with a great yet, as was widely known, difficult scholar. Ritter then sent me photographs of a good manuscript of the city of Aleppo by Ibn al-Adim which I was to publish; toward the end of the war, my notes on it, just like most of my work on various aspects of the history of the Mameluks, got lost. But primarily I worked on my inaugural dissertation on the military caste in the Mameluk empire– their emirs often reminded me of my contemporary “leaders”.

I don’t recall exactly how I lived in those days. Every morning I left for my job. We had a new flat in Charlottenburg and I got there easily. Among my colleagues old Mr. Baumert stood out, who one day, addressed me in good Swabian dialect as “Schimmele”, and then converted it into the Arabic Jemile, “beautiful”. (Turkish version: Chemile). This is how I got my pet-name, and my Turkish and many of my German friends use it to this day.

In late autumn 1942 I was plagued by a series of illnesses which culminated in a thrombosis. It was a dozen leeches found by Papa, under adventurous conditions and brought home through snow and ice, that saved my life.

The air-raids increased, the tragedy of Stalingrad became known, and on the radio in the “Your Choice” programme the choir of the prisoners from Verdi’s opera “Nabucco” was broadcast more and more frequently. We didn’t know how truly it reflected the seriousness of the situation. We tried to survive somehow.

On 23rd November 1943 Berlin, for the first time, came under massive aerial attack. We were able to extinguish the fire-bomb on our roof, but next morning in the office we learnt about the losses among our colleagues: wife, mother-in-law dead, house shattered. Everyone who came had lost, human lives or objects. I was sent out to look for my friend

Hanka. I walked between Fehrbelliner Platz and Lehrter Bahnhof, face covered by a thin veil, among burning and smoldering ruins. Hanka's house was gone. Since then, when walking through the South-West of Berlin, I see before me that burning hell. Even the most beautiful fireworks remind me of the burning "Christmas-trees" which the bombers dropped so as to throw light on their targets. If anyone had, at that time, foretold that twenty years after this major bombardment, the Berlin population would crowd the streets to mourn John F. Kennedy who had just been murdered, he would have been considered a madman.

The bombardments now came regularly; soon my friend Ings with her mother and husband stood at our door: bombed out. The air to breathe became heavier, but the news cleverly veiled the information about the ever tightening ring of allied troupes. We didn't even know that since early March, the armies were standing at the Rhine.

On thirty-first March 1945 I handed in my inaugural dissertation. The next day our department at the Dol was loaded onto trucks and carried away– nobody knew, where. For the last time I saw my beloved father. In the end of April he, like so many elderly men and teenagers, were recruited to the Volkssturm[4] – he, a man who throughout his life, had never held a weapon in his hand. He said good bye to Mama: "We are twenty-six men with three rifles and they tell us: 'You are the main line of defence.'" He died as a soldier on 4th May 1945 near Ketzin. Mama remained alone in Berlin. She survived the storming of Berlin by the Russians and learnt about Papa's death in June– one day before somebody gave her the news that I was alive and in safety in Marburg.

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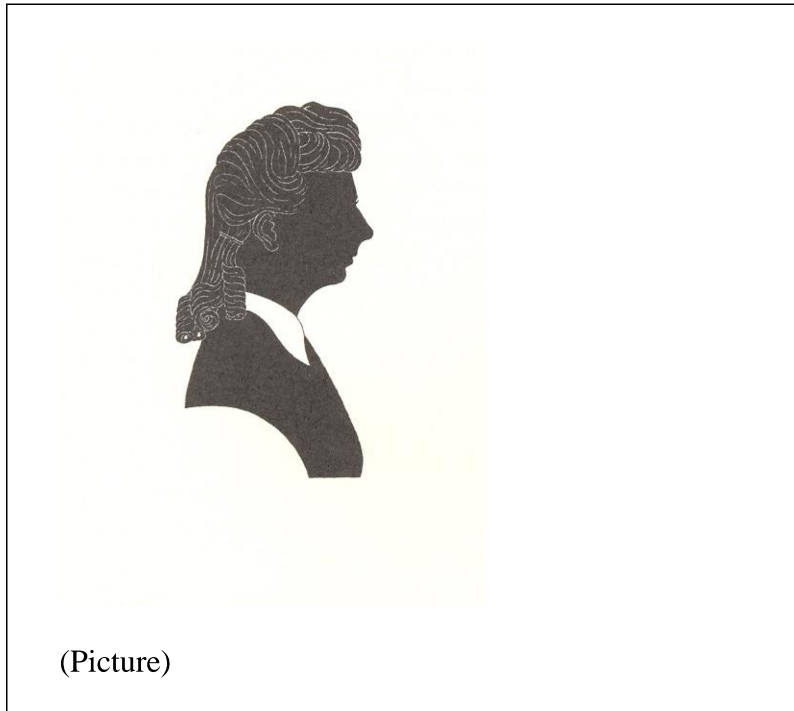
[4] Army of old men over 65 and boys below 16 recruited to defend Berlin

PART II

EARLY POST-WAR YEARS
(1945-1952)



(Picture)

Marburg– a new Gate to the World

The wheels of the buses took us in a South-Western direction to Halle, where we stayed for three, four days in barracks which were also inhabited by rats. The activities of low-flying bombers increased and we were quickly

moved away. Zschepplin in Saxony was the next station; all files were burnt there. We kept ourselves busy with some gardening. On 20th April the Americans arrived and on 1st May they loaded us on trucks that took us to a building with a paved courtyard. About thirty of us were pushed into a tiny room, later on into an underground bunker for some days. One night our guards, the American soldiers, invited us, gave us food and chocolates and took kind leave of us. I must emphasize again and again that the GIs behaved exemplary with us - who were a group of mostly younger women– after all, we were totally given into their hands. By the way, later in the USA, I caused quite a surprise with this statement, because there, due to the Vietnam war, every soldier was considered a kind of criminal.

Next morning, yet another transport. It was the end of the war, the 8th May– unbelievable. Never had the sun shone so brightly as on this day, when we left for an unknown destination. The trees sparkled in their brightest foliage and birds sang everywhere. We did not know our fate, where our families might be, who was alive, who had become a victim of the war. But the war was over, no more bombs…. In the evening we reached Marburg and were unloaded in a student hostel, the Westfalenhaus in Luther-street. We, all twenty-six females, settled down in a dormitory with two tier bunks. The balcony overlooked the town. This place was to be our domicile for several months. It was an incredibly lucky chance which had brought us here. We had a roof over our heads and got regular meals– which was weighed in front of us - while millions of people had been rendered homeless, were hungry and suffered badly for many months– which many did not survive (among others, Ings' husband in an American prisoner of war camp).

One day news reached us, that Saxony-Thuringia had been placed under Soviet rule (that was the reason why we

had been taken to the West). When we heard this ghastly news, we were stunned. It was an elderly, somewhat peculiar lady who spoke first: “Oh my, now my cat has become Russian”!

Initially we were under house arrest and off and on, we were interrogated. But no incriminating material was found. Soon we organized a camp university. With greatest pleasure I and a friend of mine read ancient Greek poetry. It took us right out of our misery:

When, Apollo, under the swaying palm tree

Whose trunk she embraced, Lete, the high one, gave birth to you…..

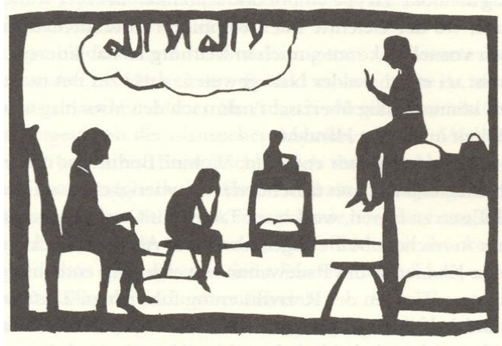
We practiced English conversation; there was a piano, and under the tutelage of my friend Ings we practiced Lieder by Brahms. And I held my first Islamic lectures from atop the upper bunk.

To this day I cannot understand how I managed to carry my suitcase in those days. There were only few dresses in it (we simply did not own many) but, apart from my inaugural dissertation script there was the New Testament, the West-Eastern Divan in the voluminous Beutler-edition which Schaeder had given me; three fat volumes of Rumi’s Mathnavi in Persian, the equally heavy Arabic *kitab-al-luna* by Sarraj plus one of my favourite books, *the Renaissance of Islam* by Adam Mez. The scribbled pages of Rumi and Sarraj are proof of my activity at translation. At times we helped at a large farm, where Erika Stoevesand– we called this young war-widow “mother earth”– had organized a helpline. Many decades later she founded in Bremen an ecumenical high school followed by a similar one in Magdeburg.

This way summer passed. For the first time we heard an American gospel choir– it was a new world for us all. Apart from that, in August, the mother of our colleague Brigitte (called desert-bride, because she has had a long-distance

marriage ceremony with a missionary in South-Africa) brought the first letters. A letter from Mama showed me that she had survived, but also brought the news of the death of my beloved Papa somewhere near Ketzin.

In July we had high-ranking visitors. There was Friedrich Heiler, the designated dean of the philosophical faculty of the university which was soon to be reopened. He gave a lecture on Nathan Söderblom, that fascinating historian of religions and pioneer of a united church and Lutheran archbishop of Sweden. We knew that Marburg had an old tradition of religious history. Rudolf Otto was more or less, the saint of the village! I had read his work but at that time, not really understood it. Later though, it became one of the most important teaching resources. We asked our learned visitor some questions, but he hardly spoke a word. And I felt very helpless and stupid. But this visit was not without consequences. A few weeks later we were allowed to work outside the camp and the desert-bride became Heiler's secretary. One evening she came rushing into the dormitory:



"In that year Mohammad was laid to rest…."
The students studied at their best.

Lecture (during house-arrest in the Westfalenhaus in Marburg, Summer 1945 (from my silhouettes)

"You are to go and take your inaugural dissertation script to Heiler"! With a twitch of fear in my heart I walked along the Marbacher Weg, climbed up the steep stairs and landed in a magnificent library where the scholar received me. He asked me, almost shily, whether I might consider to start lecturing in Marburg; the local Arabist had been such a mad Nazi that he could not be re-employed. I was totally stunned and accepted the offer. I left my work in his hands.

Shortly afterwards we were freed. Now what? Berlin was unreachable. With endless difficulties and on coal transports I managed to reach Essen where I hoped for Aunt Uli's hospitality. She was more than generous about it. She immediately stuffed me along with my clothes into a bath-tub– a long-missed luxury. After a few weeks of getting civilized again I travelled to Aunt Mia in Aurich. There, I helped her in the library in which she worked (without work one was not entitled to a ration-card). I also met the employees of the *Ostfriesische Landschaft* (East-Friesian Countryside) and we planned the first East-Friesian Cultural Festival after the war. We borrowed a vehicle from the British occupation forces and went through the whole of East Friesia, collected poets and painters, artists and sculptors and arranged the first festivity after the war. Poets read from their works. We had arranged an exhibition, there was also some food– the British had even contributed an extra ration of tea! Bruno Loets was there, the excellent translator from Dutch, an extravagant type; also Moritz Jahn, whose stirring poems were hardly known outside East Friesia because he wrote in classical dialect and not so adjustable as Klaus Groth or Fritz Reuter.

Then Christmas came. We had prepared dolls and a picture book for the rural relatives in Georgsheil. They had

a farming estate, therefore good smells emanated from their cooking pots. But much more exciting was a telegramme from Schaeder in Göttingen, in which he informed me that the oral examination for the inaugural dissertation would take place on fifth January in Marburg. If ever anyone tried to get officialdom moving in the British Zone between the days of festivities knows what red tapism means. But we managed it. On second January I managed to get to Essen where Aunt Uli had a decent black dress ready for me. I spent the night on the steps of the Hagen railway station and even got an entry-pass for the train. The rail-official, to whom I showed my invitation to my inaugural orals, smiled at me: "Well, then I do congratulate you"! I reached Marburg in the evening of third January. They had given up hope of seeing me. But the discussion went well.

My introductory lecture took place on twelfth January. I waited to be called in when Heiler came and said: "There are so many people, we have to move the venue to the large assembly hall. Are you afraid"? I said: " No."

I spoke about the main personages in Islamic mysticism and the Marburg lot was apparently thrilled. After all, it was the first inaugural address after the war, on top of it, by a woman– and a young one, too, barely twenty-three years old. When I finished my lecture Luise Berthold, the valiant German Studies scholar came up to the stage, pressed my hand, congratulated me and said in her deep voice: "Now, child, remember one thing: Men are our enemies"!

My career started under ideal circumstances– if spring 1946 permitted to say so. The American officer deputed to the university, Dr. Hartshorne, did a great deal to help the Marburg colleagues; he, in his car, went to Berlin and brought a large chunk of my books to which Mama had added a number of other things. We were all dismayed when, some time later, Hartshorne became a victim of a mysterious car accident. The case was never resolved.

It was a matter of sheer luck that a large part of the Berlin State Library had been evacuated to Marburg. Most of my free time I spent in the vaults where I found precious things like Hammer-Purgstall's T*reasure Troughs of the Orient* or Prisse d'Avenue's large-sized book on *The decorative Arabic Arts* from which I copied innumerable motifs. Many things which at that time I had noted on small scraps of paper in tiny script– paper was then non-existent– have been of great help to me to date. I also held lectures and seminars on various Islamic themes, and introductions into Arabic, Persian and Turkish. My happiness was complete when, in May 1946, we succeeded in getting Mama over to Marburg. She had managed to survive and get ration cards by working somewhere as a seamstress, but her body had lost all flesh due to hunger and agony. Her happiness to be joined again with the "lost daughter" soon made her gain some strength. Later she went back to Berlin once more and managed to bring, against many odds, a part of our furniture and other items.

Not all things went by smoothly. The de-nazification[1] often produced ugly tensions among colleagues. We heard about crimes that we never knew about. We had heard the term "concentration camp", but had no idea what it was about. I remember an excursion on Ascension day in 1938 when, together with friends from Erfurt, we walked via Buchfahrt to Ettersberg, which was a favourite walk of many people in spring. On the road was an unusual number of cockchafers which had eaten through the foliage of many trees. Mama was disgusted by them. At the slope of the mill were barracks from which smoke rose up, or steam. Papa was annoyed. "Why do they always put up more and more factories and pollute the air"? We passed those

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[1] a Judicial inquiry conducted all over Germany under Allied supervision to find Nazi war criminals and to punish them

buildings on our climb up to the forest. We had no idea that we had just passed the concentration camp of Buchenwald. It shook us to the bones when, in 1946 and 1947, we were informed about it. It cast a shadow over our hearts– in spite of the fact that now, we were living in peace and could dedicate ourselves to real scholarly work.

Of course there was hardly any food. When I walked to the seminary I used to pass by the American Centre from which emerged the most delicious smell of freshly baked doughnuts. How much I would have given to get just one of these delicacies! (Twenty years later my friends in the USA had a good laugh about it.). Consequently, Mama and I began an intensive study of Davidi-Holle's cook book of 1914 in which the most delicious dishes were made of "only" twenty-six eggs or three kilogram filet of beef. This sated our hunger.

Everything was available in the black market, but we had nothing to trade. A German-American colleague who was to teach the Marburg students all about the secrets of political science and sociology, wanted me to teach him ancient Turkish privately. It wasn't really my special subject. I worked hard to introduce to him the language in ten lessons. As reward I received one bar of cigarettes which cost him nothing. For us, it equaled one pound of butter which in those days, cost upward of eighty marks. And how happy we were when once in a while, a CARE parcel[2] arrived!

In those early years we filled ourselves with knowledge. We attended the lectures of our colleagues. Werner Milch, the tender soul, spoke about the W*est-Eastern Divan* and I was allowed to assist him; or, on Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Theology or science of religions was of particular interest

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[2] A private initiative by US families. This food saved many a German's life.

to me, although the theological faculty was brimming with tension. Above all between Rudolf Bultmann with his sober de-mythification and Friedrich Heiler, who represented the side of the Christian mystics. Emil Balla read the Old Testament and recited and explained the psalms and prophets beautifully. But he resembled more a reformed Jew than a Christian theologian. When the brilliant student-preacher Wolfgang Philipp handed in his inaugural thesis on *Trinity is our Being*, Balla called out: “There seems to be still someone who believes in Trinity”! But Philipp and his wife gave some colour to the faculty; in his rolling East-Prussian intonation he talked of ‘soured sentiments’ and emphasized the Celtic roots of his family. Who else would have come to the university lectures in a Scottish kilt and have given Scottish names to his five children? He died far too early from the consequences of a war injury.

I belonged to the Heiler-circle. It was he who had brought me to Marburg. Full of enthusiam I attended his lectures and took part in his exercises in which I represented Islamic studies, an area with which he was less familiar. Thus we achieved a most satisfying symbiosis.

His ideal of “Protestant Catholicism” appealed to me a lot. On Sundays Mama and I went to attend church, the Protestant mass, which he celebrated in a small chapel in his house. His faithful friends participated in it, later also the little dog Mitra and his descendents. The black foundling “Laqit” sat quietly in the chapel. I often stenographed the sermons and knew that after he had said “God is love” the sermon was almost over. These were the wonderful hours in which the connection, so typical for Heiler, of scholarliness and mystical piety became evident.

It doesn’t surprise that Friedrich Heiler, within the theological faculty, had a tough time. It is explained in his biography. Grown up in a very pious Catholic family in Munich he was much interested in modernism. Ernesto

Buonaiuti was one of his favourites among the Catholic theologians. He later dedicated one of his works to Alfred Loisy. His oriental studies stretched from Assyria to Sanskrit and he was, all his life, fascinated by the Indian religions, starting from his early works on *Buddhistische Versenkung*, “Buddhistic Submersion” and “Mysticism in the Upanishads”. After that appeared his voluminous masterpiece “The Prayer” for which Nathan Söderblom invited him to Uppsala. It was to become a decisive visit for him. He took part in the Lutheran communion and thus, stood excommunicated, although he never committed a ‘formal’ breach with the Roman Church. Toward the end of his life Pope John XXIII appeared to him as the much desired papa angelicus whom he adored. Again and again he felt drawn to Italy, where Sorella Maria in a Franciscan retreat became his spiritual sister. In his numerous works he tried to recreate the development of the early church. He was particularly attracted to the Eastern Church. He received the Bishop’s ordination in the Gallician succession which fact enabled him to celebrate, off and on, together with the Greeks and Russians living in Marburg, the orthodox Easter Night in a small chapel. In 1935 he was sent to Greifswald on punitive transfer; this was changed into punitive transfer from the theological to the philosophical faculty. This made it possible for him to also conduct philosophical inaugural dissertations. Today it is a matter of dispute whether the punishment was directed at him or his political leanings against the entire Marburg theological faculty.

Heiler’s erudition was stupendous and his lectures, which were held in beautiful, melodious sentences kept attracting admirers whom we labeled with a term from Hinduism, gopis, who longingly surrounded Krishna. Ours though, were elderly shepherdesses, among them the faithful Grete Grönland, a retired teacher who had looked

after him since his call to Marburg in 1921. The swarming gopis were not quite to the liking of his wife, who was a representative of sober Protestantism. She was a delegate in the Bundestag (Federal Parliament) during its first legislative period.

Heiler occupied himself with issues which only decades later, became modern, like the relationship of Eros and Agape, the two forms of love in religion. It was I and my colleague Goldhammer who participated in his seminar, so that the amused students found the announcement of it in the lecture list: Eros and Agape: ‘Dr. Heiler and Dr. Schimmel’ One of Heiler’s favourite themes was “The Woman in the Religions”! He published a book on it which, unfortunately, did not receive enough attention. He was a strong proponent of women priests and we lovingly called him the “patron-saint of the lady-lecturers”.

I remained puzzled why he and his works received so little attention, above all in the Anglo-Saxon regions, while the works of the excellent novelist Mircea Eliade were considered the non plus ultra in the religious sciences. Heiler exceeded him by leaps and bounds in scientific depth. But, may be the reason lay in his introvert nature, his mystical tendencies, or his German thoroughness which showed itself in thousands of foot notes. Or perhaps, it was his inclination to perceive encompassing kindness and beauty in everything and by that, ignore the *mysterium tremendum,* the tremulous aspect of the holy, which is as much part of religion as the *fascinans.* His excessive kindness sometimes showed itself in the grading of dissertations which fact increased the tension between him and Bultmann. But Heiler was a man of harmony who played the piano superbly. In 1948, my ghazals *Song of the Reedpipe* appeared. He composed romantic melodies for them and liked to sing them.

The year 1947 came around. “Our Persian Kitten”, as the man of Ancient History called the young colleague, had settled down well in Marburg and got used to the social structure of a small university town. A committee was founded, “The Educated help the Educated”. The group consisted mainly of *Prowis* (Mama’s term): professors’ widows, who stretched like a net over the whole town. They were all called “Mrs. Professor”, although earlier, most of them had been cooks or household helpers of the Mr. Professors. The only real Mrs. Professor was Luise Berthold, who was much concerned that the notices from the administration were not addressed to the Mr. Professors. She rightly placed a high value on the “lady colleagues”. (Even now, occasionally, I get mail addressed to Mr. Professor Annemarie Schimmel). Luise Berthold also taught me the answer to the remark often passed about successful women: “How sad that you don’t have any children!” She simply replied: “I need my inheritance for myself”!

New scholarly projects were started. Hans Wehr, at that time professor for Arabic in Erlangen, continued the work on his “Dictionary of Arabic”. We younger colleagues took excerps from texts and looked for new meanings of words; each newly found meaning was written on a notepad on which the source was also entered. Each note received an honorarium of ten pennies; I made two-hundred marks!

The summer of 1947 was unusually hot. But the Heiler-seminar had a few climaxes: we celebrated midsummer at Erika Stoevesand’s like a real summernight-gala. Everyone brought something along: We had plenty of bread and we danced into the early morning hours. Heiler played nothing but waltzes (he didn’t know that other dance-forms existed). Two of our students had brought full jasmine-bushes from a wilderness-garden– it was unforgettable. Ten days later we celebrated Hermann Hesse’s seventieth

birthday. Helmut Rückriegel, who had a large room, invited some colleagues from German Philology and some from the Heiler seminar. Most of us heard for the first time about *Steppenwolf* and *Oriental Journey*. Enthusiastically we wrote a letter of congratulations which we managed to smuggle to Switzerland with the help of an American soldier. A year later, the initiator of the celebrations, Cold, who was a talented but hard to tame scholar of Religious Studies, sent my poetry collection *Song of the Reedflute* to the venerated poet as well as some texts, which he printed on a hand-printing machine in Holzminden. We were thrilled when we received a letter of thanks and every year, I got a small package of special prints as well as a beautiful, hand-signed water colour painting of Hesse who, in 1957, also wrote a foreword to my translation of Iqbal's *Book of Eternity*. At that time, we also got hold of Brecht's works. His Tao-tse-king became a kind of cult-work for us.

There was another event that stuck to my mind. Ernst Kühnel announced to me the visit of D.S. Rice, a specialist in Islamic art, who served with the British army in Germany. He came on a Sunday. We had hardly anything to eat and Mama had borrowed a few potatoes. But our visitor had brought eatables and drinkables with him in his VW car. Then we sat in the sun and talked about art, about calligraphy, about arabesques and I mildly complained that no watercolours were available. Two weeks later a small parcel arrived with a note: "The black one is watercolours"– and the rest was Pond's cream and similar treasures which we had never seen before. Later we were told that our visitor was a German scholar of Semitics of Jewish origin (Reich) who, through gifts of food, had helped many German Orientalists through these hard times. Our friendship continued. He helped me during my first visit to the totally confusing London. When, in 1957, he committed suicide, we were all deeply shocked.

In mid-August there was a certain short item in the news-paper: the Indian Subcontinent had been divided into Pakistan (West and East) and Bharat. This latter name had hardly ever been used, everybody called it India. It was the bigger part and Pakistan was hardly known and led a shadow existence. Did anyone really know about the refugee tragedies which took place over this division? I needed a long time to understand that the capital of this new entity was Karachi and not, by way of historical argument, Delhi which, for over nine-hundred years, had been the heart of Muslim India. In 1948 the area of the Nizam of Hyderabad– center of Islamic culture in the South of the Subcontinent– was annexed by India, because, although the ruler was a Muslim, the majority of the population was Hindu; while Kashmir, with a population of over 90% Muslims under a Hindu ruler, was likewise allotted to India. Till to-date it is the cause of friction in the Subcontinent.

The year 1948 brought the currency reform. It brought about a gradual normalization of life. Over night the shops were filled with goods. Everybody bought the stuff of his or her dreams, cherished for many years. My translation of Yacup Kadri’s Turkish novel *Noor Baba: Flame and Butterfly* appeared just before that, and the clever publisher sent me the honorarium a day before the currency reform. Thus, the publisher had fulfilled his contract but I was left with worthless money in my hands. Something else happened one or two days before the great event: In Mainz, the first great conference of Orientalists after the war took place, organized by Helmut Scheel who, with a changed worldview, had come from Berlin to Mainz. His organizational talent was not less here than it had been earlier at the Orientalists’ moots in Berlin. The conference was topped by a wine-testing in Oppenheim. During the festival speech on “Wine-growing in ancient Egypt” the

speaker swayed a little bit. We rather starved scholars celebrated a Bachantian feast with music and dance, while next morning Richard Hartmann could not understand why the halls of the group-meetings were rather empty.

Through American influence the interest in Sociology grew; many Americans considered Ibn'e Khaldun (died 1406) the actual founder of this science, and whenever I explained that I was an Arabist the question was put to me: "Oh, then you know Ibn'e Khaldun"?

By the promptings of our Marburg sociologist Count Max Solms I was compelled to translate portions of his work– a job which one accepts only when one is very young or very courageous.

During this time I evaluated the first doctorial thesis of my teaching career. My friend Ings had done her thesis in Turkish Studies. At the same time, she once again got engaged. I wrote a congratulatory poem for her, which was to reflect on Turkish topics:

For my first Doctor-Daughter

When once, many hundred years ago
The Mongols nearly stepped on our toe
A highly learned man the pope addressed:
"Why don't you start a language school; it's best
To teach us there the heathens' tongue
So that fluently, we may convert them, without a wrong.
We also train in languages the girls, and then we send them to those hordes
To marry there the overlords,
So that their virtue, bright and tall,
May be copied there by all."
Alas, the school did not succeed.
Seven-hundred years have passed with speed
To bring us nearer to the double aim.
You studied, torturing your brain,

The tongue of the uncivilized.
Excelling elsewhere too, you devised
To conquer yet another stranger's heart.
He may not be a Tartar's Khan
But is a lawyer in Marburg on the Lahn
Today, to doubly honour you in state,
Large crowds are coming until late:
From Inner Asia our Turkish friends
Arrive with cheers and waving hands;
With dignity, his wisdom bright,
Mahmod of Kashgar comes– a splendid sight!
Near him from Uzbekistan, fine boys
Have understood the law of noise.
The Kazaks their jackets swirl,
The Karakalpaks their moustaches twirl.
Meanwhile, the Chovaches drag
Their well-stuffed travel-bag.
The Karachaias, full of wonder, mutter
Seeing milk and cheese, many eggs and butter.
They together with some mountain clan
Just dropped by, for wishing them.
Some Shorees in a corner stand
Feeling lost among the grand,
Till later, they with other Altais in a swell
Celebrate the engagement just as well.
Even the Osmanli, often disregarded, with a swish
Waves his crescent-flag as a wish.
From the snowy fields of their home
The Kirgiz full of enthusiasm come,
With the urgent wish to bless you.
The Turkmens hurriedly arrive here, too.
Then the Yakuts come, and the Dolganas
The Tartaries, the Bashkirs and Komanas.
Karaimas,Kipchak and Uiguirs, all get settled
All, who once through Turkey's land had travelled.

Oh, well-wishers come from days away,
And joining them, comes -
Jemile.

The world began to open up. Guests came to Marburg from other parts of Germany and from abroad. In Heiler's house we met the great scholars like Gerardus van de Leeuw and Joachim Wach. Our guest-book too, filled up with names of almost all the German Orientalists. I think of Wilhelm Gundert who, together with Walther Schubring and me published the beautiful anthology *Poetry of the East, s*ensitively edited by Herbert G. Göpfert, who continued to accompany me on my literary path. Gundert, who was a cousin of Hermann Hesse, was responsible for the Far-East part of the work. He had lived in Japan so long that he himself had almost turned into a Japanese: gentle, withdrawn, smiling. We called him the "Little Rice-man". The way he translated, on the occasion of the visit of Suzuki, his lecture on Zen-Buddhism is unforgettable – actually the old man showed us how to live Zen. In the end, Suzuki hit Gundert across the face– and he returned it, and with a smile bowed before the audience. A fine friendship developed with this wise scholar. Today, I would have contributed a much larger part of Arabic, Persian and Turkish poems; but it was my debut in an area which for decades– and even today– occupies me.

Soon after, the first foreign guests and students arrived in Marburg. The first Turk who studied there, Nadeem, was much more admired for his football-skills than for being a model student. Niyazi and Naime Bademli– how could we have later, managed without the loving, overpowering hospitality of the Bademlis in Ankara? And through Nusrat's stories of his "mystical aunt" I came to know a very traditional family which later, opened me the way to Samiha Ayverdi. Jim Peabody, an American officer who wanted to learn Arabic from me, brought a new element

into the Heiler-circle. From him I heard about the old Boston sea-faring families. When, two decades later, we met again in Harvard it turned out that he belonged to the same Harvard-house as I. But here in Marburg, he was the most generous St. Nicholas at Heiler's Nicholas festivities, dressed up in Heiler's lithurgic gowns.

Another strange bird I want to mention who visited Marburg was Elsa Sophia von Kamphoevener. I had invited her to give a lecture, because in those days her beautiful fairy-tales *Around the Campfire of the Caravan-serai* was a bestseller. However, our Oriental specialists were quite upset because there was hardly any real Turkish fiber in them. But when she told the tales, one forgot everything else and got absorbed in the fairytale-fantasy. In Marburg, the large, stately lady also spoke in the America-House of all things, before the Evangelical Women's Association on "Life in the Harem". Three brave men and a large number of virtuous, elderly ladies listened with growing surprise and horror when she defended the harem and gave the battle-call in a voice increasing in pitch, that women should see to it that men should be degraded: " They should be made soooo small"! she ended up with the remark: "Dear sisters, when you are fed up with your man, buy a pretty slave, decorate her, spray her with perfumes and instruct her: Keep that beast away from me as long as possible"!

I am not sure whom I had annoyed most, the Protestant ladies or the three totally dejected men.

At that time a doctorate for History of Religion was created, the Dr. sc.rel. Through this act the Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck had fulfilled a wish which, since the days of Rudolf Otto, had been heard again and again. Heiler insisted that I should be the first one to obtain this doctorial degree. I handed in a thesis on "the Idea of Mystical Love in Islam". Bultmann thought this work not very enlightening; nowadays I fully agree with him.

Several disputes erupted about this title, so much anger and many unbelievable incidents happened like broken legs, that after all these annoyances I could never imagine that the Theological Faculty in May 2001, would celebrate my Golden Doctor-Jubilee in a most beautiful way. I am grateful for it; this thesis was to play an important, even decisive role in my future career. After the third award the church cancelled the Dr. sc.rel., so that– God forbid– no non-Christian student should ever obtain a doctorial title from the Evangelical-Theological Faculty. It was like a final chip in the puzzle of this entirely absurd scenario.

The warnings about men of Luise Berthold were not quite out of place when I learnt that some of my colleagues in 1953, undermined my promotion to extraordinary professor. However, for me it meant only one year delay– and by that time my life had taken a quite different turn.

Sweden– the first Trip abroad

Among the many visitors that came to Heiler was one Märta Tamm-Götlind, a Swedish pioneer for kwinnliga präster, an ordained woman-priest. She invited me to participate in a congress ‘Fred og Frihet’ in Stockholm, and to visit her. All very well– but the travel permit reached me only a day after the conclusion of the congress. The Americans saw in this organization for Peace and Freedom a communist propaganda movement and did not allow anyone from their occupation-zones to have anything to do with it. But finally I boarded the train going North and, after some adventures I reached Uddevalla on the West coast of Sweden from where a boat took me to Bokenäs. I spent full ten days on the island during which I added to my theological Swedish some useful words of daily life– after all, every morning I had to run to the beach and do the shopping. There were many interesting discussions on theology and women movements; Märte truly deserved it

when on her ninetieth birthday, she was given an honorary doctorate by the Uppsala university.

From the West coast I then went through southern Sweden to Stockholm. There I was permitted to stay in the Sigtuna Stiftelse, a convalescence home of the evangelical church. I was slightly uncomfortable with all the pampering. Could I not be a bit useful by giving a lecture? Oh no, I was ordered to enjoy, Manfred Björnquis, the Bishop of Stockholm explained to me. He was an unforgettable person, tall and slim, a most charismatic divine.

Then came Uppsala, where I stayed with a friend of Märta. I regularly visited the mighty cathedral in order to listen to the resounding sermons. I always enjoyed seeing the silhouette of the old palace which rose against a glassy-blue sky. And right amongst the many great scholars I felt like in a dream. I had never seen such a precious lay-out of a lunch-table than at Professor Zetterstien's, whose work I knew from my studies on Mameluk history. Of course I visited Geo Widengren, the scholar of History of Religion who, for starters, reproached me with the– to me unknown– political sins of my respected teacher Schaeder. Later he became a good friend, with whom I enjoyed a good cooperation in the International Society for the History of Religion. Widengren was a great rider before the Lord; for this reason, I gave my festival text for him in 1970 about the 'Education of the Soul' the title: "Only an obstinate Horse". His researches were of a different kind than the rather mystical works of Heiler. Evil tongues labeled them as Geology.

The meeting with Henrik S. Nyberg, whose works I admired since my student days, was of central importance. He was one of the first, if not The first, European Orientalist who attempted an analysis of the complex works of the great theosophist Ibn'Arabi; Schaeder had translated

his ground-breaking work on *The Religions of Ancient Iran.* In Nyberg's house I met his daughter Sigrid to whom I am by now, bound in friendship for half a century. I admire her elegant style in Swedish, English and German, and since she soon afterwards married a German diplomat Hans (John) Kahle (likewise, the son of an Orientalist) our paths kept crossing repeatedly– in Bonn, Harvard and in Sweden, not to forget common friends in Pakistan and India.

The greatest experience of this first of many later visits to Uppsala was the encounter with gamla ärkebiskopinna, Anna Söderblom, the widow of Nathan Söderblom. She lived in a kind of old tower, very close to the Domkyrkan and allowed me to visit her as often as I wanted in order to tell her about Friedrich Heiler and about the history of religions. I became a good friend of one of her granddaughters (Söderbloms had ten children, the three daughters were all married to bishops of the Swedish Lutheran church). I was even included in the family celebrations of the 79th birthday of this remarkable woman with her sparkling eyes.

My first stay abroad had, in every respect, been a great experience. I gave a few lectures and even received a small honorarium– a wonderful opportunity to go shopping. Normally, we had no foreign exchange, so now I went for the hat of my dreams, and my bags began to fill with dresses presented to me.

I often returned to Sweden, to Stockholm and Göteborg; but I could never imagine in my wildest dreams that one day, I was to become honorary doctor of the university of Uppsala. It was Sigrid who broke this totally surprising news to me over the telephone on New Year Day, 1986. It then happened in the end of May. A Swedish honorary doctor is something very ceremonious: To start with, I was being measured for the ring and for the hat (it looks like the riding hat of a lady) (the doctors of literature wear laurel

wreaths). Then the ceremony is practiced, the steps in the hall, the bows, the turn to the audience; this all was quite exciting. Kurt Ruh and myself were the honorees of the Theological Faculty. I could not have preferred a better co-recipient than this most profound specialist in medieval German Mysticism. Later, I stood on the wide steps next to Boutros-Gali, the then Foreign Minister of Egypt. In the evening there was a gala banquet in the palace. I had been requested to express the thanks of the foreign honorary doctors. I was myself surprised that I managed to express it in a mix of Swedish, English and German. Then I enjoyed the evening. There was background music– no "academic festival tunes", but refined entertainment including "Old Man River". Since then, Uppsala evokes in my memory the fragrance of lilacs, which spread their aroma all over the place. Was it the smell of holiness?

Holland– Land of Historians of Religion

Among the visitors in Heiler's house was also Gerardus van der Leeuw, the well-known scholar of History of Religion from Groningen, whose "Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion" we read enthusiastically. He brought the news that in 1950, the first International Congress of Historians of Religion after the war was planned to be held in Amsterdam. On that occasion the founding of the International Association for the History of Religion, the IAHR, was to be decided. A tempting prospect –but how would the Dutch accept the presence of so many German colleagues so soon after the war?

There had been no need to worry. The congress developed into a most pleasant and cordial forum. Since we had no foreign exchange we were accommodated privately: my colleagues were amused when they heard that I had been given into the trusted hands of the female director of the moral police. She really pampered me! And then the congress! What an experience when so many names from

specialized subjects turn into living people. There was Karl Kerenyi, the Hungarian specialist of antique mythology; Gershom Scholem, the profound scholar of the Kabbala. Five years later we became friends during a congress in Rome. While I was teaching in Ankara, he was mainly interested in the strange group of the Donme who mainly lived in Salonika. They are followers of the "false Messia" Sabbathay Zwi (1626-1676) who, towards the end of his life and while in Turkish prison, converted to Islam. His disciples followed him. They were hated by the orthodox Muslims, as they had developed a highly interesting mystical piety and liked to sing tunes of the Anatolian mystic Yunus Emre, while using relics of Jewish tradition. Scholem, at that time, was working on a biography of Sabbathay Zwi, a superbly written book, like all his other works, too.The deeply erudite Bashkiri Turkish Studies scholar Zeki Velidi Togan was there. He, after world-war I, had been president of Bashkiristan which, for a short time, had become independent. After his prolonged stay in Germany, he worked in Istanbul. He invited me for lunch in order to smoothen out his lecture. At the end of the meal he put his teeth in a case and remarked laconically: "They hurt me." This does not diminish his erudition nor his humour.

The encounter with Louis Massignon was the peak of the congress for me, whose enormous work on Hallaj I, as a student, had worked through with equal amounts of labour and enthusiasm. Heiler took me to him and while the scholar spoke kindly to me in fastest possible French, I stood before him in silent admiration. Never before nor after that, have I met a person who stood in so much light, as if Hallaj's love of God and his own passion for divine love and mercy, as well as his knowledge about the unavoidable acceptance of suffering, found their expression in his well-cut, slim face and eyes.

Massignon was not only a scientific exponent of Islamic Mysticism but also and always, even under danger, stood for the suppressed (like the Algerians). He founded prayer-groups and organized pilgrimages to places which are holy to both Muslims and Christians. Later, I sent him poetic texts in which Hallaj continued to live, particularly from the Subcontinent. In 1957 we met again at the Orientalists' moot in Munich and we happened to sit next to each other during a lecture of the Orientalist Franz Babinger from Munich, who read about the sanctuaries of the seven-sleepers in Anatolia. Again and again he sighed: "That man doesn't believe, he believes in nothing"! Because, treating the topic of the seven-sleepers, so dear to him, simply from an historical and critical perspective seemed to him a desecration. One year later, in late September 1958, we met again– at the congress of Historians of Religion in Japan. Our last discussion took place in an overcrowded lift in a Tokyo hotel. It was about the *rosa mystica*, the rose as a symbol of divine beauty and glory, as it appeared in the works of the Shiraz mystic Ruzbihan-e-Baqli, whom Massignon made known for the first time. We never felt the tightness in the lift– he lifted me into a higher, spiritual world. And thus he remained in my memory: a man like a saint, a real saint.

In Amsterdam, IAHR was newly founded. With it, the Historians of Religion had their own organization which gradually spread across Europe, then to America and later, East and South. In 1958 a remarkable interim congress took place in Japan, in which prince Mikasa, the youngest brother of the emperor, took active part. In 1960, Marburg was the venue. We also met in Stockholm (1970) and in Lancaster (1975). In 1985 we met in Sydney, in 1990 just like the second congress, in Rome. I loved these gatherings, but could never imagine that I, in Winnipeg in 1980, would

be elected IAHR president: the first woman and the first Islam scholar.

At the congress in Rome in 1990, I took leave, not only from the presidency but also, from active participation at the congresses. The ideals and methods of the sciences of religion had changed profoundly. Emphasis was now on "science", i.e. theory, sociology, psychology and less on philosophy of religion.

About two years after the congress in Amsterdam I was invited to a meeting in Oude Loo near Amersfoort. There we were to discuss mysticism and gnosis. It was the time when Queen Juliana, in search of cure for her youngest daughter, turned to the healer Grete Hofmann and encouraged moots on esoteric subjects. The group of invitees was strange. From among the known figures I only recall Gilles Quispel, the great specialist of Gnosis.

I also spoke– on what else but Rumi. It was a pleasant experience to see the queen in the role of a caring hostess who not only discussed issues animatedly, with speakers and guests alike, but was concerned about the welfare of all; she poured tea for them as if born to it. She herself brought a tray with sherry to celebrate a guest's birthday.

Later I visited Holland repeatedly. Once in 1973, there were lectures for the Sufi community of Inayat Khan, to celebrate Rumi's seven-hundredth death anniversary. There I experienced that the noble ladies, Rumi-enthusiasts, didn't know that he originally wrote in Persian. This experience made me quite skeptical towards western Sufis; this skepticism increased further during my stay in the USA; and it dominated me when the works of Idris Shah flooded the market –books, which changed the rigid, demanding mystical search into a watered-down, sweetened worldview which is easy to reach for everybody.

I also travelled to Utrecht and Leiden for lectures on different subjects. These universities had been promoting

Oriental Studies for centuries. I simply love to recall J.M.S. Baljon from Leiden, one of the few scholars who dedicated himself to the study of Islam in India, and who introduced the great reformist- theologians Ahmad Sirhindi (died 1624) and above all, Shah Waliullah (died 1762).

My last encounter with Holland was a congress in Utrecht on “Sufism and its Critics” in which a number of excellent scholars from all over the world participated. It was early May, 1995 and it was there that I came to know that I was to be awarded the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade. The ARD wanted to record me. Therefore I travelled to Hilversum to be interviewed. I shall later tell (page 316 ff) about the witch hunt that ensued. The congress obviously had the correct title –“Sufism and its Critics”. But all this was not the fault of Holland.

Switzerland - Spiritual Experiences.

Another consequence of the Amsterdam congress was an invitation to Ascona– not to attend the Eranos-moot, whose results I had enthusiastically read as a student, but to which I was invited only decades later. No. It was a Dutch-German couple who had invited me. Thus, I travelled for the first time via Basle and the St. Gotthard-Range to Ascona. When I reached there, I had to climb a seemingly endless staircase up a slope till I reached Casa Raganella. There, for two weeks, I experienced a luxurious hospitality.

Unfortunately, the rotund mistress of the house was at that time, engaged in a dietary programme. This was rather hard for someone who had no foreign currency and could not afford to buy a meal in a restaurant.

But there was no end to spiritual food. For the first time I met my colleague from Basle, Fritz Meier, who, through his first publications proved himself to be a profound expert on Islamic mysticism. Small and delicately built with piercing blue eyes, he gazed critically at the young colleague and seemed to approve of her; together with his

then wife Ronco, a vivacious follower of Jung, we made a trip to a romantic neighborhood village of Ascona, from where the painter Lenne has since long been painting the beautifully shaped mountain across the lake in ever new aspects. I met Fritz Meier again when one day, somewhat lost and lonely, I was strolling along the Piazza. The learned colleague asked me kindly: "May I invite you to a Cassata"? I had no idea what a Cassata was, but discovered that it was something really tasty. This was the first of dozens of invitations by Fritz Meier, because in time, a wonderful friendship developed between us which lasted until his death. It was he who received me at the Badische Railway station when for some reason (and there were many reasons, above all, lectures) I came to Switzerland. It was he who took me to beautiful restaurants, whether in Switzerland or Iran, where at times we also met at congresses. Meier, who was considered by many to be unapproachable, was a perfectionist, a man of endlessly vast and thorough knowledge, a first class philologist and equally knowledgeable in philosophical and historical subjects.

He knew the remotest manuscripts, the most intricate rules of Arabic and Persian languages and demanded of his students totally exact work in their studies of– preferably mystical– texts in their seminary work. He never stopped short at pure philosophy which is an absolute basis for any understanding of a text, but also expected a solid, philosophical perspective. Not everyone could stand up to his penetrating glance. He distinguished himself by his intensive hard work coupled with a delicate sensitivity for languages. On this basis he brought to life, during the course of his long life-span, the figures of the great mystics of Central Asia while in his biographies, he developed a vast network of remotest facets of Islamic culture. There was really nobody else who might have investigated the

problems of joy among the early Sufis. Nobody else would have analyzed the vastly complicated, mystical-sensual experiences of the father of Rumi. At the same time he was, during periods of respite from his work, a connoisseur, who knew and loved the most exquisite foods, good wines and music just as well as the most complex problems of Persian grammar and poetry. I was grateful that I never experienced his strict side, so much dreaded by his colleagues and students; I knew the happy and hospitable man, who once, when he saw a pram, exclaimed:“ Whenever I see a little child I think: how lucky you are, having so many wonderful things ahead of you”!

He died just as he had wished: on his return from a small party celebrating his eighty-sixth birthday, he collapsed and died, with a bunch of roses in his hands.

Another great person that I met in Ascona that spring of 1951 was Rudolf Pannwitz, the philosopher, who for a long time had lived in Yugoslavia. At the time we met, he lived near Ascona in a flat most shockingly, cheaply furnished. The man with the edgy skull made a deep impression on me; I breathlessly listened to his words, delivered in a surprisingly high-pitched voice. Never before had I heard such a transparent presentation of philosophical problems. I, the non-philosopher, was equally enthused by his equally transparent books. At that time I had started working on Mohammad Iqbal, the Indo-Pakistan poet-philosopher, and we embarked on an intensive exchange of letters which showed Pannwitz to be an admirer of Iqbal whom he– himself familiar with Nietzsche– considered a better interpreter of Nietzsche than most of the European thinkers.

Soon after our meeting in Ascona I received a letter from him in which he introduced a friend of his to me, “…so that you may see for yourself what strange fruit

grows on Märkische[3] pines". This friend was Hanns Meinke, teacher in Königswusterhausen, from the poetic school of Otto zur Lindes, the "Charon". For starters, he manifested himself through a self-stitched and self-embroidered dress which he sent me and which, strangely enough, fitted well. And it was not only an embroidered velvet belt and other art objects which reached me from Eastern Germany, no! Two, for me totally important books reached me, Iqbal's Persian poem *Payam-e-Mashriq,* "Message of the East," and *Javednama,* "Book of Eternity", which became the foundation of my growing Iqbal library. It was Meinke who, around 1930, had translated a number of Iqbal's poems from English translations into German verse and had sent them in beautiful calligraphy, to the poet-philosopher in Lahore. These are much admired exhibits in the museum there. As a sign of gratitude Iqbal had sent both the volumes of poetry collections to Germany. Meinke however, did not know Persian and to my immense joy, they then reached me. From that time on a lively correspondence developed between Hanns Meinke and me; he sent me his poems which he partly published under the name "Merlin", or he simply just sent them to his friends, beautifully bound and artistically calligraphed. He dedicated to me a large volume of free translations of Maulana Rumi, in a self-made copper-plating. Every day it reminds me of him and the days, which he and his family later spent with me in Ankara or Konya.

Ascona re-emerged as a centre of importance in my life when, in 1991, I was asked to participate in the Eranos moots which, since 1930, are held there every year. It brings together a galaxy of scholars, a group whose work is very close to me, although I could not be considered as one

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[3] The land around Berlin

of the Jung-followers who at that time, dominated the scene there. But what a pleasure it was to meet again persons like Magda Kerenyi, who still looks after the heritage of her husband Karl. In past years, many new friendships started there, as with the Egyptologist Erik Hornung from Basle and with Elizabeth Staehelin, with the Jung-followers Regina and Andreas Schweizer and many others.

The story of Eranos, presented recently in a thorough and knowledgabe way by Thomas Hakl has, in the past years, suffered many bruises. It is hoped hat their work will soon be consolidated again.

During the time that I co-edited *Fikrun wa Funn* (see page 163 ff) I often travelled to Sur, because the publishing house of this cultural magazine in Arabic was situated in Unterägeri in the Canton of Uri. Thus I saw Zurich– first by traveling through it, later very thoroughly. The Rietberg-Museum was a major attraction for me. I quite often held lectures there and enjoyed the beautiful objects of Islamic art. The Turkish-Swiss Society invited me quite often, so that the house of my Orient-loving friends Fortunat and Ursula von Salis became central to my Swiss travels. And how could I ever forget the days in Bern, where my former student and colleague, Christoph Bürgel, represented Oriental Studies? Could I ever forget to mention Geneva, where the precious collection of Islamic art of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan is housed, which holds the finest Indian and Persian miniatures– a collection, which counts among one of the best private ones of Europe or may be, of the world. In this way, friendly relations developed with Prince Sadruddin and the circle of friends of Islamic art. One of them was Felizitas Countess Schönborn in whose hospitable home I enjoyed many not only spiritually stimulating hours but also a lot of gaiety: even the jolly lap-dog amused me.

There was one place that never attracted me. It was the spa Ragaz. Hugo and Gerda Veddas from Lüdinghausen, whose friendship I count among my most precious treasures, went there every summer to take the waters. Once in 1989, they invited me to spend a week with them there. I shook my head and out came the rhyme:

Once to Radaz went a tom-cat
Hoping in the bathing cubicle
For a rheumatic miracle
And cure from all the pain.
Alas, it was in vain

Gradually I gave in and spent ten days with the friends in the "Quellenhof". My room had a sunny balcony. I had brought along a thick volume of Turkish verses of the medieval sufi Yunus Emre, and I utilized the many hours that I was free from bathing and massaging to translate some more verses of the Anatolian singer who earlier in Anatolia, had brought me so much consolation. When, ten days later I flew back to Bonn, my new book was ready; I called it *Wanderungen mit Yunus Emre* (Walking with Yunus Emre).

In the book I tried to render the last year of the life of the singer as a legend and catch some of the moods of Anatolia. So, the Radaz days were not altogether wasted.

When I had to be examined by a doctor there, I had the most pleasant experience ever with a doctor. After Dr. Diet-helm Urban had looked at me critically and had examined my not so ideal spine, he was of the opinion that he might prescribe me hundreds of exercises and medications. But since I was expected to protest and reject it, its condition was expected to get worse rather than better. Therefore, he recommended that I should do whatever my heart dictates me to do, because– and the rest was spoken in strongest Swiss intonation and has since,

accompanied me: “Because you are an example of the victory of the spirit over the body.”

PART III

TURKEY
(1952-1959)

Did you come a stranger here,
Why do you weep, oh nightingale?
And tired, lost your way here?
Why do you weep, oh nightingale?
You climbed over the mountains' height?
And flew low across the rivers' might?
You suffered separation from friend's sight?
Why do you weep, oh nightingale?
Oh how very bitter is suffering's cup
My own pain you bring rising up
You might want to see the friend? But
Why do you weep, oh nightingale?
You your wings can spread in light
And stretch them wide in brilliant flight
And overcome the veils so tight
Why do you weep, oh nightingale?
You live in spring, amidst the roses' field
They all day long for you their blossoms yield
But a never ending plaint you wield
Why do you weep, oh nightingale?
Yunus Emre

A City without an Equal– Istanbul

What was it that Orhan Veli said, who sang the praise of the city on two continents in ever new images and has

taught his readers to listen to Istanbul's manifold sounds and feel the agitated pulse of the Galata Bridge?

I don't intend to really travel much
But should I be inclined to such
To Istanbul of course, I'd go
If you saw me on the Bebek tram
What would you be doing then?

And Yahya Kemal, the representative of the great classical literature at the same time when Orhan Veli introduced new sounds into Turkish poetry, sings, like him, of his unquenchable longing for this city in whose praise he has written the most beautiful of his verses:

If every spirit could in heaven choose his place
And see it open up according to his wish,
If kind fate had favoured me
And given a new star into my hand,
I would not look at favours of the kind:
I would rather go to Istanbul

I was introduced to Istanbul through poetry, I walked through it, let myself be driven like leaves in autumn up and down the steep alleys, breathed the smell of tar and kebab, of fish and dried blossoms in graveyards and, half aware, hummed the Turkish songs which from every radio echoed through the old city; lost myself in the mosques and in the sight of ever new sunrises and sunsets, when the Bosporus lit up in silver or dimming lilac, or the sun built in its waves a bridge of red-glowing light

The voyage by steamer from Naples to Istanbul in February 1952 had been tiring, as I had been squeezed together in a tiny cabin with three– mildly spoken– obese Greek women; but a German professor-couple to whom I talked about Turkish and Islamic history and poetry so as to prepare their minds and souls for their stay there, entertained me for the major part of the days.

Behcet Necatigil, the poet-friend with whom I corresponded, was there at the wharf to receive me. He and his warm-hearted wife took me to a place in Laleli which is nowadays a part of the Ramada Hotel. My hostess was a middle-aged lady with whom I immediately developed a fine understanding. Through her I met a number of interesting people who also enriched my classical vocabulary by some useful word like toothbrush, umbrella and oven-pipe. After a week I moved to Pangalti on the European side of the Golden Horn; the friendship with my first companions stayed for years.

I can’t forget the day when I for the first time, came to Jale and Mustafa Inan. They had invited me to stay with them. The living room had beautiful furniture studded with mother-of- pearl. When Mustafa, who was professor of Mathematics and had done his Ph.D. in Zurich, came home for lunch, Jale told him that I, since many years, had a Turkish pet-name which a colleague in Berlin had bestowed on me.

“Her name is Cemile”.

The master of the house looked at me critically. “Is this word from the Quran”?

“No”, I replied, “Only the masculine form jamil (cemil) is there in Sura 12, *sabrun jameel*,

“beautiful patience”.

With this I was accepted by the family to whom I owe the best introduction into Turkish life and Turkish culture in all its shades. Jale (who did honour to her name, “dew drop”) was the daughter of the painter and director of the museum Aziz Ogan. She worked as archaeologist and became one of the leading specialists, particularly for the area of Side, where she excavated every year. Mustafa had a profound knowledge of Turkish literature, music and tradition. Whenever I returned in the evenings from my manuscript studies in the university library, I continued

learning at home in a most pleasant way. The little Huseyin too, soon made friends with “Aunt Cemile.”

The house in Pangalti remained my home in Istanbul, also when I returned to Turkey in autumns 1953 in order to continue studying manuscripts. When in the following year my mother accompanied me to Ankara, “Aunt Mama”, as Huseyin called her, became a family member too. And Aunt Mama accompanied me to Turkey again and again and stood by my side during the often difficult years of my teaching assignment in Ankara.

Sometimes my memory of the first two stays in Turkey melts into one, although in many ways they were so different. The weeks during spring 1952 are anchored in my memory as an eternal spring. Had I ever seen more magnificent chestnuts than in Pashabahche (once famous for its glass-works) where a friend of Jale lived in a beautiful old Yah?

And had I ever had such animated discussions as on the famous Tuesdays, when the young, progressive poets of Istanbul met in the Machka Kahvesi? I sat there with them and listened to their arguments against classical poetry. The entire group of progressives which got together around the magazine Varhk met there. Behcet Necatigil, who had introduced me there and whose dry, almost meager poems I found hard to accept, was always around. I still see his face, shaded by a touch of melancholy, which seemed to reflect his efforts for extreme honesty in poetry and his almost fearful rejection of the romantic (yet, he succeeded in writing a few very tender love poems). At times Yashar Nabi dropped in, the chief editor of the Varhk; Salah Birsel also belonged to this group; Sometimes Cahit Kulebi came; friendly relations developed with Haldun Taner. Samim Kocagöz, the story teller, appeared– later on, I often was his guest in his home in Izmir- Karshiyaka.

I got inspired by my Turkish friends and began to write articles on German art in Turkish magazines. In the Istanbul Dergisi, in Yeditepe and the great Hayat a number of sketches appeared, about German cities or country-sides, about persons that seemed important to me, all signed with the pen-name Cemile Kiratli (kirat = Schimmel).

At our meetings, I occasionally tried to defend classical poetry and to recite a few lines by Yahya Kemal which were so near and dear to me. But no! –"Such ghazals, just linked by the classical form of verse, are simply too easy!" they said. "We need to labour at it, find honest forms. We cannot sit in an ivory tower and write about sunsets and roses and nightingales, while all around us people suffer, are hungry, demand justice"!

At times I asked myself (and them, too) whether at the time of Homer or the great Oriental poets like Hafis or Fuzuli people did not suffer, were not hungry; but such arguments were rejected as irrelevant. In a way these young poets were right: the classical form of the ghazal and cassida (both having mono-rhymes), which have been popular for centuries in the Islamic world, can also be used by a poet who is no more than a skilful rhyme-smith, because the imagery, the symbolism, the rules for rhyme and rhythm and the play with innumerable associations are fixed: one can learn these almost like a craft. But the great poets of the Islamic world have coded their feelings and problems of their time so elegantly, filled the traditional forms with so much energy, that till to date, one finds ideas in them which appear modern, even progressive– if one knows the cue! And the young generation of Turkey had lost this cue; by the replacement of the Arabic alphabet which had been used by most of the languages of the Islamic cultural region, by the Latin script (1928), millions of young people were cut off from their cultural heritage, could not read the gravestones of their forebears, the plates

in the mosques and hundreds of thousands of verses of earlier poets. Although in the course of time the most important literary works have been transcribed into Latin script, a large number of words and imagery which can only be expressed in the Arabic alphabet had lost their meaning.

Therefore, it was more than just a progressive view of poetry which my poet-friends represented; in a way it was the result of the reformed script, connected with the reform of language, which made a "classic" like Yahya Kemal seem to them out of step with their own time. One day I was lucky to meet my admired poet in the house of friends and listened breathlessly as he talked of Ottoman history and generally of historical problems, while drinking a glass of whiskey. He had been in foreign service for many years. I had, at that time, just finished translating his poem "Spanish Dance" in which he masterfully, rendered in Turkish language the Flamenco rhythm of Spain and the flashing red of the skirts. Similarly, during his Warsaw years as ambassador to Poland, he had caught the melancholy of a winter night in his poem "Snow Music", in which the poet finds release from it by listening to an old record, to Tamburi Cemil which transported him back to his home. The son of Tamburi Cemil was, in those years, an important person on the Turkish radio. It was this very Mesut Cemil with whom I had my first radio-interview and I remember having read my translation of Yunus Emre's beautiful poem *Why do you weep, oh nightingale*? This refrain of the old poem became a kind of motif for our circle of friends who, almost all of them, had been brought up in German culture.

From among them I remember one person, through whom I had met Mesut Cemil: Vedat Nadim Tor, with his charming wife Alice Hanim from Berlin. He pleaded for a modern and ultra-modern Turkish lifestyle. Vedat Bey had

worked for the development of Turkish theatre, although his own plays (for friendship, I translated one of them) were not very successful. He had organized the People's Festivals, worked for the revitalization of Turkish folk-dance traditions and other popular art forms and traditions; for many years he had been the cultural representative of the "Yapi ve Kredi Bankasi" and played an important role in the introduction of modern printing techniques. The cultural life of the fifties including film-productions owe a lot to this agile, never resting Vedat Bey who was always full of new, good ideas. I saw him often although, understandably, he did not share my inclination toward the classical tradition or even mysticism. But this did not affect our friendship.

Through Vedat Nedim I met Kazim Tashkent. He was a man of chemistry and became very rich by setting up sugar mills and promoting the growing of sugar beet. Later he did a number of jobs in the public sector; he founded the Yapi ve Kredi Bankasi and the publishing house Dogan Kardesh which, at that time, brought out the best-published magazines; the name Dogan reminded me of Kasim Bey's young son who perished in an avalanche in Switzerland. The mother never got over the shock while the father invested his energies in ever new projects.

We often talked about his ideals to educate his compatriots, to give them new chances of education –that was his wish, his truly humanistic attempts to advance his people. Once or twice he visited us in Germany and for years, a delicious parcel of figs from the production of one of his vast businesses became a part of our Christmas joys.

An Ottoman historian of the sixteenth century, of the time of Suleiman the Magnificent wrote, that under every cobble stone of Istanbul lies a poet. This did no longer fit our modern times, but still, I met more and more new artists: I met them in the gallery of Adile Ayda in Pera,

where modern Turkish art is exhibited and where, for the first time, I met my favourite poet Bedri Rahmi, whose surrealistic and yet, earth-bound pictures and expressive poems appeared to me like the two sides of a coin. For some time he became the most popular Turkish painter who also won acclaim abroad for his "Powerful Anatolian style". My friend Asaf Halet Chelebi however, totally given to the mystical tradition, was very different. I was very attracted by his verse in which he sometimes picked up the themes of the dance of the derveshes, of the enigmatic figure of the martyred mystic Mansoor Hallaj or the old legend of Farhad, the deceived lover and his Shireen. We together strolled along the ancient Byzantine town-wall, where he showed me the gypsies and evoked in the style of legends, the history of Turkey.

Whenever I was through with my studies in the library I roamed through the city because, for one, I had very little money and would not afford myself a car and also, because I wanted to really meet the city from close quarters– no matter how tiring it was to stumble along the irregular cobble stones, the foot-paths which are patched up like a rag-carpet, or the sudden holes in the pavement. Even though they now, fifty years later, still exist, I enjoy roaming along the streets crowded with people and cats.

The most beautiful experiences were, of course, the mosques; is there anybody who might not be enchanted by the Suleymaniye, which sits like a crown atop the city of Istanbul? There is no end to new details in this mighty hall. Inscriptions to be admired, above all, that large golden line at the courtyard-side of the mosque, which contains, in exquisite calligraphy, the "throne-verse" of the Quran– that verse which is attributed to hold protective powers, since it praises the might of the "living, in itself continuing", whose throne encompasses heaven and earth but who does not tire of protecting them. The numerous buildings which are part

of an official mosque are of perfect elegance. The *Türk ve Islam Eserleri Müzesi* which, at that time, was kept in the Sulemaniye-complex, offered the most beautiful treasures to the eye. I spent most of my time there admiring the scripts, the Qurans and the plate with artistically arranged Quranic verses, invocations or names, with the sultan's documents each of which bore a different *tugra*, the "hand-sign" of the sultan. I could visualize the clerks in the offices, the *divan* of the overlord. who were occupied with the preparation of such documents. Filled with such visions I might then go to the Topkapi Serey whose treasures appeared like a tale from One-thousand and one Nights.

Down at the crowded bridgehead of the Galata-bridge near the Covered Bazaar (I think in all the many years I went there only once, because I never really learnt how to bargain) was the Yeni Cami, where at that time, numerous Arzuhalci sat, scribes, surrounded by men and more so, women, to have applications written and forms filled by them to satisfy the complicated bureaucracy, or simply dictate a letter to far-away relatives. Not far from the Yeni Cami there was, among winding alleys, the Rustam Pasha Camii, which was built by the son-in-law of sultan Suleyman. No other mosque has such rich décor on the floor-tiles as this one. There are dozens of motifs of different tulips which shine from the wall in bright red shades; the visitor feels that the painters and ceramic craftsmen were gifted with inexhaustible phantasy. Once I visited this mosque with some Turkish girl-friends who explained to me, why the Turks show so much love for the tulip: Its Turkish name, lale, when written in Arabic letters, results in the same numeric value as the word *Allah* and the word *Hilal (crescent).*

To me, the most beautiful mosque of Istanbul however, is the one built by the daughter of Sultan Suleyman, the wife of Rüstam Pasha, Cemile Mihrima. It lies nearest to

the old city wall, just at the Edirne Kapi. It has one large dome; it is painted in light colours and has extremely slim minarets– as such it is for me an ideal, it is total perfection and, at the same time– so it seems to me– has a feminine touch to it. Material and spirituality merge into a harmony:

Blossom of light before the dark wall,
Delicate, purest crystal of all,
Since I entered you, the world is gone,
It’s through tears that I see the All.

It was nearly half a century later that I again visited my beloved Mihrima, accompanied by the famous ebrucu (one who prepares precious marble paper), Hikmat Barutchugil. In the wilderness-garden where, as always, cats played around, a few elderly men were busy making soap. We took a kitten with us which looked like a white-grey-brownish kind of silken ball that immediately felt at home at the artist’s place. We called it Mihrima.

I could never really like the Hagia Sophia. Perhaps I should have seen it at a time when bearded priests in precious gowns celebrated the Easter-night before a crowd and the light of thousands of candles reflected in the gold of the mosaics –or, perhaps, later, when great numbers of worshippers assembled there for early morning prayers at the celebration of the end of fasting and prostrated themselves in the same rhythm, knelt, bent, and rose again. The Greek tradition never tired of telling painful legends about the conquests by the Turks of their greatest place of worship, all culminating in the hope that one day, a hidden door in the wall would open and an angel would reoccupy the church. On the other hand, Muslims not less fervently in their own tradition, pointed out that from the beginning, the place of God belonged to them. The architect, so they say in beautiful anachronism, for years struggled to complete the dome. Finally a heavenly voice directed him to bring the binding material for the mortar from Arabia;

the caravan which was sent there brought, by order of that voice, a small vessel with the spittle of Prophet Mohammad; they also brought seventy camel loads of soil from Mecca and seventy vessels of the water of the sacred well of Zamzam. This made the dome indestructible. Here, a number of Muslim saints had prayed before Mohammad's prophecy came true on 29th May, 1453: "They shall conquer Constantinople –hail to the army that shall accomplish it." It was one of the first official acts of Mehmet the Conqueror (at that time, twenty-two years old) to pray in the Aya Sofya. And legends continued to spread: wasn't the wood of the great gates brought from Noah's ark? And when you have offered two prayer units before embarking on a journey and recite the Fateha for Noah, the journey will proceed well.– But now the Aya Sofia is an empty museum-hall, in which the visitor might admire the huge mosaics, the mighty pillars with their marbled designs, the dome which seems strangely flat, and study the writings on the round boards which carry the names of the Prophet and the first four caliphs.

Uncountable times I walked through the small garden and through the gate, turned hurriedly to the right where, behind a wrought-iron fence, the –for me –most beautiful part of the Aya Sofya was situated: the library with its precious manuscripts! The small room had colourful floor-tiles which carried a design of bluish-greenish ribbed leaves and in between, bright-red flowers, similar to those in the Topkapi Serai and to those on the large bowl and hanging lamps which were produced in Izmir during the 16th and 17th centuries. There was a case and a box, finely inlaid with mother-of-pearl arabesques which might originate from Gujerat in India. A long bench and a table, the desk of the director of the library completed the furnishing. The room was cool and dark and the whole day long one could hear the cooing of the pigeons. The eyes, tired from

transcribing Arabic or Persian manuscripts, looked at the turquoise coloured tendrils on the tiles, up and down, in the last light of the day, before they returned to the manuscripts. Off and on the young director of the museum brought from his stores, his most precious treasures, Persian poems decorated with miniatures, old, medical manuscripts with drawings, gilded prayer books written by princes who hoped it would grant them heavenly rewards; There were autographs of the great ones who were known from literary history and who, here, came to life again. At times, some old Turkish scholar came, absorbed in a theological treatise; at other times, a young researcher. It was a wonderful, quiet life. The only grievous point was that no human life-span would be enough to take all these manuscripts into one's hand, read or work with them.

Sometimes the director took me to the galleries of the mosque where the grand mosaics were being repaired. Once, we climbed through a mysterious, tiny door up a dark stairwell and suddenly came out at the outer edge of the dome, just at its base. The view from there was indescribably beautiful; the bluish-grey Marmara Sea, a finely tended small park between the Aya Sofia and the Sultan Ahmat Mosque around which the people looked tiny, the graceful domes on the surrounding buildings of the Sultan Ahmat Mosque, the former theological schools and kitchens for the poor; at the right, the oblong hippodrome with the obelisk about which earlier, children were taught that it was a prince turned into stone because he had not obeyed his parents. Just in front of us was the small fountain-structure which the emperor Wilhelm II had gifted on his visit there. And in the middle of it all was the all-commanding Sultan Ahmat Mosque, whose dome is just two meter less in diameter than that of the Aya Sofya. Slowly and majesticially it rises up like a prince from among the small half-domes that surround it.

The front yard of the mosque takes the visitor to a gate: when you stand at its lowest step the golden crescent on the main dome seems to touch the peak of the gate and the mosque is set into it like a picture in a frame. Then comes another yard surrounded by arcades and finally, the mosque itself.

Europeans often consider it the most beautiful of Istanbul's mosques (for this reason it is nowadays, filled with touristic locust swarms). It is, indeed, charming, unique in its manifold shades of blue on the wall decorations, the ornamental painting of the main hall and the thickly set tiles on the back-wall which draw the spectator deeper and deeper into a bluish-green fairy-garden; when he turns to the front-side of the mosque, his eyes meet the blue of the Marmara Sea which is visible from all its windows, under the sparkling, porcelain-like blue of the sky. Like encased in a blue crystal, the visitor walks between its four supporting pillars; each has a diameter of five meters. But due to their ribs they do not appear weighty. In one corner some boys recite the Quran; at another place, an elderly man prostrates himself in prayer, undisturbed by the staring crowd; another man passes the beads of his thirty-three beaded rosary through his fingers and absorbs himself in the secret of the ninety-nine most beautiful names of God.

From our lofty view-point at the dome of the Aya Sofya we saw people enter there and disappear in the silver-grey building in order to flee from the noise of the world. The Prophet had said: "Prayer is ascension."

The trams squeaked in their rails, taxis rushed by with loud honking, the blue water was crowded with small steamers and fishing boats. The shadows of the minarets of the Sultan Ahmat Mosque became longer and longer and the autumnal evening breeze made me shiver. Was Istanbul

more beautiful in spring, or in that magical autumn of 1953?

I looked deeper and deeper into the city; at the slopes of the Bosporus the last flowers blossomed and on some days, the gayety of the tulip-era of the early eighteenth century was revived. At the time that Sultan Ahmat was building the Blue Mosque, Nedim wrote his lovely love-lyrics and Levni painted the delicate ladies and gentlemen of the court. Even though the Bosporus might have changed, one often felt like saying:

Look, there at the quay
Three pairs of boats are waiting.
Come, you moving cypress
To Saadabad let's stray!

During that autumn I did not meet the poet-friends of the last spring quite so often. I owe it to my friends in Ankara that I got into the circle of Samiha Ayverdi, a mystic woman who carried on the tradition of Kenan Rifai and became the center of a large circle of educated young friends. Together with three friends- Nezihe Araz, Safiye Erol (who had done her Ph.D in Munich with Fritz Hommel) and Sofi Huri, a Lebanese-Christian, she had described the life and work of her mystical master; it was the first attempt in a time of sheer liberalism, to re-awaken the meaning of inner values and religious traditions, which had contributed to the shaping of the Ottoman empire, which now again seemed necessary. The glorious time of Mahmet Fatih, the conqueror of Constantinopel was coming to life again: Samiha's older brother Hakki Ayverdi had written a book on the Fatih epoch as well a many other sketches; family members and friends published and are publishing, a number of important monographies of Ottoman culture. The house in Fatih, where Samiha Abla, as I was permitted to call her, lived, was like a museum; here, for the first time, I came to know at close quarters the

tradition of Ottoman calligraphy, which had started with Sheikh Hamdullah. He comes from Amaya and because he was the teacher of calligraphy of Sultan Bayezid II he obtained a high position at court. His successor in the art of calligraphy continued that elegant style, which is the hallmark of the Ottoman art of writing. Like Hamdullah, his most important successor Hafiz Osman, who, likewise was the teacher of two monarchs (Mustafa II and Sultan Ahmat) was honoured by them. Princes fluffed up his cushions and held the inkpot for him. The Qurans which were printed in Turkish language during the 20th century were printed after a manuscript which he had prepared. The fame of this manuscript was so great that often, I met Turkish friends who thought this one, and no other book, was the original Holy Book. They made Hafis Osman's manuscript the basis of mystical numerology by counting certain letters per page and thus hoped to get a glance behind the veil of the future (as was done during the Christian middle-ages and the Jewish Kabbala). Yahya Kemal in a beautiful poem had called him "Prophet of Calligraphy". In the 20th century Aziz Rifai became the successor of Hafis Osman. He came from Trabzon and like my friends, joined master Kenan Rifai. He then went to Egypt and became the founder of modern Egyptian calligraphy.

In this setting I saw treasures of the Ottoman period and particularly such, which were connected with calligraphy. There were tiny pens in an elegant style and with handles of precious metal. There were small boards on which the reed-pens were placed for pointing and slanting. They were either made of ivory or the hard skin of salmon; there were kalemdans, penholders and other writing utensils which might have been of metal, with finest engravings, or made of paper-maché and painted in many colours. Very frequently Persian or Turkish verses were written on them,

or they were inlaid with mother-of-pearl, framed with daintiest ebony tendrils. There were innumerable, artistically arranged pages which often were pasted on marbled paper, ebru. The eyes roamed over gold-rimmed manuscripts and embroideries with which ladies had decorated their towels; there were many flowery motifs so finely finished, that one could not decide which one was the right side. In between were golden designs; each design had its own name and own tradition. The same was the case with the oya, the very fine petals which were crocheted with a hook as thin as a sewing-needle. They were sewn around the yemeni, which were printed with wooden blocks. Here too, each had its name, like, “what the secretary pinched” or, “mother-in-law’s grave-stone”. Samiha Abla explained to the astonished lady-visitor, who gave whom which kind of oya. I started a collection of them; each was different according to its place of origin and made of all kinds of silken thread.

I often met colleagues who loved the tradition as much as my friends did, among them Suheyl Unver; although he was an historian of medicine, he was our finest expert of calligraphy and miniature painting; also Nihat Sami Banarli, who brought the great tradition back to life in his book and articles. Thus impressed, the grandson of Samiha Abla grew up, who was named after the great Turkish architect, Sinan, - who built the Suleymaniye, the Mihrima, the Rustam-Pasha Mosque and the Selimiye in Edirne. Samiha Abla herself gave lasting expression to the traditions which she loved so much, in her novels and short-stories. I used to love to listen to her when she, in long, melodious sentences, told about the old Istanbul. Its finest aspects she recreated for her readers in her book *Istanbul Geceleri*. These “Nights of Istanbul” enchanted me every time read them.

Mostly we sat in the family house in Fatih near the mosque of Mehmet the Conqueror, and once in her summer residence in Istinye at the Bosphorus. While she talked about humankind's spiritual efforts and duties, the sky got overcast by a huge fan of fleecy clouds which the setting sun painted pink and red, till they vanished like gently shimmering birds. The great Persian mystic Ruzbihan-e-Baqli once had a vision of God's beauty in rose-clouds.

Through Samiha Abla I experienced aspects of Istanbul which otherwise seemed lost in the hub of the modern city. It was for this reason that, at times, her criticism of certain aspects and developments seemed very harsh. She could not accept compromise, because she knew only of the one way, the way to perfection. Her letters, written in a style like birds' wings, are important documents of a great soul. I saw Samiha Abla before her death in 1993. She left this world in the Lailat-al-Qadr, the holiest night of the year, in which Mohammad had received the first revelation of the Quran.

I discovered more and more spots in the landscape of the Bosporus. I can never forget my excitement when, for the first time, I reached Uskudar by steamer. At that time it cost me just eighteen kurush. In my enthusiasm I nearly kissed the soil of Asia. "Not very healthy," commented my sober German student-friend Hanna Sohrweide, who worked in the German hospital in Taksim. Uskudar– that was Yahya Kemal's poem, in which he sings about the dazzling windows of the "poor Uskudar" at sunset-:

The architect, drunk with golden wine
Of light, stretches out his hand to the horizon,
Holding a goblet– as in many thousand years again
He thus built up the fairy Uskudar.

There was the home of a friend in Çhifte Havuzlar under ancient trees; there was the garden of Jale's family in Erenköy. In a swaying boat and blown through and through

by the northern winds, we travelled to the yali of the well known historian of literature, Fahir Iz in Anadolu Hisar. Seeing the hills of Kandıllı in the moonlight, Yahya Kemal's verses came to life:

When Kandıllı lay in slumber
In waters we the moonlight trailed

Old Yalis with large rooms arose near the shore. The mind evoked images of pleasures at the sweet water of Asia, as European travellers and artists had described them at the end of the eighteenth century. By steamer we could travel right up to the entrance of the Black Sea and enjoy fresh fish in one of the many restaurants. In Bebek, the summer residence of the German ambassador with its wide garden in Bebek became visible and also the Robert College (now university). We often went to Bebek and partook of the generous hospitality of Jale's relations. We climbed up to the fort of Rumeli Hisar and contemplated how this fort, together with the one lying opposite on the Asiatic shore, the Anadolu Hisar, were to protect the city from attacks. The Dolma Bahche Palace spread out pleasantly along the shore, and every visitor loved the photogenic, small Dolma Bahche Mosque .

Istanbul has many faces. It changes according to the direction of the wind: The warm Lodos from the Mediterranean and the cold Poyraz from the Black Sea determine its weather, its light, its mood. *Üsküdar* and its surroundings do not only represent a romantic past but, on its Asian side, one finds the large barracks and above all, the station of Haydarpasha; at the same time, Pera's features were not just European. There, you saw beautiful, old Ottoman houses as well. In Galata, the old Mevlevihane rose up, where in the late eighteenth century, one of the greatest Ottoman poets, Seyh Galib, wrote his profound, multi-layered epic of the lovestory of *Husn-u-*Ashk, Beauty and Love.

Indeed, Istanbul does have many faces. It is easy to get carried away by the charm of the architecture, by the small fountain-structures in the old city, by the old wooden houses; but there are also days when the early, sparkling autumn turns into icy winter days, when the ferry-trip to Üsküdar wrapped us in snowy rain and whipping storm and was anything but fun. There were days when the rain had made the steep alleys slippery and suddenly, unknown puddles, small lakes and deep holes appeared. There is a nook at the Bosporus which is said to be the coldest spot in Istanbul. It is called Kirechburnu, where the Poyaz, the icy northern wind from the Black Sea with full force hits the strait. One of the most interesting, mystical thinkers that I had come across lived there, Hasan Lutfi Shushut, whose works are now also available in English translation. I had seen him several times in his downtown office, and his emaciated body suggested, that Hasan Lutfi Bey, through fasting, had brought it totally under his control. Wasn't hunger, so he insisted, in accordance with the old mystical tradition, the "food for the saints"? He taught constant meditation and breathing control, and his aim on the path was the "absolute without quality", the "non-being", being totally different from everything created. He believed that this was a totally different, Asian way of understanding God and rejected the traditional mysticism. No, he did not want mystical love, the ecstasy of the great poets –"Un-becoming," to become nothing, that was his aim.

"The more you enter nothingness, the more powerful you get", he taught us, while the storm rattled at the window-bars. "Like a stone-mason the pain releases you from the rock."

Of course he knew that the spiritual guide was only a light-tower, not the aim; but, "he cannot hide his light." The iron stove was glowing while he tried to take us into the world of the Absolute Otherness, and I felt cold. As a

departing gift he gave us a beautiful Turkish manuscript of legends of the great God-lover Abdul Qadr Gilani. But the icy rain made me cry out for some warmth, also for my mind and soul.

No, I much preferred the poems of my friends to this abstraction and was glad when I reached the Galata Bridge, where I could watch the people in their daily struggle for life:

Some row along laboriously,
Some collect the shells from pontoons,
Some steer through what is easier,
Some are gruesome men, those at the tow,
Some are bird, flying, like poetry,
Some are like glittering, flashing fish
Some are steamers and some are anchoring places.

I heard Olan Veli's verses inside me on my way back home.

How can one ever stop talking about Istanbul?
To love just one of all its quarters
Is worth a whole life-time

said Yahya Kemal, and he was right. One should describe a visit to Eyub, the old graveyard where, when the city fell into the hands of the Muslims, the bones of Ayub Ansari were discovered, the flag carrier of the Prophet; one should show the Roman antiques, the precious mosaics of the Kariye, one should sing about the view from Cihangir to the Asian coast. I should be remembering all the colleagues that I met in Istanbul; Zaki Velidi Togan, the tall Bashkiri historian, or Ahmat Hamdi Tanpinar, the literature critic whose impressive poems I loved; and all the friends who built ever-new bridges for me. How can I forget, when the director of the Academy of Arts, Zeki Faik Izer, invited me and I listened, for the first time, to the sound of the reed-flute of the dervishes! Or, when we girl-friends met at the house of Sofi Huri in the American Bible Society and

did not so much talk about problems of translation (the large dictionary by Redhouse was being updated there) but about matters of religion, the deep common connections between Christianity and Islam. Or, when Robert Anhegger, to whom the German-Turkish cultural scene owes so much, invited me to meet the famous Sheikh Abdulbaki Golpmarh, who is one of the foremost authorities on Maulana Rumi, the Mevlevis, and a thousand other things which interested me. But for the whole evening the famous man spoke, in a most dramatic style, about the toothache of his cat instead of taking me into the depth of mystical literature.

Thousands of memories pass through me like a film, bitter-sweet memories, but always lit up by the light of the Bosporus. Like that day, when we visited a site of antique ruins on the European side of the Marmara Sea. The women and children had run off to a nearby spring; we squatted under a tree, in whose top -foliage birds chirped and sang. The air carried a smile. And in between the split pillars of an antique theatre grew red poppies. The sea stretched far into shimmering blue filled with the history and the poems of thousands of years. Istanbul - woven of water and light:

This was the end of spring:
Like music, a secret, hidden harmony.

A a Professor in Ankara.

The first time I got to Ankara was in late summer 1953. I was met at the station by pen-friends. One day after my first stay in Turkey I received a package full of magazines called *Sohbet*, “Conversation.” This expression is mostly used for the didactic discourse between mystical leaders and their disciples. An intensive correspondence started with Hüsrev Tökin, the publisher. Now, he and his jolly, not so mystical looking sister Mehpare were waiting for me, well-prepared by a day of fasting. Only later and in

small bits and pieces did I come to know that Hüsrev, who at that time, held a leading position in the railway administration and later, became director of the Yapi ve Kredi Bankasi followed by the position of General Secretary of the Turkish Chamber of Commerce, was one of the leading political economists of the country. During world war I, he had studied Economics in Moscow, as one of a group of six Turkish students. He founded, together with colleagues, the so-called Kadro-group in Ankara. They, in the late twenties, played, through their radical economic researches and theories, an important role. Many works and essays on economic theories came from his pen. I however, knew him only as a mystic who kept trying to improve himself. He had re-discovered the religious traditions of his parents and tried to apply them to himself. Hüsrev and Mehpare took me to the house of their friend, my host: It was Selahettin Batu who, although a professor of veterinary sciences, was mainly known to me as a poet; apart from highly sensitive poems, he wrote above all, dramas, in which he used themes from Turkish epics (like Karem and Ash), or ancient Turkish legends. But the most impressive work of Selahettin Batu, who had been educated in Germany, was his drama *Helena stays in Troy.* It takes up the theme of Helen. It was produced in 1974 in German translation by Bernt von Heiseler and was a great success at the Bregenz Festival.

Batu's house was ideal for me. It was situated in the Bahchelivler part of the city– which rightly carried its name "Homes with Gardens" and was beautifully done up with modern furnishings. The housewife, the son (whom, thirty years later I met again as ambassador in Islamabad), the blond little daughter Chiğdem, (Crocus) and a large white cat kept me company.

The following weeks were filled with beautiful conversations. And I made a lot of new friends. For the first

time I heard Yunus Emre's Oratoryosu when the composer of this magnificent oratorium, Adnan Saygun, visited us. The way he merged classical dervesh- music with modern sounds was a new experience for me.

Shevket Sureyya Aydemir came, whose memoirs Suyu arayan adam (the Man who was looking for Water) were an impressive presentation of his student years in Moscow and his return to the Turkish homeland. One of the guests was Suut Kemal Yetkin. He was a literary critic and historian of fine arts, and it was through him that, for the first time, I heard about the Ilahiyat Facultesi which had been founded in Ankara, after the election victory of the democrats in 1951. He taught Turkish-Islamic History of Fine Arts there.

The first stay in Ankara passed very quickly. I had just held my first lecture in Turkish and I was considered a friend of Islam; moreover, I had, just before leaving Germany acquired my second Ph.D. from Marburg in the subject of History of Religions: as such, they seemed to consider me an ideal candidate for the still empty chair of History of Religion. The fact that I was not a Muslim woman seemed to be a non-issue. (Would a Protestant Theological Faculty have ever invited a Muslim colleague?) During the subsequent months the plan matured and I accepted most happily when it was proposed to me to start on first November, 1954 in this faculty. For me, it seemed to be an ideal opportunity to not only teach in my beloved Turkey, but also to learn a lot more about practical Islam.

The Ilahiyat Facultesi was an attempt to train Turkish theologians who, while fully respecting the Islamic tradition, were also to be informed about modern, western sciences. The idea was to get qualified imams and preachers as well as teachers for religious instructions in some types of schools where, after years of absence of religion, religious instruction was to be re-introduced. Men

and women were needed who had studied European philosophy, religious sociology and above all, comparative history of religions. Men and women were needed who were not only familiar with the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet (Hadith) but also with the basics of Islamic law. Instead of simply learning the Quran by heart they were to have a sound foundation of Arabic language. In short: it was a most interesting project. Among the students were a number of bright young girls (none wore a head-scarf!) as well as several young officers who were later to satisfy the religious questions of army personnel. I was fascinated by these prospects and taught history of religion, starting from the so-called “primitive” religions up to Christianity. During the second of the two year course, I taught Christianity and Judaism. There were no Turkish books on the sciences of religion, and I had to write the course-books myself. They were a good foundation for the students. When later, I prepared a considerably enlarged edition, the manuscript disappeared mysteriously. It was found many years later in the drawer of a colleague who had died –and promptly disappeared again. As far as I know, nobody ever published it under his name.

I was vastly interested in the reactions of the students who mostly came from villages or small towns with traditional life-styles. Their sharp rejection of Indian religions with their multi-armed gods exactly corresponded to the attitude of the Muslims of the Subcontinent. Some of them might have understood the deep mystical wisdom of the Upanishads as a parallel to Islamic theosophical mysticism but mostly they were helpless in the face of the jungle-like Hinduism. For them, the caste-system presented a harsh contrast to the teachings of equality of the Quran. When we got to Christianity, I focused on the teachings of the Eastern and the Western Church as well as the Protestant groups and sects. I was, every time, surprised

about the enthusiasm of the young Turks for Martin Luther; what Islam nowadays stood in need of was a man like him, they thought. It cost me considerable effort to convince them, that Luther was not exactly a friend of Islam when he wrote:

Oh Lord, keep us by your word
And control the pope and the Turks' sword.

I tried to acquaint them with the great medieval theologians of their own homeland, Kappadokia, or figures like Raymundus Lullus who had incorporated in his system so many inspirations from Islamic mysticism. They were informed about the veneration of Jesus as taught in the Quran, the last great prophet before Mohammad, and of his virgin mother. When once I mentioned that a number of modern Christians reject the mystery of the virgin birth, one girl-student jumped up indignantly: "In that case, we are much better Christians than they"! The class agreed with her. Although the theological conditions may, in some cases, have been quite different, we discovered many commonalities when I translated church-hymns for the young people. Which pious Muslim would not have readily read with us Paul Gerhard's "Befiehl du deine Wege" (Direct your Paths) from the bottom of his heart?

I utilized the time to get introduced to the art of calligraphy with the help of Ali Alparslan who, at that time, was assistant for Islamic History. He was a well-known calligrapher in the Nastaleeq style, the "hanging" variant of the Arabic script which was used mainly in Iran, but also in India and Ottoman Turkey. Only then did I realize how much practice it needs to point the pen correctly and to draw just one of the simple looking letters in perfect proportion. My discussion-partner on classical Ottoman literature and culture was Kemal Edip who still mastered the old art of chronogrammes, which express historical dates by forming a meaningful word or sentence from

them, whose letters reveal the date –every Arabic letter has a numerical value from one to one-thousand. When Stalin died, he invented a chronogramme saying: “The devil has gone to hell”.

At my time there, the faculty had about four hundred students, later on it grew, and all over the country new theological universities were opened. There, a number of my “children” taught (it’s hard to believe: some are already retired. Even some grand-children represent some of the subjects of History of Religion at Ankara, Izmir, Urfa and al-Marl in North-Rhine-Westphalia.

But these are later developments. My mother and I arrived in Ankara in November 1954 by train, and everything was new to us. We were excited what Ankara would hold for us. Right then, it offered us friendly hospitality with the Bedemlis whom we knew from Marburg. Dr. Niyazi had specialized there in Anatomy. Their cozy house in Cebeci was our first accommodation and we felt lovingly cared for by Mrs. Naime, for whom her three well-behaved children showed a tender love. Niyazi came from an old family of dignitaries of the city and told us with a roguish smile, how his forebears had taken coffee with Taimur when this Central-Asian conqueror in 1402, had occupied the city. He told vividly about his time as a young doctor in East Anatolia where he tried to heal the wounds of the stubborn Kurds which they contract in their fights. “…and nobody cried!

I said: ‘But it must be hurting’. ‘No doctor, it doesn’t hurt’! ‘But it must be hurting you’ and so on, till I got a clear answer: ‘To say before a doctor that it hurts, is shameful’ ”

For us too, during our early months there, Niyazi’s help was vital for us, though in another area. On paper, I was entitled to a very decent salary (it was a special surprise that just at the time of my arrival, the Turkish lira was

vastly devalued; the same happened to me 25 years later in Harvard: The dollar depreciated substantially!)

However, week after week passed and I saw no money. Niyazi stood guarantee for us, for the rent, the quilts, the coal, the broom, and for all the most essential things. Without him and his family our start would have been unsurmountably difficult. When, one day– it was March by then– I opened the New Testament, my eyes fell on a Paulus letter to the Galatans in which he cries:“ Oh you uncomprehending Galatans! It looks that I worked for you for nothing”! The idea that he, too, here in the centre of Galatia, had a similar experience to ours was so amusing for us that we managed to get over the remaining waiting period much better. Our first residence was exactly opposite the Ilahiyat Faculty in Cebeci; we gave it a home-atmosphere with the help of a few black-brown goat-blankets and some pictures. On the hill to our right more and more gecekondus came up which gradually, crept up all the slopes of the city, because the migration from rural areas continued unabated. Today, the larger number of people in Ankara live in these– as the name says– “shelters for one night” (gece).

The courtyard of the house was inhabited by some cats, the snowy-white Ipek, “Silk”, and an ugly spotted animal with fierce yellow eyes. Our neighbour, the well-known writer Halide Nusrat Zorlutuna told us that in the neighbourhood, this cat was called “Gestapo”. The white faculty-cat, a real van- cat with one green and one blue eye, kept a dignified distance. But we soon became friends. Ipek too, had trust in the faculty: once somebody brought us some pork which didn’t seem to be quite fresh any more. We threw it into the courtyard. Ipek, quite astonished, sniffed at the unknown meat and with tail raised high, walked across the street to obtain– so we guessed– a legal attestation, whether as a Turkish cat he may eat the pork

which is forbidden to Muslims. The attestation was obviously negative.

Also in our second home in a suburb, a little cat played the most important role. One night Mama awoke from a strange feeling in the back of her knees. She couldn't find anything but, when later she looked again, she found a tiny kitten in her bed. The streaked animal with a white face and white chest adopted us. She made us very happy, and even foes of cats could not resist her charm. Nobody could stay serious when Hureira (Arabic: kitten) suddenly, with the large eyes of a child, looked out of the collar of a coat where she had climbed up through the sleeve. At other times it looked down sweetly from behind a row of books and when I sat down to write, she draped herself around my neck like a fur collar; she remained a small cat, so she weighed lightly on me. She also learnt the command "Hureira dead!" and went flat out in front of the fridge from which then some eatables appeared. Later, she started to cough. The diagnosis was a torn diaphragm. She did not survive the operation. I was very sad about it.

So I turned to feeding her relatives that pressed around the feeding bowl in the corridor. Above all there was Jenghez Khan, the huge, striped tom-cat with a Mongol's moustaches. But the strongest among them was an elegant lady-cat with emerald-green, black-rimmed eyes which always reminded me of Sophia Loren; the beautiful queen knew how to secure the best chunks of meat and boxed the ears of anyone who came in her way.

Of course our love for cats was nothing as compared to the crowds of tailed guests to whom my former Arabic professor in Berlin and colleague in Ankara gave board and lodging and care. To kill a cat in Turkey is considered a great sin:" Whoever kills a cat cannot redeem this deed even if he built a mosque", was a common saying. Thus, the poor creatures lived in the garbage-bins from which

benevolent people carried them home. As a consequence, Björkmann's apartment was populated by twenty- two cats. Even today I visualize the scene when a cat from high up on a wardrobe, jumped into a chocolate-cake that stood on the table, and left some artistic design on the table cloth.

Björkmanns were our nearest friends among the numerous German experts who taught in Ankara. Turkey, during the Nazi-era, had given teaching jobs to quite a number of German professors. Some of the colleagues of that time were still around, like the musician Eduard Zuckmayer, brother of the writer Carl Zuckmayer, who taught at the Gazi Egitim Ernstitusu and enjoyed great prestige. After the war too, the influx of German scholars had continued: Katharina Otto-Dorn taught Islamic Art in Ankara for many years. Rudolf Fahrner was professor of German. All of us met more or less regularly at the functions of the Turkish-German Friendship Association or for lectures at the slowly growing German Cultural Institute. Quite a number of Turkish colleagues came there, above all the archaeologists Ekrem Akurgal and Sedat Alp (I knew both of them from my years of study in Berlin); also the sociologist Yavuz Abadan. I particularly want to mention the activities of the cultural attaché of the German embassy, Friedrich von Rummels. He was a specialist on the country, its literature, and also the author of the beautiful book *Turkey on the Way to Europe*. He was an ideal representative of German-Turkish cooperation.

But, as a result of my special interests I met my Turkish friends more often than the German ones; selfishly, I argued that even the most boring invitation had at least the advantage that I learnt a few more idioms and came to know more of the traditions and customs, of the totally ritualized exchange of courtesies which served as conversational topics. Those long dialogues in which, through ever new formulations, you ask about someone's

health and welfare, or the admiring exclamations "elinize saglik" (may your hands stay well) when you admired a dish or a piece of handicraft; and gratitude to the visitor by wishing him "ayaguniza saglik", (May your feet stay well), which carried you to us. I learnt the different nuances of a blessing, "gule gule giyin" (carry it always smilingly) when wearing a new piece of clothing, or even, "gule gule yakin," (burn it up smilingly the winter coals). And then there were the different types of praise, the rejection of praise, the good wishes for parents and children: anah babali buyusun (may it grow up with mother and father). And when you inquired after the welfare of the baby, the surprising answer was :"I kiss your hands".

I was much touched by the custom not simply to say 'such and such has died' when bringing the sad news or when talking about a deceased person. The phrase went: "O dun sizlere omur oldu" (yesterday he became 'may you others live'). These and many other things delighted my philologist's heart. I learnt which small phrases you recite on seeing the new moon, and also short prayers which beg for blessings for the coming weeks. It was particularly lucky when, while saying so, you looked at a "moon-beauty" person: bright and dazzling like his or her face was then the forecast for the coming month. If the moon however, had a corona, it was the wings of angels.

At times we were invited for Iftar, the breaking of the fast at sundown during Ramadan. The dishes were already set on the table and it was said that the waiting dishes in their silent language sang the praise of the Lord till the moment of fast-break arrived. At first, everybody eats an uneven number of dates. Sometimes a neighbour sent me ashure. It is a dish prepared from many types of grain and fruit. It was originally eaten by the Shi'ites on the tenth of Moharram, on the day of remembrance of the grandson of the prophet, Hussain, who died a martyr's death in Kerbela

on the tenth October, 680. This dish, made of the rests of meals to remind of the last meal of the martyred man, is now a common sweet-dish available any time.

We were also invited to circumcisions. Sunnet, the circumcision, is an important day in the life of a boy. In earlier times this event, by virtue of which the boy becomes a full member of the Muslim community, was celebrated with great pomp and show. Some miniature albums from the Ottoman era show, what entertainments were arranged so as to divert the attention of the sultan's son from his pain. Therefore, often group-circumcisions of many boys were celebrated so as to entertain them richly through shadow-plays, Karagoz-theatre, music recitals. The little patient, mostly aged seven to ten years, proudly got himself photographed in his fine gala-garments and white cap and told us what all was offered to him on the occasion. In all the years of my life in Turkey and other Islamic countries, I never heard of female circumcision, although women mostly speak very openly about their intimate sexual problems. This custom originates from an African tradition and via Sudan, has unfortunately, reached Egypt. But it is not very widely practiced. On the other side, abortion was not taboo. Even in the small bookstore near the central sanctuary of Ankara, the Hacci-Bayram-Mosque, books and pamphlets were available like "chocuk nasil düsürülür", (how to abort.) Some pious ladies, well known to me, spoke without hesitation about the "Kurtaji", the abortion, which they got done because three to four children seemed enough to them.

During these years I learnt the forms of greeting: the hand-kiss for elders, where one pulls the hand to the forehead; the normal mutual kiss of the dervesh on the clasped hands; the custom, to call older people according to their age; there was Abla (elder sister), Agha Bey, (speak: Abi,- older brother) Hala or Teyze (aunt, paternal or

maternal) , or Amca (uncle). This was expandable by more additions: Mehmet Amca Bey, the "respected uncle Mr. Mehmet". But if an over-zealous European woman-convert should claim that all Christians, including her parents, were naturally destined to hell, there would surely be someone among the others who would comment in a low voice: "Yeni muslumanin ezam minareyi yikar" (the call to prayer of the convert destroys the minaret) - because she shouts too loudly.

At times it happened that at gatherings of women, too much "water was kneaded in the grinder" (there was too much gossip). Then I sneaked away, withdrew like a "hair from the butter", although the adage says: Sabreden dervesh muradina ermish: a patient dervesh gets to his destination. But my destination was mostly the writing desk.

So many women crossed our path in those years! There was the old neighbour, a refugee woman who had fled Macedonia during the Balkan wars in 1911 and come to Turkey. But she spoke a strange kind of Turkish in which she complained about her sufferings or gave advise to the younger neighbours. She had given birth to fourteen children; eleven died in early childhood, one son was buried somewhere in Eastern Anatolia. One daughter aged twenty died from tuberculosis after giving birth to her third child, and the last son mostly travelled. The old woman suffered spells of mental confusion. Half a dozen times she came to me to ask me whether she had offered her prayers or not. The rosary was her major consolation.

"You are lucky", she used to say, " you have a job, you have golden bangles –if I ever had such things, do you think I would have stayed with my husband"?

At an early age she used to get beaten by her elder brothers where she grew up when her parents died. She got married at fourteen and again got beaten up –"but, praised

be the Lord, now I am lucky– you will directly go to paradise" –cennetliksin cennetlik she mumbled satisfied, sipped her sweet tea which I happily offered her, and munched some sweetmeat.

Sometimes I saw some relatives visit her, huge women in black robes. Some of them had only recently left their Balkan home. Squatting there on a bed they looked like large bats. I saw them through the window. Some stayed for hours, others settled down for days or even weeks.

"I can't stand that old hag, but I told her: 'Stay!'. After all, it's custom," she told me with a grim smile when, after some ten days, some visitors left her house and she came to me to recover. She used to squat on my divan and watched me writing:" It's better than running to the neighbours: I once heard a preacher in a mosque say that all evil comes from gossip with women-neighbours," she nodded her head, pleased with herself and her long, thin plait swayed along with her movements.

The poor woman was right. There were certain neighbours whose only topic of conversation was how to bring up children, or the most intimate issues of their marital life and, occasionally, cooking. At times, when they visited me, I would have loved to follow the Turkish superstition and sprinkled salt into their shoes which, of course, they had taken off when they entered, because "then the guests will leave quickly." Or, I would have loved to "sweep after them," then they would never come back. It also seemed prudent to have within reach, some seeds of tendrils against the evil eye.

These women, separated from traditional life-styles, tried to be Europeans. Outwardly they stuck to the old family-ideal:"…the girl has brothers, it would be a shame if she worked outside the house!". This was the verdict of some frustrated older girl who would rather have worked in an office than baby-sit for some relatives– but this was only

skin-deep. Their remarks about religion were similarly vague. Outer changes had disturbed their inner peace, weakened the inner certainty of the Muslims which expressed itself in arrogant aggressiveness, the natural, national pride changed to chauvinism. On the other hand these women had not the slightest ideas about Turkish traditions; about the value of Turkish artisanship; in their houses plush covers with dog-motifs decorated the tables, glaring, imported satins were preferred over the hand-woven materials with calm colours, carpets with screaming colours and gross designs covered the floor instead of beautiful old kelims which were used to wrap up some useless gadgets lying in some corner of the house.

Such women exemplified the dangers that sudden change brings about from a protected existence within a family to persons, who desired to appear European but could only see the outer glamour (the wrong glamour) of such civilization. Especially in the 1950s one could observe this loss of certainty among women of the middle class: they were too young to have been brought up in the traditional way; also too young to have experienced the enormous efforts during the Turkish war of freedom. They were, so it seemed to me, hybrid creatures of an intermediate world. I recalled how much the women had engaged themselves in the war of freedom, how big were the sacrifices they had made, the help that they had given their soldiers! It was a woman who had written one of the best-known novels about that time, Halide Edip, whose future-oriented work was much praised during the twenties and thirties.

I loved the simple village women. They were totally illiterate but had an inexhaustible wealth of adages, riddles, poems and stories full of the wisdom of the ancients. Their judgments were quite often, sounder than the ones of the semi-educated city dwellers. They bravely managed to live

on and laboured hard under blows of fate and the harsh conditions of Anatolian existence that they were exposed to since thousands of years. One of them– I don't remember which one –taught me a verse by Ibrahim Hakki Erzerumlus:

Let us see what God does,
What He does, well He does,
He does well, what He does.

On the other hand there was a large number of women who had seized what life offered. In the 1950s the percentage of women lecturers and professors in Turkey was many times higher than in Germany. In my faculty there were, apart from me, one lecturer for European Philosophy and a number of women-assistants who made a career. In the faculty of philosophy a number of professorships were held by women, like in German Studies or in Islamic History of Fine Arts. There, Katharina Otto-Dorn trained a large number of young Turkish women archaeologists, who are unearthing Hittite and Roman sites, as well as Historians. At my time, there was Afetinan, who had been the confidante of Ataturk and played an important role in the Turkish Historical Association. Even at that time the medical faculty had a female dean and nowadays, it seems normal that many women are selected as dean. They work hard and are intelligent and dedicate all their energies to the problems of students and administration alike. I was particularly happy when my friend Meliha, to whom a fine friendship connects me since my first stay in Ankara, became dean of my old faculty. I often think how proud her mother would have been– her beautiful mother, who, widowed very young, sent all her seven children to the university. She drew her strength for this from her deep faith. Whenever I remember her she comes to my mind while praying, dressed in pure white. Here, there was no

friction between Islamic tradition and modernity. The two spheres merged without seam.

In those years I came across female lawyers and jurists as well as female officers, even air force officers. I still see before my eyes the calm, beautiful face of a young woman who was a trainer with the air-force –deeply pious, and yet able to take all modern challenges. My own girl-students were also a part of this group; they later, went to the Imam-Hatip Schools or took up teaching at the university. Nobody wore a headscarf except –as ordained –at prayer or recitations from the Quran. They were convinced that Islam is fully compatible with modern life and that there is no need to express it through rules in clothing.

I enjoyed celebrating mevlut with my Turkish friends. This is the celebration of the birthday of Prophet Mohammad, which falls on the twelfth day of the third moon-month. In Turkey however, it was common to celebrate mevlut also forty days after a birth, after a death or as annual memorial service; one could also take an oath that, in case one or the other wish found its fulfillment, a mevlut would be held. The texts of these recitations were from the early fifteenth century. Suleyman Chelebi had retained its position of honour in Turkey throughout the centuries, although dozens of imitations of it have been written.

We had read the mevlut in Berlin in a group discussion with Professor Richard Hartmann; it had been the first Turkish text that I had read and translated with pleasure, after I had, with great difficulty, laboured through the long-winded historical texts of the seventeenth century. Thus, the real-life experience with Suleyman Celebi's work was a special pleasure and always a beautiful experience.

A mevlut may be celebrated in a mosque; when we arrived in Ankara, just such a celebration was held on Ataturk's death anniversary on tenth November in the

Suleymaniye in Istanbul. Mostly though, it was a family affair. Friends were being invited and men and women, sitting separately, listened to the simple melodies, which were being interrupted by recitations from the Quran. I invariably got deeply touched when the singer reached the actual description of the light-filled night of the birth when Amina, the mother of the future prophet, sees three heavenly women (one being Mary) descend, who want to assist her; she complains about thirst and then experiences, that between herself and light there is hardly any difference. Then she says:

A white swan came flying on his gentle wings
Stroked my back and gave me strength.

Then every participant strokes the back of his or her neighbour as if to re-enact the miracle which is further described:

When then the prince of faith was born that night
Earth and heaven steeped in light
What created was, started to rejoice;
Grief receded, the world found life; in one voice,
All specks of the world's dust gave shout:
Welcome! through the world aloud.

Now begins the marhaba, 'welcome', repeated over and over, called by all that was created and offered to the 'nightingale of the garden of beauty' which, according to the Quran, was "sent to the world for mercy". In the end, sweet juices are offered and each guest receives an artistically folded, small envelop with sweets.

Once I arranged a mevlut recital at home; my book on the mystic Ibn Chafif from Shiraz which was printed in the faculty serial, had just appeared and I wanted to celebrate it. Hafiz Sabri, our teacher in Quran recitation, came and brought along a blind, young singer with a mighty voice. We admired his power of expression and his charisma. He was Kani Karaca, who, in subsequent years and decades,

became the most celebrated singer of religious songs, above all at the mevlevi-ceremonies. The coordinated presentation by the two musicians who, each in his own way, conveyed the holy, consecrated texts to the audience was an unforgettable experience.

At the other end of the experience stood the Ankara of Ataturk, clearly visible in the Anit Kabir, the huge mausoleum which overlooks the city from its central hill. We enjoyed going there; the vast lay-out with the extremely simple structure with the lions in the style of Hittite models, the elegant inner décor with dark mosaics and last not least, the magnificent view over the landscape, became for us an attraction in this growing city which we liked to visit often. Later, a museum with memorabilia of Ataturk was established in a side-wing of the mausoleum.

Later, more museums and art galleries were put up; we experienced the development of the huge Hittite-museum, - now, Museum for Prehistoric and Early Historic Cultures. It was erected from the Bedestan near the fort and done with great skill and refined taste. It offered the best impression of the many-layered history of Anatolia. The artifacts from the excavations of Chatalhuyuk, Bogazkoy and Yazihkaya, from Greek and Roman sites, gave an impression that this apparently poor soil of Anatolia is quite rich. In the Ethnographic Museum we admired artistic objects of utility: there were carpets, jewelry, heavy silks and precious embroideries; some families still possess such items. After we had given our visitors the tour of the museums, we walked a bit in the central Youth Park or, at least at that time, visited the Ataturk-Farm and the tiny zoo. There, the effect of animals which they had never seen, was particularly intense on visitors from Anatolia. "God be praised," an old, bearded man exclaimed on seeing a – rather extremely– ugly black wild boar, "God be praised that he forbade us to eat such a disgusting animal." But

when the big peacock spread its tail, the spectators broke into happy prayers of thanks.

One friend, well-known to the visitors of the German Cultural Centre was a part of Ataturk's Ankara, although few people knew who the stately, white-haired gentleman really was. He was Tevfik Bryikhoglu, who never missed a single function, concert, lecture or film which were offered by the Goethe Institute, even if at times, he fell a little bit asleep. The man, born in 1888, had fought as active officer in the first world war, partly at the Balkan front; during the war of freedom he became chief of operations of the western front and as such, a close associate of Kemal Pasha. As military advisor to Ismet (Inonu) Pasha, he took part in the conferences of Mudanya and Lausanne and in November 1926, he was made general secretary of Ataturk. This job was once interrupted when he became Turkish ambassador to Moscow from September 1927 to November 1928. In February 1932 Tevfik Bey presided over the Turkish delegation to the Geneva disarmament conference.

For Tevfil Bey, the recent Turkish history was a part of his own life. For hours he told us details of Ataturk's life, which were probably not known to anybody else but him. His knowledge of detail made, even to the layman, the various phases of the war of freedom very clear. Upon his request, at a certain time, when we had returned from Gordion with some friends, we went up to Duatepe. Here stood Tevfik Bey, looking across the valley of Sakaryas, like a field commander of antiquity, and described to us how Mustafa Kemal Pasha had allowed the Greeks to get deeper and deeper into the Anatolian highland, so as to cut them off from their base at Izmir; and how they advanced to the line of Polath-Haymana. We felt that we saw the armies down there and witnessed how the Turkish army was being concentrated there. From a hill like the one were we stood, under a bright sky in the cool April wind, the

counter attack was launched during the first days of September 1921 which threw the Greeks back across the Sakarya and opened the southern gates to the Turkish armies. We felt like fighting this battle ourselves which had decided the future of the Turkish people– not far from the place where once, Alexander the Great had severed the Gordon's Knot.

This was the only time that Tevfik Biyikhoglu had revisited the site of his greatest moment of the past.

In the fifties, Ankara was actually an ideal city to live and work in; a variety of guests from Europe and America came there to see with us modern Turkey and Islamic Anatolia, and to get information about the so amazing Ilahiyat Fakultesi.

The guest-book filled up. We did have certain problems to explain to some ladies, that over here, men of various social backgrounds move around with linked arms but that nothing objectionable was to be seen in that.

One major problem for us was, that in those years, the economic conditions in Turkey were miserable. Coffee was nowhere to be found, and the stuff that they sold as butter was rather far from our idea of it. At the butcher's show-windows the lambs were strung up in a row with a colourful paper frill in place of the much-desired fatty tail. It was difficult for a European to cook a decent meal. How often did Mama go to the little store down the road and asked :“Sut?” (Milk), only to be told by the kindly salesman “Milk Yok!” Yok, not available, was in those years one of the most important vocabulary for us because there were just few things that were not yok, off and on.

The faithful Fatma, wife of a servant of the faculty, helped us through the economic problems. Whatever the weather, fasting or not, she would walk to us from her Fort-hill. It was a one-hour walk and often, she was laden with household items which to us, appeared useless, but to her,

very useful. If ever she really wanted something, she looked at me imploringly and fluted: "Ablacigiiim hen bir ruya gordüüüm…. (dear elder sister) I had a dream." After I had spoken the obligatory "I hope it was good," she explained: "Ablachigum, I dreamed that you had given me a dress." How could I refuse? Because the dream holds elements of truth. According to Islamic belief, it holds one over forty sixth of prophethood. And Fatma relied on that.

We also learnt from Fatma how do deal with rats. In December 1957 there was a plague of migratory rats in Ankara and we heard, with great displeasure, the sound of rustling movements of an animal in our bathroom– on the third floor of the house. "You must not club them to death, Abla," said Fatma. "Or else, the spouse will come and cry for the whole night about his or her dead companion." (One year later it turned out that she was right.)

So we decided to treat our unwanted guest politely. We named the creature "Adelgunde" and knocked at the door before entering the bathroom. We never saw Adelgunde, but three or four days later– it was the fourth Advent– suddenly the electricity in the house went off. We hurriedly called some electrician (oh yes, a handyman does come on Sunday!) who shook his head. "It looks as if a mouse has eaten through the wiring," he murmured. They tried their best while Mama and I hurried to the Advent service in the embassy. We heartily joined in the priest's prayer "Lord, let there be light in our houses!"

When we got home the damage was repaired and the lights were on. There were no more rustling steps that night, but when next morning, we entered the bathroom there was, in the middle of the floor, a new cake of pink Lux soap with very fine traces of incisor teeth. Adelgunde had stolen it somewhere and gave it to us– apparently in gratitude for our hospitality, as a Christmas gift.

In those years a relationship developed which later, was to influence and even, give direction to my life. I, for quite a while, had been reading the poetry of Mohammad Iqbal, the “spiritual father of Pakistan”. In 1957 I published my translation of his great Persian epic, the Javednama which tells the heavenly journey of the poet in the company of Maulana Rumi. This work is a key for the understanding of Iqbal’s dynamic religious philosophy. After I had lectured extensively on Iqbal, my Turkish friends urged me to also translate the *Javednama* into Turkish. This, obviously, could not be done in a poetic form. But the work is so multi-layered, that I decided to write a commentary on it. The initiative for the project had actually come from the former minister of culture, Hasan Ali Yucel, who helped me with his action and advice. In those days Iqbal’s works could not yet be found in Ankara. I was able to write my excerpts from his scripts in the well-stocked library of Kazim Gulek who, in those days, played an important political role. By the way, in the house of Hasan Ali Yucel I also met Mahmud Makal, a teacher in a Koy Enstitusu (village institute) and author of the small book *Bizim Koy,* “Our Village.” I was deeply touched when I read this slim volume, in which the misery, the backwardness and the problems of a remote Anatolian village are rendered in short, clear diction and is therefore, deeply moving. It was obvious that the author as well as the book were attacked by certain groups– the misery seemed too real for a country that tried so hard to modernize itself.

Hasan Ali Ucel, who was not only interested in social progress but is also the author of some beautiful poems in honour of Maulana Rumi saw to it, that the great work was printed as *Chevidname*, which then appeared in 1958. The finest echo was for me a long letter from a *garcon,* a waiter from East Anatolia who found in Iqbal’s work an idea of Islam which corresponded to his visions and who thanked

me in touching words. My spiritual way now led me out of Turkey and pointed to Indo-Pakistan.

After my departure from the faculty in 1959 I kept coming back to Turkey. In 1996 I received the Order of Merit for Arts and Sciences. President Demirel tried to pin it to the front of my dress; I could not avoid thinking that his name means “Iron Hand”.

Konya --the Town of Maulana Rumi

Eighteen is the sacred number of the Mevlevis, the dancing derveshes, because the opening poem of Maulana Jelaluddin Rumi’s great didactic poem, the *Mathnavi*, has eighteen verses.

Two times eighteen years passed between my first visit to Konya, which was then almost a home for me, and the most recent one in autumn 1988 when I, after an interval of many years, revisited the town, because the Seljuk Universitasi was bestowing on me an honorary doctorial degree. Maulana Rumi once sang:

Come to our home, beloved, only for a short time!
And give life to our souls, only for a short time!
That at midnight the sky may see
A clear sun sparkling, only for a short time,
So that from Konya, emanate the light of love
To Samarkand and Bukhara, only for a short time

From the time when I was a student I had loved and translated Maulana’s poems and it was natural that I, during my firs stay in Turkey, wanted to visit Konya by all means. But how? I asked some German friends whether they might accompany me.

“Sure, but….”

I asked Turkish friends to go with me.

“With pleasure, but….”

I was quite discouraged and voiced my disappointment to a Turkish friend, a dear, understanding soul, who lived near the Islamic university.

She looked at me: “But, Sweetie, it is so simple. Hazrat-e-Maulana doesn’t want to see these people. He wants to see you alone.”

I figured out how much money I had left and quite daringly, bought myself an air-ticket to Konya, to an airport, which was brand new on the map of the city. I found a simple, clean downtown hotel and went to the Yeshil Turbe, Maulana’s mausoleum. It has a turquoise coloured pointed dome which is conspicuous from a distance: a small, untended garden, grave-stones of loyal disciples of the master behind the mausoleum, all rather neglected but touching. The then director of the mausoleum helped me on with certain information. I drifted through the town and saw the collapsed fort, the mighty Alaeddin-Mosque, the beautiful small medrisses –all in a state of trance. At night a heavy thunderstorm came down and in the morning, the town was clad in green. The heavy scent of the osier filled the air. I walked around and realized why in Maulana’s poetry the sudden awakening of spring, the tears of the clouds, the burst of thunder which was for him, a trumpet of God of the day of resurrection, played such an important role. One needs to experience this sudden transformation so as to understand why he, so often, sang about the dance of the branches in the spring-breeze, the paradise-green robes of the trees and bushes: the whole of nature joined in the praise of the spring-sun which brought new life to the world.

I was awakened from my reveries when suddenly I met a colleague from Istanbul who, for the rest of the day, took charge of me. With him, I once again walked through the town– a sleepy town, it seemed, with peasant people who looked surprised, but in a friendly way, at the sole lady-visitor. On the next day I boarded the small aircraft and we got into such a terrible thunderstorm that I feared we would end our lives pinned up like a butterfly on one of the

needle-topped rocks near Afyon Karahisar. But Maulana's blessings took us safely to Istanbul. At the reception that evening in the house of Professor Erdmann, who was a friend from my Berlin study-days, my adventure was duly appreciated.

This was my first, unforgettable visit there. The following year, 1953, I went with friends from Ankara in their car, for the first time by road to Konya. In the course of the following years I came to know this road so well that I almost knew every stone. Short of milestone one hundred there were two trees, after which the road forked. The left one passed by the great salt-lake on its way to the Taurus. The road to Konya went sixty kilometer straight ahead. We approached the tiny village of Cihanbeyli. This was a point for a fifteen minute rest where in winter, you sank deep into the mud of the unpaved market place while drinking tea or ayran. Only one hundred kilometers were left. The road was straight like a stick and invited cars to race. But there were always sudden flocks of sheep and watchdogs, which quite arbitrarily attacked cars. Thus we needed to be careful. Then, turning left, one crossed the last, low pass and the wide flatland of Konya opened up before the eyes. The feeling of getting home in fact, started, when one had the first glimpse of the peaks of the two defunct volcanoes South of the town and, from a distance, you saw the first greenery of the gardens.

The road, apparently so boring in the softly undulating plateau without a forest or a tree, was fascinating in all seasons. At times the whole land was grey-brown; sheep, rocks, the flat mud-houses, at times a caravan of camels packed with salt– all had the same colour, seemed to be part of an unreal moonscape. At other times the white lambs, separated from the herds of mother-sheep, looked like spring flowers among the light green of the fields and meadows, while the distant hills were of a transparent blue;

some were snow-capped. On other days, the tarmac burnt in the relentless midday sun and created strange mirages. At times the Hasan Dag on the other side of the Salt Lake glowed in the evening sun. During some sunsets the road turned into a band of amethyst in the melting snow and transformed the sheep into large mythical creatures, which herded around the ancient wells. The shepherds in their stiff, broad-shouldered felt-coats tried to start a small fire.

The violet sheep
Flocking to the well
A moon, half asleep
White between the clouds' swell.
A snowy road, wet line,
A band of amethyst-
Forgotten was all time!
Moon and cloud vanished in the mist.
From stars the dance arose
Intoxicated by eternal wine.
The sound of flute. The silence froze,
Would in your silence join.

Each trip was full of its own beauty and own adventures. The motor of the bus might conk out and the driver then stuff the passengers into another passing bus which was already overcrowded (a good opportunity to learn new Turkish words, mostly swear words!) The bus might also get stuck in a deep snowdrift or in the sticky mud of a building-site– or, to beat all records, do the long trip in four and a half hours. But all passengers were happily sharing their bread and fruit with the foreign lady-traveller. In the days before the great festival, the death anniversary of Maulana Rumi on 17th December, the bus was resounding from the enthusiasm of the travellers. They were singing and reciting pious songs and prayers on their pilgrimage to the burial place of the greatest of the mystical singers of the Islamic world.

But many travellers went to Konya only on official assignments. The developing, sprawling town every year, turned more and more into a commercial centre. A sugar-mill and many other factories rose up; new hotels were erected to cater for the ever increasing touristic needs. The artifacts of Seljuk rule were being restored and the carpet traders' business was thriving, also the trade of the dealers in colourfully painted wooden spoons. One of the traditions of Konya is the Kasik oyunu, a dance performed with wooden spoons and going by the trend of modern times, they were painted with the portraits of the Maulana, with pictures of his mausoleum, or, some of his verses were, with more or less artistic skill, scratched into the wood. By 1988 Konya had become a large city. Appproaching the city by road, the old phrase came to mind:

Our deserts know no rim nor end

To our heart, peace does not descend

On the right one could see the Horozlu Han, a collapsed caravanserai from Seljuk times (unfortunately, rather poorly repaired with the help of the cement factory by its side). Here in Konya, the old Ikonium, layer by layer the peoples of antiquity had settled. Caves with wall paintings more than seven-thousand years old have been discovered; in Catalhuyuk in the Konyan plains, Greeks and Romans had settled. Legend connects the place with Plato, who appeared as great magician. His name is engraved in the Hittite sanctuary of Eflatun Pinan near the Beysheyir-lake, by the side of a spring. Antique

marble tiles which one could see off and on around the wells in the gardens of Konya proved the earlier presence of the Romans; the church-historian will remember from the Apostle tales how Paulus, after his dispute with the residents of the town of Ikonium, shook off the dust from his feet and moved to Lystra. There seems to have always been a Christian community of considerable size in Konya;

because Kappadokia, the home of the great, deeply mystical fathers of the Eastern church like Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianz were only a few (antique) days' journey away. These communities stayed on. The Christian caves near Sile between Konya and Beyshehir with their interesting wall paintings and the deserted Greek-Orthodox church of the small place, prove their influence and traditions.

When the Turkish Seljuks in 1071, had beaten the Byzantines near Mantzikert and advanced to Anatolia, they made Konya their centre. The prosperous town attracted many scholars and artists; even more so, when the Mongol hordes after 1220, brought utter destruction to the eastern parts of the Islamic world. The influence of some East-Iranians, Chorassanians, pious people who had fled from the hordes of Jenghis Khan, can be seen from a small story which explains the name of Konya: two saints from Chorassan came, flying and floating, slowly via Iran to Anatolia. They saw the green plains of Konya before them and decided to settle there. " Konalim nu?" (should we settle?) one of them asked and the other nodded agreement: "Konya!" (do settle!) This is how the city got its name.

Among those who came from the East was also Maulana Jelaluddin Rumi, a youth, whose father, who was a famous scholar, had brought the family from Balkh through the Central Asian regions to Anatolia. The family settled in Laranda-Karaman till in 1228, they were called to Konya. His father died there in 1231 and his son followed him to teach theology in one of the numerous, rich theological schools, the medresses. Here in Konya he was seized by mystical love to the itinerant dervesh Shams-i-Tabrizi, a love, which changed the learned professor into the most ecstatic poet of the Islamic world. Nearly forty-thousand lyrical verses; the didactic poem, the Mathnavi ("double-verses") which has twenty-five-thousand verses, and a

number of prose texts were written in Konya between 1244, the year of enrapture, and 1271, the year of his death.

Before the bus reached the city it passed an old graveyard: sunken grave-stones, a few small mausoleums and a large, plain tomb in the form of a prayer-niche reminded the visitor that Islamic mysticism developed from the meditation of those verses of the Quran which emphasize the transitoriness of everything earthly when confronted with the permanence of the Almighty. Maulana himself had sung, in uncountable verses, about the enigma of "mystical death" of the burning of the butterfly in the flame, the "die and become". Because for him, as for all mystics, death is "the bridge, which takes the lover to the beloved," after having shaken off the earthly wrappings like a colourful patchwork-frock.

Thus the bus passed through the narrow lanes and suddenly, the Alaeddin Mosque came into view, built proudly and seriously on the fortified hill. Sultan Alaeddin Keykobad had it built in 1220. He was the one who granted asylum to the refugees from the East. At this time the realm of the Seljuks reached the Mediterranean Sea; the shipyard of Alanya is still a reminder of it. In the spring of 1190 Barbarossa, on his way to the Holy Land had enjoyed here the hospitality of the Seljuks. In 1236 Franciscans looked for possibilities to establish ties between the Church and the Mongols. A little later they proceeded right up to Mongolia. Trade and business flourished; the annual income of the state was more than three-hundred-thousand gold coins in those days. The mighty fort which once covered the whole of the Alaeddin Hill is reduced to a pitiable rest; when Helmut von Moltke visited the town in 1838. the walls of the fort were still visible. The reliefs, which are now kept in the Ince Minareh Medresse in the museum at the foot of the hill, give an idea how beautifully the fort and its gates must have been decorated; large

figures of angels, falconers, animal fights and extremely artistic inscriptions can be admired.

But the mosque whose hall can hold four hundred worshippers stands unchanged: It is an irregular structure of yellow sandstone from which a conical peak emerges which covers the mausoleum of the princes. In the beginning one does not notice the interior irregularities– different pillars, a slight twist in the axis caused by additions and changes to the structure. First of all one notices the large number of colourful carpets and kelims which cover the floor. The most beautiful ones lie in front of the large prayer niche which shows a tile-mosaic in a dark turquoise-green colour, typical for the thirteenth century. The high preaching chair (nimbar) of dark walnut-wood, which stands right next to it, is a masterpiece of wood carving; stars and rosettes rise up and are joined in geometrical designs in one mysterious system. A simple, beautiful Arabic inscription in Kufi script forms the borders. How often the Maulana must have come here to offer his prayers! His shadow gave life to the seriousness of the site, because he was the great worshipper who said about himself:

I totally turned into worship, so much I prayed
Whoever saw me, he asked for him to pray.

In a niche in the wall, which has been covered up by masonry, a little box is kept wrapped in a scarf full of rose fragrance. It contains the most precious relic, a hair of the Prophet. We saw it when in the late fifties, the niche was being opened for the first time.

At the foot of the fort-hill are the two Seljuk medrisses which had been built during Maulana's lifetime, the Karatay Medrisse (1251) which his friend, the minister Jelaleddin Karatay got erected, and, seven years later, the Ince Minareli. That year, 1258, had great consequences for the Islamic world, when Hulagu Khan took Baghdad and

killed the last of the Abbasid-Califs. They had been ruling since 750. Even one year earlier, on 25th November 1256, Mongol soldiers had laid siege to Konya. Maulana, in a strange visionary poem tells us about it; but it was said that the power of his blessing kept the armies away.

Some decades ago the Ince Minareli, through lightning, lost the tip of its slim, tall minaret. The great gate of it is fascinating: It may well be the first religious Anatolian building whose gate is framed by a large, knotty inscription in the cursive style of the Arabic script. Before that, the Kufi, stylized by thousands of refinements, had been used for writing on buildings (building-epigraphy)

The inside dome of the Ince Minareli is plain, just a few turquoise coloured tiles break the simplicity of the grey-brown tile-work, But the dome of the Karatay Medrisse is, for me, the most perfect expression of mystical piety. A lot of tile-work at the walls has fallen off, but one can feel the effect that the mostly turquoise-green interior must have had. Nowadays the medrisse is a ceramics museum where the excavated artifacts of the Seljuk castle of Beyshehir, Kobadabad, are exhibited. A good solution.

The most beautiful item of the Karatay Medrisse is the dome above the central structure. In the four corners, the change from the square to the dome takes place through five by four so-called “Turkish triangles”. At the top they spread out and end up in twenty-four corners. On these, the names of the Prophet Mohammad, his first four successors (of the “rightly guided califs”), and the names of some other Quranic prophets are written in turquoise and black glazed tiles and in square Kufi: only the eyes of the adepts can recognize them. At the border of the tambour then follows a highly complex Quranic writing in which the intertwined, knotted Kufi seems to reach its climax. Above that, in the curve of the dome, there are stars, large and small ones, some with twenty rays. They are mysteriously

connected to each other and guide the eyes of the onlookers to the small opening in the apex through which at night, real stars can be seen. They reflect in the small water-tank in the middle of the hall. The circle of stars, as if frozen into the dome, is, so it is said, a model for the mystical circle of the Mevlevis. For me, this dome expresses better than any commentary the nature of Rumi's Mathnavi, which was started a few years after the completion of the Medrisse. It is firmly rooted in the Islamic tradition and in the words of the Quran (which, just like the intertwined letters of the script, are all the time repeated) and open the meaning, the heart to the divine truths through central themes and elaborations which are intricately joined together; the smaller "stars" in growing wonder, rise up and reveal themselves in the clear water mirror which the sufis call the heart. What other offering could one bring to the moon-like beloved than a mirror in which he can gaze at himself ?

Since my first visit to Konya I saw the town through the verses of Maulana, through his connectedness with the place, its mosques, medrisses and garden– no matter how much they overcome limitations of space and time and keep rising up to the source of eternal love, to the all-warming, but also the all-scorching sun of love. But would I ever get to see the dance of the derveshes which former travellers had described and painters had drawn? It seemed totally impossible, because in Turkey, since 1925, all activities of mystical brotherhoods were prohibited and all tekke (dervesh assemblies) were shut down. Only the memory of it was alive.

However, in November 1954, right after I had assumed my duties at the Ilayiat Facultesi in Ankara, a letter got to me. It was planned to arrange a celebration in Konya on the occasion of Maulana's birthday. Would I, or, could I, give a speech? They didn't know how much I wanted to. But,

would I be allowed to bring Mama along, I asked? But of course! The honourable madam child-producer (valide hamm) was most cordially welcome. We made preparations, and the state of anticipation caused me to see the dervesh dances in a dream. I told the dream to a good friend, Hafis Sabri, who mainly was a higher official in a ministry but taught Quran recitation at our faculty. Hafis Sabri smiled: “Inshallash hayir”, he said, (if God wants it, it means something good!) “I shall also be there”, he added.

On a grey, wet December-day we got onto the bus and in Konya, went to Maulana Muzesi, where, in the director’s room, we found Onder sitting with some other gentlemen. We were warmly welcomed and taken to our hosts, a well-to-do family in whose spacious home we right away, felt at home. The eldest daughter was to get married in a few days, so we had a chance to admire the dowry. We learnt that it was customary to give a complete set of clothes to each member of the household. Everything had been chosen with care. There was Elmas, the little *Evlatlik*, a girl who had been adopted in the house. She helped by playing with the children and grew up together with them. Now, she was beaming all over her face in excitement of the coming festivities.

At about nine in the evening some men appeared and put us into a car. They took us downtown where we got down at a vast, almost totally empty house. There we saw quite a large number of elderly gentlemen. They opened mysterious boxes and took out reed flutes, drums and– I wondered whether I could trust my eyes– the high felt hats of the Mevlevi-derveshes, while we sat in the only two armchairs. The men had begun to play and sing and slowly, the mystical circle (sema) developed from it with its thrice repeated slow stepping and the welcome of the Sheikh. The rhythm of the instruments increased and the turns became faster, with the right hand flat upwards and the left one

pointing to earth, so as to receive mercy from above and transmit it down to earth. The derveshes, who had come from Anatolia, Konya, Afyon and other places, had not had a chance to perform the ceremony together in thirty years. It was an overwhelming experience to see how the circle took them back to the roots of their religious tradition, how they absorbed themselves in the passionate sounds of the reed flute, in the voices that sang Maulana's verses. Were we dreaming or was it reality? Hafis Sabri smiled again. "You see, your dream got fulfilled", he said and was surely as happy as we were.

The next morning the duty began: lectures in schools and in the seminar of the lady teachers, then visit to the mosque, again speeches. We were always accompanied by kindly gentlemen. We saw the bazaar of the goldsmiths from where once, Maulana had pulled the goldsmith Salaheddin to the circle, enchanted by the silvery hammering of the craftsmen. There were medrisses, the Ottoman mosque next to the turbe of Maulana and evermore, the mausoleum itself. The cells which were situated around the courtyard were later to be converted into a museum. Nowadays only the ancient Mehmet Dede lived there, who had received special permission from Ataturk to stay in his cell. The library contained treasures and in the large kitchen one cold visualize how the young people who wanted to become Mevlevi had to do kitchen duties for one-thousand and one days. Step by step they climbed, learning the verses of the Mathnavi, being instructed in music and learning the whirling dance.

We saw another thing: the wooden floor was studded with large nails, and one of the students pressed one of them between the first two toes of his left foot. He then began to turn around in daily increasing speed in the direction opposite to the fingers of a clock– till he was able to overcome the long drawn out ceremony without getting

giddy, and when the music ceased, stand stock-still in his place.

On the third day the actual festival began. The cinema hall in which we were assembled was overcrowded. Dignitaries had come from Istanbul and Ankara like the then minister for culture, Tevfik Ileri with his wife; Samihe Ayverdi and her group had come from Istanbul. I was nervous about having to or, being allowed to, hold the festival speech on Maulana's influence on Western literatures. All went well. It was my eighth lecture in three days.

And then the dance began: Hafis Sabri sang the Prophet-song which is the introduction to every sema. After the thrice repeated circling, the derveshes threw off their black over-coats and stood there in their white dance robes, which while whirling, spread out almost horizontally. One of them was truly gripped in ecstasy turning at incredible speed, while others merged with the rhythm of the drums, the small violins and reed flutes. Lastly, the –not always sung– Turkish closing lines *Dinle sozumu* sounded, a verse, which praises in ever increasing speed the sema as food of the soul. Then suddenly, it was over: the derveshes wrapped themselves in their black coats, they sort of changed back from their light-footed body of resurrection to earth. Finally, they spoke the common prayer, always ending with the deep "Hu" and "He".

We understood that Rückert was right when he ended one of his most beautiful Rumi-lyrics with the verse:

He, who knows the power of the circle, lives in God,

Because he knows how love does kill– Allah Hu!

That night we hardly slept.

The next morning while getting ready for departure, we were called once again to the mausoleum where the circle was to be filmed, for the first and only time after 1925. We were received very warmly. My lecture of the day before

brought me many hand- and other kisses; even the ancient Mehmet Dede hugged me, which touched me very much. Then, once more the circle on the spot, where it actually belongs. However, through a strange misfortune, the film got destroyed.

We were taken home to Ankara in the bus of the delegates. From that time on, somehow, I was considered as a part of the mevlevis and saw the dance repeatedly. I also noted with concern that the old customs began to be ignored. When the dance is studied only as the sufi-dance, without the many years of instruction of the interpretation of the Mathnavi, without knowledge of the original language, without "being cooked" for one-thousand and one days, one will not be able to gain access to one dimension of the ritual, one which not Maulana himself, but his son and second successor, Sultan Veled, had organized. And yet– the music fascinates me even now, a wonderfully structured piece of art, and whenever Kani Karacas in his mighty voice sings the song of praise of the Prophet, the old days of Konya and Ankara become alive.

In subsequent years the museum in the Yehsil Türbe was being embellished and expanded, and the buildings of Seljuks were being repaired, so that Konya, thanks to the efforts of Mehmet Onders, became more and more attractive. For us, it was not only the place to visit Maulana, but we also stopped at the grave of his mystical friend and first inspirer, Shams-i-Tabrezi. Next to it is an old well. It is said that in a December night, jealous disciples of Maulana had thrown Shams into it and killed him, after having called him out of the house of Maulana, whose location was known. During the repair works, a large grave from the time of the Seljuks, painted over with plaster of Paris, was discovered there by Mehmet Onder. Thus, the legend became truth. One simply had to visit this mausoleum, or

else the excitable, powerful Shams would have been annoyed.

At times, we also visited the grave of yet another contemporary of Maulana. It was Sadreddin Konavi, who died shortly after him, in 1274. He was the step-son and commentator of Ibn `Arabi from Spain, who died in 1240 in Damascus and whose powerful theosophical system influences Islamic mysticism to this day. Maulana preferred the passionate music, love, to the systematic thought-structure of his Konya neighbour: Isn't it that love hits reason with a club on its head, so that it slumps and plays the lute? Yet, both men enjoyed a deep friendship; sometimes it feels as if you hear an echo of the talk of the two mystics when reading the Mathnavi. Sadreddin's grave is open, exposed to wind and sun, and only few do him the honour of a visit.

Konya had even more attractions. To praise the delicious kitchen of the town would need a whole book, whether it be meat dishes or sweet dishes. Our Konya-friends found ever-new delicacies to spoil the friends that came from Ankara, a place of indifferent cooking. In Meram one could still see the waterwheel the sound of which had inspired Maulana to write poems, and a drive in the gaily painted horse-coaches was always very pleasurable.

A special attraction was an old, dilapidated house in the middle of the old city. When the young maid in her dark-blue, wide trousers opened the heavy door, the visitors stood enchanted. Every corner, every wall was covered by prayer carpets, and the small room in which we used to sit, held never less than a dozen of the finest Anatolian carpets. There was the Ladik with its typical design of three or five tulips on the narrow side of the central field, which was mostly red. One had finely knotted gordes, others a yellow cube and not less than nineteen borders. Or, there was a prayer-mat on which not only the usual mosque-lamp was

shown but also the long-spouted water-can for the ablutions. What was the riddle, whose solution was "carpet?" "All kinds of flowers grow whose roots I hold in my hands."

Izzet Koyunoglu, the owner of these treasures, had a story for each piece. On cold winter evenings the iron stove was aglow. Its pipe went through the whole room. I was always full of fear that with sparks, this unsecured building of wood and mud might not go up in flames. While coffee was being prepared, Izzet Bey reached into a bookcase: "Here are a few particularly nice things," he used to say, and pass me a manuscript of the Turkish Divan of the Uzbek prince Ubaidi, or an inventory showing the cost of the wedding of the daughter of an Ottoman sultan; or, some works on Byzantine music or a Persian manuscript with miniatures! He told us that his collection held ten thousand manuscripts in Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages. Some were autographed by famous men of literature. There were also magnificent calligraphies.

From another case rosaries slipped out. They were of incomparable beauty, made of mountain -crystal, a simple brown one of fine wood, another of camel teeth. Turquoise and agate were among them as well as some of subdued shining beads of mother-of pearl, others of smooth ivory or thorny fruit. I could not have enough of this sight and wondered whose hands might have moved the beads, whose lips might have murmured the ninety nine most beautiful names of God, or had counted the phrases of the Fateha or of blessings for the Prophet.

A helmet decoration of diamonds sparkled from the next room across to us; rounded daggers and shining swords stood in the corners; under a white linen sheet we discovered embroideries on linen and silk, dainty blossoms in gardens on light cotton sheets, brocades and velvet from Bursa and cambric sheets which, under the weight of the

heavy golden embroidery, got torn. At times, when we sat with friends at Izzet Bey's, I was permitted to wear one of the colourful old costumes: light, silken trousers, purple or red velvet coats and jackets with golden embroidery, striped coats or others, which were studded with roses. When later, sadly, I slipped back into my European, sober dresses, other things caught my eye: Persian silver vases from Iznik, the centre of classical, Ottoman porcelain, and more and still more manuscripts. At times, some pieces of European kitsch came out from amongst the treasures.

Izzet Bey had collected these things over decades from all over Anatolia when he was railway inspector. American collectors had offered him several million dollars. But he had decided to make over his collections to the city of Konya, provided they would build a respectable museum for them. We are still waiting for it. When we finally, intoxicated from the beauties, took leave and thanked the host, there was for us a rather hard piece of sweet meat which was supposed to bring us blessings.

The duty called us back, the bells of the caravan sounded; central to Maulana's poetry is the thought of the constant movement, the upward development, the climb that never rests, up to the fields of divine reality. Thus he sang:

Like the bells of caravans are our calls,
Or when under heavy clouds, the thunder rolls;
Traveller, don't leave your heart at any place,
So you may not feel tired, when the calls you chase.

But Konya also had a living heart– it was Ismail, who embodied all the ideals of Maulana.

My Brother Ismail

Ismail stood in the door, smiling. "Okey, it's 'good bye' till next summer in Germany," we said. "Inshallah! And imagine, no one in my family cried when I left, they were all so happy that finally I am getting to Germany." He

turned once more and we waved after him till he disappeared in the mist of the unfriendly Ankara February day in 1959– that day, when at night the aircraft of Adnan Menderes crashed.

Ismail had, for many years, harboured the desire to see Germany. He keenly learnt German words, from “starling” to “garbage bin”. We had been rather reluctant to help him find a job. We feared that the adjustment from the Konya home, from the almost medieval tightness of his carpentry workshop in which he made solid, good furniture, to a high-tech enterprise of a German factory would be too tough for him and his sensitive heart, and might confuse the clarity of his worldview.

Ismail was one of those people in whom the ideal of a dervesh was so perfectly incorporated as one can hardly find again in the Islamic world. He came from a family of Konyan artisans and from early childhood on, had experienced the traditions of the Mevlevis. Once he told us proudly: “From the past three hundred years my family has supplied meat to the tekke”! It was his luck to have found a spiritual guide who took him right down to the depth of the mystical poetry of Maulana Rumi. At the same time, he showed him the world of Islamic art, above all, calligraphy. This is how we met him.

It happened during the memorial celebrations on Maulana’s death anniversary on 17th December, 1954. At the last lunch suddenly, Ismail stood before us (he was a relative of our host) and gave me, as an expression of his gratitude for my lecture, a beautifully inscribed tablet with a Persian four-liner, dated 1810, as a present.

I was still hesitating to accept it, but his charming warmth, his smile and sincere happiness made it impossible for us to reject his gift. “I shall frame it and then take it to Ankara”, he promised. A few weeks later he stood in the door, not only with the script-tablet, which even now

graces the wall of my study, but also with an artistically knotted small wall-carpet with a religious inscription. During the initial months we saw him quite often in our place in Cebeci, where he delivered kelims and fresh butter from Konya, delicious jams made from wild berries unknown to us, and other desirable things. We did not know why he spoilt us like that. In the course of time we began to understand that it was necessary for him to give and thus, express his gratitude to those who, he believed, had made gifts to his spirit and soul.

In late winter that year we visited him for the first time in his house in Konya, which in the coming years became a real home to us: the almost invisible, modest building behind a thick mud wall was not far from the beautiful Sahib Ata medrisse. The house had two small courtyards; at their end was the kitchen. A few steps led to the front yard and to the two rooms which were connected by a square hall. The room at the right was the guest room– you have yet to see a more cozy one. It was in honour of the European guests that some chairs had been placed there. But we really did prefer the low cushions which ran along the walls. The floor and walls were covered with a fine selection of carpets. The built-in cases contained a library rich in Persian and Turkish works on mysticism, and also some German grammars. There were also cases full of finest embroidery. Sukruye, the untiring housewife, was a master of this art. Later in the evening our beds were taken from the walls and spread on the floor. What a gentle sleep we enjoyed there, after an evening full of long discussions on religion and art. Sometimes, some guests arrived; then someone played the reed flute, the book-dealer sang ancient dervesh songs. The lamp cast strange designs on the beautiful ceiling made of beams, between which we saw parts of reed-mats. The tea glasses were being refilled again and again. Ismail himself prepared the tea. He helped his

wife with all the domestic chores “He is actually a girl”! said his mother tenderly.

His mother was the soul of the house. She had the room on the left of the hall; the heavy-built woman with her clear features was untiringly busy to control the little boys and at the same time, clean vegetable and prepare dolma and with her foot, move the rope of the cradle which was suspended from the ceiling and in which the little girl was sleeping - “Binnur”, “a Thousand Lights”, was the name of the child. The mother was one of the most impressive women that I have met in Turkey– and not only there - : she embodied one thousand years of best tradition. She had rare sensibilities and a rich soul. She was always there to comfort, to protect and never to complain. “I have given birth to ten boys; only the eldest and the youngest survived”, she said without a trace of revolt against her fate (a short time later the eldest one too, suddenly died). She enjoyed being there at our discussions and off and on, threw in a wise remark. The young woman was mostly too tired from the day’s demands and did not participate in our spiritual discussions. She looked after the physical welfare of the guests: Nowhere in Turkey did I eat more delicious soups, exquisite dolma, or more juicy boreks.

Ismail’s house became the abode of other friends as well. It so happened that in subsequent years, a number of guests from Europe came to us to Ankara and wanted to see the centre of the Mevlevis, the grave of Maulana and the Seljuk buildings in the old city. After a short hesitation I wondered if I could ask Ismail to help us in finding accommodation. From that point on it became a routine that I wrote to him: “Dear Brother, on such and such date we are arriving with this or that friend”, or just: “My girl friend is arriving on such and such bus.” Then we could be sure that he was waiting at the bus stand, joyously receiving the new guest and that he would accommodate him or her

either in his house or in a good hotel. He excelled in finding accommodation. Even in 1958, at the Maulana celebrations when the influx of German guests was enormous, he managed to find sleeping quarters for everyone and also arranged admission to the celebration for everybody; he himself sat modestly behind the stage and was happy when the guests were satisfied. At another Maulana-celebration when we sat in the house of a friend listening to music and recitations till four in the morning, he did not mind to take home eighteen ladies from Istanbul whose hotel had been closed for the night. He offered them tea and sleeping arrangements. Ismail had a second house in the middle of the vineyards, which he used only in summer. When the German visitors came in increasing numbers he made, for his second home, two beautiful beds of fine wood so that the visitors should feel comfortable.

Different friends now entered this circle. A professor of ship-building from Hamburg and a doctor from Berlin, Friedrich Heiler and his colleague C.J. Bleeker from Amsterdam, German student groups and Turkish lecturers, professors, poets, artists– everyone was welcome. After a few hours everybody, overwhelmed by the purity of his hospitality, by the all-embracing love and piety of this man, called him: My Brother Ismail.

We desired to go to Beysheher and Ismail found the means for it. It was only at the last excursion there, that I succeeded in at least partially share the taxi fares. On one cool morning in March we visited the grave of the mother of Maulana in Karaman. On the way back, hundreds of storks, exhausted from their flight from the South, had settled right on the road (a Turkish riddle compares them to white-dressed Mecca-pilgrims). And unforgettable are the excursions to Sile and Meram, where Maulana had listened to the sound of the watermill.

Ismail always fathomed our needs. “You want oyas”? He knew where these fine, colourful needle-points with which the borders of the headscarves were stitched, could be had cheapest. “A kelim? Sure!” Either he took us to the carpet dealer “Mustafa with the thick lip” or he discovered one among his own collection, “which surely fits better in to your place”. When the theological college in Marburg wanted a prayer-carpet, he at once sent a pleasing kelim as a gift to Germany. There is no end to counting the instances of his generosity. He was known to everybody in Konya and was loved and respected. His business went quite well, and his children grew and brought him joy (earlier, three little ones had died). The eldest, Mehmet Emin, apart from normal schooling, was learning Arabic writing.

“He shall study in Germany later”! Ismail said proudly and to every German guest the little one had to offer a “Guten Tag. Wie geht es Ihnen”? Ismail too, studied the language of the country of his dreams, sent loving cards to my mother and tried to please his friends in Europe with Christmas greetings.

The most intimate connection he developed with Hanns Meinke from Berlin, the poet, who in 1956 together with his son and daughter-in-law had gone there to fulfil his lifelong wish to visit Maulana. The old gentleman with his long beard celebrated his seventy-second birthday in Konya, and that on Shaker Bayram! He won the hearts of the Konyans by storm and all the ghazals which he had written in his life in the style of Maulana came to life during his days in Konya. Later, in his artistic writing-style, he wrote letters and verses to Ismail, who had enchanted his Konyan days with his reed-flute and mystical songs.

Through the contacts with so many Germans, Ismail’s wish to visit our country grew rapidly. He wanted to see the world of his friends and at the same time, study new methods of wood treatment and new forms of furniture

production. The opportunity came in autumn 1958 through German friends. He had yet to complete several orders and finally, in February, he, happy to the extreme, went to Lengerich where, with the help and care of German friends, he at once felt at home. He was happy in the small town and at work in a furniture factory. His happiness was unimaginable when Meinkes invited him to spend Easter with them in Berlin. "Is it proper to accept all this hospitality"? he wrote to me. He enjoyed the time together with his friends whose children were the same age as his own, viewed the pictures of Konya and kept saying: " I am so happy! I am so very very happy"!

Had the new impressions been too powerful? Had there been a tension between his spiritual world of Konya and the life in Germany which might have weakened him? Nobody knows. On his return to Lengerich he got a slight fever and a sudden haemorrhage put an end to his life. He was forty-two years old on the Saturday after Easter. It happened during the Laylat-ul Qadr, the holiest night of Ramadan. The friends in Berlin had him brought there and buried him in the Islamic graveyard –in gratitude for his hospitality. I was not able to say to his mother some words of consolation –to a mother, who lost her tenth and last son. It was she who comforted me: "Don't be sad. German soil has drawn him there. He always wanted to be there. Now he is with you forever"!

This obituary was written in autumn 1959, when I returned from Ankara to Marburg. I now did not have many chances to visit Turkey and if so, I could not find the old friends. I did not know whether Sukruye was still alive, what might have happened to the children.

But Ismail's spirit was alive. I got to Konya in autumn 1988 and was aghast at the outer changes that had taken place. I had my first meal with Mehmet and Zafar Onder in a well- known kebab restaurant. I was just sipping the rest

of my ayran when three gentlemen came down the stairs and stared at me. The youngest then came rushing towards me: “Cemile Hala”! It was Mehmet Emin, Ismail’s eldest son, a ditto copy of his father. Thirty years vanished like nothing. Right away we had to accompany him to his flourishing dental clinic and drink coffee there with him and hear about all the relatives. We were grateful for this opportunity. His sister, while tidying up the room, had found a letter which I had sent him when he was eight years old (at that time I had sent some delicate toys to the skilful boy) in which I told that one day, he would be a very good dentist…. And this is what happened, although he knew nothing of the letter. He was married with three little boys, the eldest again Ismail. When later that night in his house, we listened to the two Turkish musicians who had come to him after a concert at the university, it seemed as if the days we had spent with Ismail listening to music had come alive again– the miracle of a friendship beyond time and space.

An unusual Mediterranean Cruise

What kind of gift could one make to one’s mother on her seventieth birthday in January 1957? There was little one could buy and we did not feel like celebrating. But then– what about a cruise along the southern Turkish coast? I hurried to the Denizcilik Bankasi to purchase two steamer tickets, Iskenderun-Izmir at ninety nine lira each, all inclusive. The employees looked at me with something like contempt: this is handled by the agency in Iskenderun– and then, how could one know what might happen until the first of February!

Defiantly we boarded the train which took us in thirteen hours to Adana. It struggled hard to get through the icy, snowed up Anatolian plateau and across the Taurus. Finally, in Adana, two unknown persons dragged us into a car which stood parked under palm trees. We were taken to

the house of Ismail Emre, where some thirty people were waiting for us, but not the much needed warm dinner. It is not so easy to be guest at the place of a holy man –or someone near sainthood; after a warm embrace I was asked to speak about the problems of Islamic mysticism. Once that was over, something warm to eat arrived.

Ismail Emre was one of the most interesting men I had come across. He was a smith, with little reading and writing skills. But he was seized by a glow of mystical love and, at times, he got into a state in which he sang mystical tunes in the style of Yunus Emre's verses, who had, around 1300, given Turkish folk poetry its specific character. We had once experienced such an event, when Emre, during a trip to Konya on a cold December day, suddenly began to sing and the unheated vehicle got so hot that the window panes were misty. His verses were called dogus, (birth; spontaneously created). His followers noted down every word. The verses of the "New Yunus Emre" were published in two volumes.

We were fond of the modest man who knew no difference between the believers of one or the other religion. "All these colours will turn to ashes– only after they have been burnt by love and turned to ashes (kul) they become one and all (kull). And once he said to Mama: "The prophets are like the sun which shines every day and throws light on the people. But have you ever seen that on the sun, there was written: 'Tuesday' or' Friday' only?

Next morning we enjoyed a real solid breakfast with things that we hadn't seen in Ankara for weeks, like cheese and fresh butter. After two hours we reached Iskenderun in a dolmust and by evening we had found a simple hotel and hurried to the Marine-Office.

The official was just about to leave for cocktails. When will our "Izmir" arrive? The official raised his hands: " Oh, she sank yesterday…"!

Now we realized that the agency in Ankara must have been clairvoyant when they refused to sell us tickets. Now what? The marine official sighed: perhaps, yes, Inshallah, we might be taken aboard the Postal Steamer “Nejat”. It was smaller, but stopped in every harbour and instead of just four days, we could travel for eight days on the same fare. “And when will it arrive”? “Only God knows– she is due day-after tomorrow, but perhaps, later ……..”

A snow-covered mountain peak stood high over the bay and the sunset dipped everything in flaming purple light.

No, the “Nejat” would Inshallah arrive after three days, the marine-man told us next morning. We strolled along the shore avenue up and down, down and up, counted the palms and beggars and shoe-shines, drank something that they sold under the name of tea and decided to go to Antakya via the Belen Pass, to Antiochia where the disciples of Jesus for the first time were called “Christians”.

The Orontes flowed yellow-brown under the bridge. Here, it is said, Daphne changed into a laurel-tree. Here, in the garden of the museum, Roman mosaics had been found and a sarcophagus of marble. Large violets stood in blossom. Through winding alleys the driver took us to a restaurant, which served the best kebab in the area. The apron of the host who, dressed in a fire-red jacket, worked at the spit looked like having been worn even in the days of the apostles; but the meal was delicious.

After yet another day in Iskenderun we fled from palms and beggars and shoe-shines and went via Tarsus to Mersin, were the descendents of the people’s apostle sat in the sun without desecrating God’s beautiful day by work. We felt comfortable in Mersin; from our balcony we could see the ocean and look out for our “Nejat”. There were orange-groves all around the town and longhaired goats grazed along the slopes like a living blanket of mohair.

The shipping agency knew nothing about the “Nejat”– Inshallah tomorrow. One of the young men realized our disappointment and promised to arrange an excursion for us. In the evening he and his friend put us in his Cadillac and took us to Viranshehir, where three tall columns were witness to the vanished glory of a temple of Jupiter. Next to them stood an old woman, toothless and in rags, who held two camels. She bent down to pick up a new-born, black little goat. “The goats are waiting,” she said and disappeared in the high grass.

Our host took us back. He was a tailor of shirts and had quickly borrowed the car of a customer for this excursion so as to please us. No, please, no thank you– but a cup of coffee for the road!

Next day, there was our ‘Nejat’. The black monster did not instill us with a lot of trust, and even less so when in the evening, we boarded it. The ship was built in 1892 and the second class passengers sat behind bars unless on beautiful days, they were lying on deck. The beds of the tiny cabins had the size and the comfort of a Greek sarcophagus. There were also four screeching cranes. I was reminded of Mehmet Akif’s poem of the unlucky boat which I had just translated

In the evening she took to the sea
The doomed mail, heading for Izmir
What would be our fate without charts and compass?

But the voyage turned out to be quite nice; we saw the Turkish coast with its historical sites and revised our history lessons. And we didn’t refuse when, in the evening, Mr. Solomon from Beirut asked us in fluent German: “ If I offer you a cognac, will you drink it”? And he filled our water glasses with vodka.

In the morning the mighty fort of Alanya appeared on a narrow spit of land**.** There in the early thirteenth century, the Seljuks had built a large five-tier wharf**.** We visited the

stalactite cave, in which people with asthma were inhaling and kept looking at the high breakers which were green like tourmaline. On this afternoon we took possession of our future family-seat on the first bridge. There were no chairs, but the first officer brought a high-legged stool for Mama; I sat uncomfortably but happy, on the railing. In this way we enjoyed the constantly changing view. We briefly stopped in Antalya and drifted to the Southern tip of Turkey, to Cape Kalydonis. Freight was loaded and unloaded in every small harbour and the lower deck gradually turned into an exhibition area of people, animals and goods.

Colourfully dressed or black-veiled women squatted on multi-coloured kelims. A man in the usual wide trousers, purple stockings, greenish jacket and an open umbrella in his hand slept there for hours. A few gentle sheep turned up and from some corner cocks crowed**;** amongst them the ship's nurse was sweeping the floor, dressed in more or less blossom-white outfit. She came from Marash and greeted us with the words "Sister Paula, Sister Anna, Sister Hedwig - how happy, how merry!" and did honour to the rumour that in Marash, the ideal woman has to be so fat that she can pass through a door only sideways.

Behind one cape which looked like a vicious crocodile, was Fethiye. We felt as if we were in a still lake with a pretty town at the foot of a rock cliff topped by the ruin of a fort. It seemed that at an unapproachable height caves with artistic gates of pillars were hewn into the rock. On the other side, light green hillocks rose up topped by a totally regular, pointed snow peak - it was a dream-like scene. A green boat, which was called Chrome after the main export article of the place, took us ashore. Together with the doctor of the ship and a student we struggled up to the lowest burial cave and strolled through the gardens where plum, cherry and almond trees stood in full bloom. Climbing down again or rather, slipping down, a little girl

with ivory skin and copper red plaits, thick like an arm, clutched my hand. Come tea-time, and the world seemed perfectly in order again.

Next morning there was Marmaris. The pine forests were steaming in the early morning mist. A motor boat took off for Rhodos. Through the telescope we could easily see the fort and the city of the island. An unbelievable sunset dipped the world in lilac and pink colours. When darkness fell, we could see distant lights of other islands. Some co-travellers told us a lot about the problems of catching fish.

When, in the morning, we woke up from the screeching of the cranes, I wanted to scream with joy: Directly in front of the “Nejat” was the mighty fort of the crusaders of Bodrum, the ancient Halicarnassos, where once, people admired one of the seven wonders of the world. The scenery became lively now. Many passengers like the gentle sheep, had gone ashore. We identified the island of Samos whose hills were hidden in mist as if they were intoxicated by sweet wine. We dimly could make out the contours of Patmos. The sky was suddenly covered by a huge cloud which had the shape of an angel - wasn’t it that the prophecies of John had been revealed here in Patnos?

The ship struggled through a narrow straits. When we turned North near Izmir, a tremendous storm erupted. It carried us to Izmir which was draped like a shining collar around the gulf. We also saw the half-drowned “Izmir” which originally was to have taken us on this trip. It was our last night on the ship - farewells were really hard - and in the morning we travelled to Karshiyaka where Samim Kocagoz and his family had been quite worried about us. We knew each other from Istanbul; I had translated some of his short stories, which mainly tell about the life of farmers in his home setting in Soke.

We went up to the old fort of Izmir which presented a magnificent view over the gulf which still was a lively area and not yet "civilized" by a chain of concrete buildings. In Ephesus we, for the first time, saw Diana of Ephesus, the sculpture of the eighteen breasted goddess, who wears a necklace of Zodiac signs and whose body is decorated with plant symbols. On her shoulders sit lions and at her feet are roses and falcons. The great mother goddess could hardly be presented better. Then the car wound its way to the shrine of Meryem Ana where according to legend, the virgin Mary had spent the last years of her life. A spring, a field and a fine view of the distant, silvery sea. The Turks like visiting the small shrine, as the virgin and the miraculous birth of Jesus are explicitly mentioned in Sura 19 of the Quran.

Next day we went - after an "obligatory" punctured tyre - to Buca, to visit Italian friends. We had a common interest in the Italian theologian Ernesto Buonaiuti. We were lovingly received in their idyllic house in a wilderness-garden.

Another day of farewell, from Izmir, after roaming through the town, which, in my memory, is one large bed of violets. There were discussions on literature and religion that filled the evening. The spirit of this Mediterranean harbour seemed much freer than, and very remote from, the orthodox Central Anatolia. Then we flew to Istanbul, to Jale and Mustafa. There, winter caught up with us again. We waded through ankle deep snow till we could find a taxi to the bus terminal; and the bus did intend to go to Ankara**.** It was not really serious when the bus, while boarding the ferry boat, hit something, which left a hole in the petrol tank so that snow entered; there were other, smaller defects, too. Considering the many accidented busses and trucks lying along the steep rise to the Bolu-Pass it seemed like a miracle that we reached Ankara alive.

There, the faithful Fatma has had another miscarriage. Lot of work was waiting for us, as well as another shifting of lodgings. And sometimes, we craved for our old, squeaking 'Nejat'.

Travels in Anatolia

Travels in Anatolia were, at our time, not quite easy, but full of adventure. We often took the bus, but at times we would avail a car, an ancient, weak Hillmann. I named it Duldul, because Duldul was the mule of the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet. Punctures were a daily feature and I became expert in mending tyres. But what to do when there was no file for roughening the spot on which to stick the rubber-patch? I learnt it when from nowhere, a few men appeared, had a look at the situation and in no time one of them had roughened the rubber-pad on his three-day beard. We continued our journey. In those days traffic was thin, and one could be sure of mutual help on the lonely roads. With horror I remember the drive from Erzincan to Sivas. There was no filling station anywhere and the driver had brought along two cans of petrol whose lids opened up, so that on the steep, tightly curving road I had to hold them straight so that the petrol may not spill. The driver, nonchalantly, lit one or two cigarettes and I thought my last hour had come. Only few hotels in those days were prepared for foreign guests and even less for women. Some distinguished themselves by large numbers of leeches. I never achieved that level of patience which made a pious friend call out ; "God is great! He created leeches in such a way that even in darkness, they fall straight on my face!". Yet, I would not like to have missed these journeys.

At one time Duldul was to take Mama and me to Kilis at the Syrian border in order to witness sacrificial festivities there. It would be a comfortable journey, we were promised. We had to kidnap the school headmaster of Kilis from the hospital because he wanted to go home. The

nearer we got to our destination the louder became his voice. The journey took us past the eastern shore of the Salt Lake. There was still one Armenian settlement where, at another time, I participated in an engagement party in which the whole village took part. The young Armenian girls wore dazzling golden crosses on the chest.

In another village on the way South, Tartars from Crimea had settled after the first world war. There too, I witnessed the wedding of a pretty girl, just fifteen years old. The bridal house was decorated with dozens of colouful sheets, and the gifts were hanging form the ceiling in star shapes, like the roof of a tent. In the glaring summer heat on the sparsely used highways I always remembered the verses of Younus Emre who combined so aptly the landscape with the images of the soul:

> At times, like the wind I blow:
> At times, dust I spray like the burning road
> At times, wild like the torrent I flow…
> See, what love has made of me.

On reaching Bor a tyre burst at exactly the time of midday prayer. Our headmaster was most happy about it. Sometime during the evening we rested on the heights of the Kilikian Gate in the Taurus, from where the road opened up to the Mediterranean. One night we spent in the suffocating Adana and then continued. When we reached the planes we made a break in Dortyol, the place where Alexander won his battle at Issus. We refreshed ourselves with the fresh orange juice which the model farm there produced.

Past Iskenderun Duldul with heavy sighs, took the numerous curves up the Belen-Pass. There the road forked, on the right to Antakya, on the left to Gaziantep. In a scorching midday wind we drove along the Syrian border; some steppe was on fire. Duldul didn’t like it, another tire burst. The call to the midday prayer sounded and the

schoolmaster called out happily: “What a blessed car! It always allows me to offer my prayer!”

The afternoon was even hotter when finally we reached Marash, a strange, ancient fort and for centuries, the border between Arabic tribes and between multiple ethnic groups, finally between Turks and French. The curves never seemed to end. The sun went down behind fantastically shaped and coloured clouds. “The sun finds it difficult to part from Anatolia,” crowed the schoolmaster full of enthusiasm. The plains were submerged in a strange mix of grey, pink and purple. Exotic birds fluttered through the dusk. It was dark by the time we reached Gaziantep. I would have loved to stay there for the night, because we knew several friendly women there who, off and on, came to Ankara to sell fine embroidery on silk - small pieces of art, which young girls produced under their guidance; while they worked with the needles they learned prayers and mystical songs. I had bought lots of embroidered pieces from them and enjoyed their company even when they knocked at my door at six thirty in the morning.

No, not to Gaziantep. Kilis was only fifty-six kilometers away. The road was smooth and even: All seemed well till the battery gave up and we, in complete darkness, landed in a ditch. A gentle, warm breeze blew, yet it seemed to take ages till one of the passing trucks stopped and the driver repaired the battery. The silver-paper of our one and only precious bar of chocolate played a decisive role in it.

Kilis- what a place! Passages, arcades, corners here and everywhere between the buildings made of stone: we were surprised at the small, clean rest house: two ancient men (perhaps they were not all that ancient?) in long robes laboriously prepared the long awaited tea while telling us all about their pilgrimage to Mecca. There were certain disadvantages attached to the fact that the hotel bordered the mosque compound, because there, goats and sheep were

kept to be sacrificed. In rhythmic pattern they bleated, and right after the morning prayer the screeching of metal was heard from the near by bazaar of the copper smiths.

But we were destined not to stay long in this lovable hotel. At nine in the morning the young town mayor stood in our door and explained to us, that such honorable guests are not to stay in a hotel. Although we resisted his invitation with all our might, one policeman picked up our luggage and we had to follow him through winding alleys and tunnel-like passages till he put us down in the house of the mayor. The house was beautiful: but our bedroom had one disadvantage: it was situated on the ground floor with windows that had no curtains but reached to the floor. We would gladly have accepted the fact that next morning at five, among a jubilant crowd of children, the animals were slaughtered right under our room, but getting up under the eyes of a lot of visitors who came to offer congratulations on the festival was rather complicated.

In the bazaar we mostly saw carpets smuggled from Syria, with five or seven belling stags on a blue or red background. We succeeded in getting Mamas shoe repaired whose heel had come off. For this purpose, the cobbler, whom we had disturbed in his study of the Quran, simply pulled some nails out of the wall. From atop a house we saw, at the other side of the border, the plain of Mardj Dabiq where in 1516, the decisive battle between Mamluks and Ottomans had been fought and ended with the victory of the Ottoman army. For a moment I remembered the days when I had written my dissertation on that time.

Now, the plain stretched peacefully before us. The colourful satin dresses of the girls and the glaring coloured shirts of the men were witness to intensive smuggling.

"You have to visit Sheikh so and so. He is a great scholar and owns Persian manuscripts!" So we went to his beautiful house and while sitting in the veranadah, women

and children stared at us. Then the scholar entered. He greeted us beamingly while we looked up at him admiringly: he wore a long silken gown of blue stripes, red, pointed leather shoes and a multi-coloured belt. He had tied a shawl around his bearded face and to crown it all, he wore a brown hat on top of it. He smiled at us with a toothless mouth and pointed at Mama: “My bride!” He then added that she would be his bride in paradise. We gave him a flattered smile. But this remark I translated only later, because Mama had a different vision of paradise. Then I was permitted to see some manuscripts and after having identified, to his satisfaction, a Hafiz-Diwan we were gracefully dismissed. Decades later I heard that in all Kilis, this visit had made legendary figures of us.

The old houses were very beautiful, bright from inside but forbidding from outside. This was the realm of the women, the mothers. The mother of the mayor told us with a roguish smile that at her time, girls did learn to read, but not how to write - or else, they might have written some love letters!

Formerly, Kilis had been a centre of education. Nowadays it was known for its wonderful fruit: I have never seen more beautifully arranged bowls of fruit, but also of good meat dishes - almost too artistically done to be eaten with a clear conscience. From the grapes not only wine was made, but also Pekmez. This is the juice of grapes thickened to the consistency of honey. Formerly, during the icy Anatolian winters, it was given to children in the morning. Mixed with some egg-white, it made a substantial breakfast.

Only on the next day of Bayram when we visited the gardens of our talkative schoolmaster could we appreciate the masses of grapes. Together with some gentlemen I was allowed to ride there, passing fertile land, olive and vinyards. Mama and I walked through the grape

plantations, tried the sweetness of the fruit and played with the white mule, which screamed after us miserably. According to custom, we then had to sit with the women. After one and a half hours, when they were still talking whether one should stop breast-feeding babies either after one and a half years, or after two years as prescribed by the Quran, we silently slipped away and sat with the men. We had our meal in the light of flickering kerosene lamps. We felt transported into the middle ages, listened to the conversations which were getting louder over issues like the old border fights. All the while new dishes arrived with kofta, salads and grapes - as we knew it from travel accounts of old.

Duldul, now well provided, took us North. In Gaziantep, lines of camels were resting in the early morning light. In Malates our Duldul again needed looking after, and much against her and our will, she was sent to Elazig. It was a strange feeling to drive along the young Euphrates which wound itself through bizarre, multi - coloured rocks. Nowadays, all that has disappeared in the huge, dammed lake which is visible from the aircraft.

People say that Elazig, the old Harput**,** is very interesting. This might be true; but the house in which we spent two nights, distinguished itself mainly by inexhaustible quantities of flies, which led a happy life between kitchen, toilet and chicken-run. I am still angry with the great sufi-master who begged me endlessly to become his disciple; he would grant me the gift of foresight. I would be able to see the future and so on and so on. But he remained adamant, because a man with such powers should have known that my mother, left alone in the house and plagued by swarms of flies needed me urgently at her side. No, my faith is certain sufi-saints began to wear thin.

We enjoyed the morning, and Duldul started via Malaya towards North-West to Sivas. It swayed along ravines, jumped frightened over suddenly appearing ditches, gave heavy sighs while noisily climbing up the slopes and then raced down the steep inclines. It allowed us to have tea in an Alevite village where the men in their wide trousers and enormous moustaches played nonstop trick track, while the women swiftly ran up and down the steep stairs of the houses. Just as on our way to Kilin, when we were well looked after on the model farm of Dortyol, now the model farm Ulash, some forty kilometers before Sivas, granted us hospitality. Two hundred thousand poplars had been planted in a campaign for aforestation. There were thousands of chickens, and on the hills, sheep with fat tails and black noses were grazing. Their fatty, ring-shaped tails from which a final tuft hung down, weighed about ten pounds. The sight was unbelievably funny, when they all had a galloping race and the one thousand fat-rings wobbled behind them. Some five hundred lambs grazed elsewhere. There is a common riddle about sheep:

From your surface I made myself stockings
From your interior I made myself a roast
One day I slaughtered you
And done a meritorious job.
(At the sacrificial festival).

One sheep remained behind, it was limping. Behind the mountains the setting sun threw a golden veil over the cloud which hung above the steep rock wall opposite us. It also gave a golden sheen to the wool of the sheep which contrasted brightly with the thyme covered meadows. I recalled the verses of Sir Sultan Abdal:

I resembled one who has worn
A borrowed dress since I was born.
Now its master came and took it from my hands
Like sheep in a dry place I stood forlorn

Sir Sultan had lived here more than four centuries ago. His poetry is strangely sparse in character, like the landscape. He was an ardent Shi'ite and belonged to the party of the Persian Safavids. Their arch-enemies were the Sunni Ottomans who hanged him in Sivas. People say that they saw him afterwards, when he walked through one of the city gates and into the setting sun. Perhaps it was his breath that we felt in the cool evening breeze which started just then.

In the morning we left for Ankara. Duldul squeezed herself past squeaking ox-carts. She got its petrol-drink while we only had an old melon. We were much tempted when we saw the signboard to Bogazkoy, the centre of Hittite culture**.** (I saw it many years later). However, since we did not take that route, the Hittite thunder-god sent three heavy thunder storms after us. The landscape looked like an ancient world, and the Kizil Irmak really did honour to its name " Red River". In Ankara**,** our corridor was under water. And we needed days to remove Anatolia's dust from hair and clothes. We thanked God that we got back from this truly uncomfortable journey.

Once I travelled with Mama on a bus to Kastamonu, the ancient seat of the Komnens. It was a wonderful trip full of curves through huge pine forests. At the most splendid view point sat an old man whom we grudged his unique view. "Gozleri gormuyor!" (he is blind) said the driver. My student Shukru had trouble finding us because the bus had reached one hour early. Next day, it left a half hour too early. We saw a beautiful Ottoman mosque, ruins of castles, a museum and a girl's high school. This first high school of the Black Sea area had been founded as early as 1885. It had turned Kastamonu into an educational center, which has produced scholars and statesmen. In Shukru's home, which was almost empty, his pretty mother had prepared on the open fire a delicious meal of meat and flat

breads, which she served us on newspapers. To go with it there were melons, which she retrieved from the icy water of a deep well. Only years later we heard that in Kastamonu, people had one hundred and sixty-five recipes for soups.

At another time we went by bus on endless routes to Bursa, to participate in Sheker Bayram, the end of the fasting month. Bursa was the first of the Ottoman capitals. We found a small hotel which I knew from an earlier visit, whose only luxury was a large peacock on the verandah of the garden. After dinner we hurriedly went to see the Ulu Cami with its twenty domes, whose interior is decorated with huge religious inscriptions in all possible styles. There was a three tiered fountain, and the splashing sound of the water filled the large hall.

In Bursa one can see most charming architecture. The Green Mosque with its turquoise coloured tiles is visible from far. We sat on a colourful horse cart whose docile horse, to celebrate Bayram, was decorated with two pink ribbons in its tail. It took us up the hill, which holds the mausoleums of the former members of the house of the Ottoman Sultans. Rightly so, this place has been called the most cheerful graveyard of the world. The mausoleums make a friendly impression. Their material of alternating bright limestone and red tiles made them seem to smile between the many rose beds and planetrees. Ahmed Hamdi Tanpanar in a poem which I had just then translated, has caught the mood of the place very well:

In Bursa is a mosque, ancient, small
From its fountain plunging comes a waterfall
And a wall from Orhan’s time
And in age the same a planetree tall
Through which the happy day does shine.
The mourning, a residue of dreams;
And inside is a smile, from within deep

As if from cooling memories leap
The azure sky, the fields' green texture
And God - like architecture

An ancient bus took us to Uludag, the Bithynic Olympos. At about 1800 meter height near Kirazli Yayla, crocuses stood in bloom and the bus took us right up to the skiing hotel where snow lay in great heaps. We didn't like that and decided to go back to the Yayla and wait for the bus. However, a large car from Izmir stopped and we were urged to get in. We agreed, although the fresh mountain air was very wholesome. But the huge dogs which came running out from the forest would probably not have left us alone. After having tea with our kind hosts we admired the town which was not only illuminated because of Bayram but also, because the Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, was expected the next day. We enjoyed the fanciful picture of decorated cars, flag-fluttering taxis, girl guides and school children, and sat down in a small park from where we could overlook the whole plain up to the mountain range which separated Bursa from the Marmara Sea. Although the town has a famous bazaar, the wonderful silks which were being produced here earlier, have vanished into the land of dreams.

At night military music called us to the town hall. It tried to attract Menderes with its Turkish and German marches. He didn't come, instead some strange figures appeared with drums and shawm. The men made place for us at once. A teenage boy presented Turkish folk dances with tremendous gusto. The men were as happy about their skill as they were about our pleasure that we took in it. When the music stopped because of the call to the night prayer they all came to us to assure us that Germans were their best friends. Then, suddenly, the fearsome looking creatures held burning torches in their hand and, drumming

and whistling, they marched to the hotel where they expected to find the honorable guest.

Next morning at six while boarding the bus to Ankara**,** I suddenly recalled that right there, some years earlier, a middle aged man had started a conversation with me. He asked me about my comings and goings. When he heard that I was teaching at the Ilahiyat Facultesi, he had a question for me: “You know, people say that Islam rests on five pillars; the declaration of faith, prayer, alms, fasting and pilgrimage. But the declaration of faith- how can it be a pillar? It is the basis, it supports everything”. Actually he was right. I had no conclusive answer ready for him.

For me, Bursa was a city of spring (I repeatedly heard that now, it has changed a lot, too). But the next capital of the Ottomans, Edirne, seemed to belong to autumn. The long road from Istanbul past faded sunflower-field made me feel melancholic. The closeness to the border of Bulgaria made it seem deserted. Yet, it has some of the most beautiful mosques of Turkey: The miracle-work of Sinan, the Selimiye with its four needle-point minarets which surround a clear cube, is unforgettable. The Uch Sherefeli and the heavy Eski Cami are from an earlier time. Inside, the visitor feels like a dwarf before the huge word Allah. There is Muradiye with its tile-décor and the hospital, where the patients are treated with music. This is done in other Turkish places as well.

The finest example of such a mosque- healing centre is in East Anatolia, three hours by car after Sivas. I had earlier visited Sivas briefly, too briefly as to admire the excellent stone-masonry at the gates of the Chifte-Minareli-Mosque, the mosque with “the two minarets”, which count among the greatest works of the thirteenth century. Here too, a hospital is attached to it which has at its windows, kufi-inscriptions in turquoise coloured tiles with Quranic verses, like a light in the semi darkness. In former times the city

was known for its fine filigran work and for its brightly coloured woolen socks. It was also very cold and windy, as Cahit Kulebi tells us in his poem *On the Way to Sivas*.

One day in the eighties, I continued from there together with friends, a journey toward North-East to Divrigi. Here one can see one of the miracles of Anatolian architecture: a mosque with a hospital made of heavy, yellow boulders: the inside resembles an early Gothic cathedral. Its walls and gate are decorated with strange, huge flowers of stone, with eagles and exotic plants. One is inclined to believe the legend that the princess of the area, when searching for a cure for her apparently incurable illness, found a dervesh who, after a long wait taught her, which herbs she should boil and drink. She recovered. In gratitude she had the images of the herbs carved into stone inside the hospital which she now donated. In the interior there is a fountain from which a water- jet falls in a spiral into another basin. This sweet, soothing melody of the water calmed the mentally sick, who were, during the middle ages, brought here at certain hours of the day.

For me, Divrigi is the place in Anatolia which has moved me most- a world, which touches very deep layers of consciousness, like a dream which stays and becomes part of the soul.

Other areas however, were more spectacular. Every traveller to Turkey tries to visit the old valley of Goreme in the ancient Kappadokia and see the bizarre landscape with its rock churches. Some of them hold interesting wall paintings - it is a world which, according to Juan Goytisolo's fine description, continues to be built by the hands of the Katalanian architect Gaudi. It is a replica of the cathedral in Barcelona. Who knows, perhaps the poet is right. They were most friendly people who gave us from their delicious grapes. We were full of admiration for the women knotting carpets. They live in caves, which they

inhabit since thousands of years. Some of the men wore pointed hats, which looked exactly like the peaks of the limestone-hills.

At times there was a surprise trip - though never as dramatic as the one to Kilis. And when my assistant Hikmet came up with an idea we could be sure that it would work. On a beautiful day in May he may ask conspiratorially “Hocam, will you come along to Gudul on Sunday?” and we knew that there must be a reason for it. The place is about ninety kilometers to the south-west of Ankara. Our bus rolled along peacefully and I enjoyed the writings on the trucks that we overtook; - on the right *Seni Seviyorum*, “I love you”, and on the left, *Seni unutmam*, “ I wont forget you”. Yet, these were nothing as compared to the Afghan and Pakistani trucks which I saw in subsequent decades. A few kilometers short of our destination the bus stopped - for what? On the road we saw, neatly lined up in rows of three, some eighty to hundred school kids! The girls wore wide dresses in pink or white made of crepe-paper, their hair was tightly combed and plated. In their hands they held wild flower bunches. Two boys carried a huge banner of welcome. Others draped garlands around the bonnet of the bus. In the small garden of the school they offered us ayran while the proud mothers squatted behind the fence in order to witness how the professors and students of the university of Ankara smiled at their children. The dignitaries asked about the situation in the capital; the poets whom we had brought along on the bus recited fiery verses about their homeland, about Ataturk, about the ideals of the Turkish youth. We couldn’t help but appreciate the efforts of the young teacher and the reforms of Ataturk for the development of rural educational facilities.

Soon after we saw the houses of Gudul. In a sort of triumphant march we were taken to the verandah of the

future library and refreshed with tea. The town elders spoke about the significance of this day, which signaled the early functioning of the library: again the poets recited inflamed verses on motherland and Ataturk, and the ideal of the Turkish youth. Four little boys entertained us to folk dances in front of the verandah while the women sat all over the roofs; but none of them came down to mix with the people on the crowded streets. Finally, on a glass plate, they gave me a huge pair of scissors. I improvised a speech and cut the ribbon. Each one of us had brought along books so that the dark rooms soon looked like the beginning of a library.

After a delicious meal we decided to investigate the caves along the river Kirmir which squeezed itself through a narrow bed between the rocks. Mama rather wanted to remain up there and enjoy the vast landscape, but nobody would leave a guest, on top of it, a lady, alone. So they arranged a guard of honour for her in form of the middle school teacher, whose knowledge of German was limited to “Lili Marlene”. He sang it for her all the way.

Years later I told this experience to the gifted novelist Orhan Pamuk who describes the mysterious Gudul in his novel *The black Book,* because he thought nobody had ever set foot in this place!

Among our friends in Ankara special mention is due to Turgut Bey, the director of the Public Bank. He was also a mystic and at night, experienced inspirations, wrote small poems, which he published in his magazine *Ich Verlik*. On account of his job in the bank he knew lots of people and came up with ever new surprises for us. One day he took us to Eregli, south of Konya, where we inspected the spinning and weaving institutions which were run by the Sumer Bank. A power station was under construction in Izmir at the slopes of the Taurus. In a basin trout swished through the bubbling water surrounded by a Hittite relief of two gods who held a huge grape. On our way back the men

talked about money, money and nothing but money. I got a bit impatient and said for fun: “If I had all that money I would afford myself a horse!” “No problem! You’ll get it today! Which one do you want? The young stud? Or the pregnant mare? Or the two year old brown one?” I opted for the two year Incigul “Pearl Rose”. But, when back in Ankara and equipped with the genealogical tree of the noble horse, I made inquiries about the accommodation and other necessary items for a horse, it became clear that board and lodging far exceeded the modest salary of a professor. Thus, Pearl Rose remained in the fields of Eregli.

At another time our charm-wielding bank director took us to Haymana, just over 70 kilometers away from Ankara and famous for its sulfurous springs. Our friend Sureya Pasha, a Microbiologist at the university of Ankara, explained to us the medicinal value of the abundantly growing flowers - it was like an immense, colourful giant drug store. In the evening when the town at its height of 1200 meters turned cool, the banquet of the directors of the craftsmen union took place. They warmed up with the help of beer and raki. Colourful salads, kofta and kebab, “lovely to look at and enjoyable to eat” were brought in and everybody talked. The eloquence of the men surprised me. They competently and with factual knowledge, presented the problems of their unions. They didn’t spare me to more or less enlighten them. Iqbal’s dynamic philosophy and poetry was always liked, and it was always appropriate on such occasions to emphasize his untiring striving, which is central to his work. At the end the enthusiastic men made me an honorary member of the scientific advisory body of the unions.

Although I could not visit the Hittite sanctuary of Bogazkoy during my earlier years in Anatolia, yet we knew and loved it. We were in Konya at the Maulana celebration and had visited the famous wooden-pillars-mosque of

Beyshehir when a young teacher told us about an interesting place, Erflatun Pinari, 'Platos Spring' nearby. In spite of sleet and slippery roads brother Ismail insisted to go there. After about twenty kilometers we left the road and turned into a field path where we found the place. Rocks stood between the sprightly springs which formed a small pond. On the rocks we could dimly make out some winged figures. The last rays of the red winter sun lit the winged sun of the monument, before everything vanished in violet darkness. But when we turned to go we looked back once more: the full moon of winter-solstice rose exactly behind the sanctuary and gradually lit the water, the shepherds squatting by the fire, the blocks of stone, with silvery light. Even the builders of the sanctuary could not have turned to it more piously than we, the chance –visitors, did now.

We saw Eflatun Pinari once more. On an Easter Sunday, when the first green covered the slopes and shepherd boys took us there, Ismail spread his prayer rug and the bells of the goats sounded cheerfully.

At one time we visited Gordion. I am not very enthusiastic about walls: even the royal burial site, just excavated by the Americans, did not impress me much, although it might have been the grave of Midas in whose hands everything turned to gold. The landscape might not have been so desultory at the time of Alexander the Great as it was now: but I thought that he did the right thing when he cut the Knot of Gordon as quickly as possible and moved on.

The Gordon Knot? Was it of a kind which women pleat so expertly and into which they blew evil wishes? Were they the same blowers of knots of which the Quran speaks in Sura 113 " I take refuge with the Lord of Dawn….from the blowers of knots, when they start blowing?" There are still such women with such powers in the Orient, their feelings of love and hate are stronger. In Gordion I began to

understand that the art of working destructive knots could not be taken out of this world by one blow of the sword of Alexander. I turned to the car and saw some eyes look at me, full of hatred.

Next morning I stayed in bed, made immobile by a mysterious illness. At the same time we received the news of Ismail's death. It was to be my last semester in Ankara.

PART IV

EUROPEAN INTERLUDE
(1959-1967)

But God-sent winds of change
Drive him away from the desired goal
And he seems to follow their drift.
But silently he works against them
Truthful to the purpose, even on the sloping path
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

From Marburg to Bonn

Luise Berthold had been quite right with her warning: “Child, listen, men are our enemies!”

At least, so it seemed to me on my return from Ankara to Marburg in autumn, 1959. I had taken regular leave and should have been re-appointed immediately, but I had to wait for a whole year; as usual, some colleagues had spread several rumours about me– perhaps it had been just one colleague, known for his intrigues (later in the USA, I met not less than six colleagues who had to leave Germany because of him). Whatever it was, Mama had to support me financially and spiritually.

But one solution seemed to crystallize which later, was to show unexpected results. Marburg in 1960, was to be the venue of the congress of the International Association for the History of Religions.

Ceterum censeo, they said in Rome,
Not far from famous Peters dome;
Marburg, non esse delendam, yet
As venue it was set,
As long as in the university
Friedrich Heiler taught them Christianity.

It also is a sign so pretty
Saint Rudolf Otto's spirit should be happy

Friedrich Heiler needed helpers urgently. So I was right on time. The first half of 1960 was spent with nothing but organization. Whoever has, with very little money and hardly any helpers, prepared a congress for some five-hundred delegates and to top it all, in a charming town that had hardly any hotels, will understand what we were up against. We– that included the chief (Heiler), my small self, Mrs. Boymann (Heiler's secretary, a wonderful woman; our friendship lasted up to the last day of her long life), and Martin Kraatz, who till recently looked after the collections of Religious Studies. Photocopiers had not yet started their triumphant victory march. There were no personal computers. So? I sat day by day, typing lectures that came in on stencils and in between, handled the correspondence which showed our colleagues with all their human frailties. Thus I wrote my ballad *Prehistoric Time and End-Time* (this was the theme of the congress):

Who knows the names, who knows the need
Which in my office we must read?
One wanted special plumy bedding
The other asked about the napkins' setting
One professor wrote: I need
My room to be quite far from that of my colleague.
"Un chambre a un lit"– in a rude tone,
"C'est la con-di-ti-o-si-ne qua –non!"
A real prince from Japan is our special guest,
And all are to behave at their best.
The gentlemen from protocol thus came from Bonn
To explain to us what should, and what should not be done
May a driver, along with the police escort
Be accommodated in a double room of simpler sort?
Must every chamberlain his own bath have? Oh tell,

Amaterasu, we need your help, to do things well!
"I need a comfy bed, quite far away
Because", said Mrs. X, "I snore, and things do sway"
"I am a simple mystic –neither meat,
Nor onion, garlic, cheese and egg I eat;
My vegetables be in butter cooked,
A first-class single room for me be booked!"
Why does a Swami need a bed at all,
A board with nails please, should have been the call!
We received such registrations every day, and I wrote thus:
One said yes, the other no,
Prehistoric chaos approached us so,
Even wardrobe-women, so we found,
On "Be or not to be" they stood their ground.

But we managed, and the congress was successful; in spite of the tightness many remembered the happy mood of those days. Prince Mikasa was the honorary president and I enjoyed helping to prepare his gala dinner.

At home– we had just shifted house for the fourth time in Marburg– we celebrated the birthday of C.J. Bleeker, and my guest-book thus carried the names of the entire board of the *International Association for the History of Religions.* But after lunch I dashed to the university to substitute for Mircea Eliade, who– repeatedly so– had cancelled his lecture in the last minute. Off and on there was tension, because not all were happy that Heiler at times, combined sciences of religion with religious brotherhood.

The year 1960 marched on. I felt tortured by the hopelessness of my situation. Should I migrate to Pakistan? But this too, was not really a solution.

Then one day in January 1961, an invitation landed on my table. The Pakistan president Ayub Khan, whom I had met in 1958 in Karachi just after he had assumed office,

came on a state-visit to Bonn. I went there with a pretty new gala-gown in my luggage. But, inspite of looking forward to it, I remained depressed. In the evening I walked from my small hotel to the Royal Gardens– wouldn't it be better to jump into the Rhine?

But in the distance there was a light– a light in the Oriental seminar. I went up the high steps. "Schimmelin", Otto von Spies called, who was just holding a private seminar on a judicial text, "Are you here because of Ayub Khan? We'll pick you up from your hotel!" And after a few conversational phrases he asked: "I have a post lying vacant– Professor and Scientific advisor, actually not good enough for you, but would you come to Bonn?"

Would I come? Suddenly life was worth living again– a sufi would say: the midnight sun is shining. I called up Mama, excited and happy, and enjoyed the evening, where I met many Pakistani friends, among them Quadratullah Shahab, one of the leading intellectuals and writers of his country.

Just then, in spring 1961, they gave me back my old position in Marburg. I also went to Pakistan for several weeks and came back without my jewelry, which had disappeared in the house of my host, but with a beautiful rillhi, a colourful, quilted cover with countless small mirrors. They told me that, a long time ago, it had cost "three good camels". It still decorates my living room.

On first May 1961, I started teaching in Bonn; good friends had offered me their flat for two months. On the second day, Mama picked up the newspapers, looked up the column of 'Accommodation,' and found something that seemed suitable to her. When I returned from college in the evening, she sat in the rocking-chair and said triumphantly: "I got it!" This way, Lennéstrasse 42 became our real home.

Right from the beginning we loved Bonn. We lived in a beautiful old house near the university, right downtown, near the station and the Foreign Office– it was ideal, not only for my work and the stream of visitors from all over the world; Mama enjoyed the closeness of the Rhine on the banks of which, on Sunday mornings, we strolled along just as we had done at Erfurt's Steiger in my childhood. Around twelve we would return for a glass of sherry.

I enjoyed teaching– as usual. But, it would hardly have happened in Turkey that a student refused to come to the Persian classes because "at that time I am playing tennis". But on the other hand, no student put his feet on the desk when he or she spoke to me, as I experienced later in Harvard. There were three very gifted students in the first batch of the Arabic course: Tilman Nagel, Gerd R. Puin and Gernot Rotter. I was particularly pained when thirty years later; the latter played a most unpleasant role– possibly not intended by him– in the discussion about the award of the Peace-Prize. It seems that there are certain mechanisms by which specially students (and generally people, too) which you appreciate more than others, turn against you or disappoint you as human beings. To me it happened a number of times. But then the Persian poet Saadi had said earlier:

No one has yet learnt from me the art of archery
Who later, didn't turn me into his target.

Apart from the normal courses I, together with our Palestinian lecturer Azar taught Arabic to young diplomats; quite a number of them I met again later in the Orient. The relationships to the Foreign Office and the embassies of Islamic countries were anyway, more interesting for me than plain teaching. I enjoyed the large receptions– whether in the Beethoven-Hall, on the Petersberg or in the palace of Brühl. I cannot forget the first reception (after that for Ayub Khan) for King Mohammad V of Morocco, where

the chief of protocol introduced me to him as “She speaks Arabic”. Upon that, our Federal President Lübke murmured under his breath: “Zounds! My wife can’t do that!” For the rest of the evening, one had to remain serious and well behaved.

There were many such receptions in the coming years, also hosted by different embassies, particularly from the Islamic world. The Pakistan ambassadors became friends quickly - their cultural programmes like fashion shows, were enjoyed by many people from Bonn. We kept good relations with the diplomatic staff from Turkey. In the years before 1979, the Iranian embassy in Cologne too, was a centre of socializing; it took quite some time after 1979, before a new, strictly regulated form of meetings took shape. The fairy-tale style residence of the Syrians, the jolly gatherings of the Kuwaitis and Egyptians and of many others, made my years in Bonn, as well as the time that I spent there between the semesters at Harvard, most enjoyable.

We made many friends in Bonn– too many to gratefully acknowledge them here. Numerous members of the Foreign Office and ladies from the Colloquium Humanum crossed our paths and some of them remained friends till now. About each of them I could write a novel, or at least, a story of suspense….. I cannot forget how Cecilia, a vivacious Italian, wife of the ambassador, specialist on Etruscans and initiator of many excursions to the gem-stone shops of Idar-Oberstein in 1982, kidnapped me from a hospital and engaged a young woman doctor, a friend of hers, to cure me at home. Every day in Bonn, starting in the morning, held something new. Friendships grew or gradually faded away, without pain or sometimes, painfully– in short, Bonn became a real home to us.

Fikrun-wa-Fann

It must have been a day in November1962, when Alberto Theile visited us for the first time. That evening a rather short, middle-aged gentleman with lively eyes stood in the door. We invited him to a glass of wine. Before that, he had sent me a copy of a Spanish cultural magazine, *Humboldt*, which he edited and in which my translation of Yahya Kemal's *Spanish Dance* along with a clever snapshot of a Flamenco dancer was published. Now, sitting with us, he told us about his life and work. He had been, for some time, in Chile, where he published, together with Udo Ruksar, the *Deutsche Blätter*, a politico-literary magazine; later he lived in Japan, now in Switzerland. "How did you actually get started?" Mama wanted to know. "Well", he said, "my first larger work was a magazine which you probably don't know– the *"Böttcherstrasse"*. What could he know! Aunt Mia had lived for years in Worpswede and since we had relatives in Bremen, the king of coffee and art-sponsor Ludwig Roselius was quite well-known to us. As a child, I had always marveled at the strange architecture of the Böttcherstreet and stared uncomprehending at the works of Bernhard Höttger, who was a friend of our guest. Mama now asked him several details from the Worpswede-circle, even about the eccentric dancer Sent Ma Hesa, and his answers fully satisfied her. Thereupon we decided to accept his other stories of Japan, Chile and other places as truthful– including his place of birth, Dortmund-Hörde.

Of course his visit had a practical purpose. The Foreign Office, parallel to the Spanish and Portuguese magazine *Humboldt,* also wanted to publish a cultural magazine in Arabic. Theile had pledged to do it and was now looking for a specialist in Oriental Studies. This project was exactly what I had always dreamed of: a forum, which emphasized the cultural relations between Occident and Orient,

beautifully arranged and of high artistic standard. In the course of time *Fikrun-wa-Fann* took shape, a wonderful magazine in Arabic language and with ninety-six pages, which appeared twice a year. Each publication had one decorative page done by a famous calligrapher (these large folding sheets later, decorated many houses and even mosques in the Islamic world) and was done from the viewpoint of a particular theme: The first, really well-done magazine was number 3, which was dedicated to calligraphy; it discussed the meaning of writing in the occidental middle-ages as well as the influences of Oriental calligraphy on modern, Western painting; there were poems on writing and many other items. The theme of issue number 5 was the unicorn, "the animal, which does not exist", but which keeps appearing in the Christian middle ages as well as in Islamic art: in miniatures, in Seljuk stone friezes or on ceramics. From Western literature we translated Ingrid Bacher's *Merry-go-Round of the Unicorn* into Arabic. From Arabic we translated the mysterious poem by Taufiq Saigh, *Questions to the Unicorn.* Issue number ten was dedicated to women; it was also made exclusively by women. Each issue also contained at least one philosophical and one scientific article as well as the biography of a German orientalist. We liked to publish translations from Oriental languages. In this way I learnt a lot about new Arabic poetics, about Badr Shakir as-Sayyab, the Iranian woman author Nazik alMalaika, the Palestinian Mahmood Dervesh and the powerful Sudanese-Egyptian poet Fayturi. I am particularly fond of the lyrics of Abdulwahab al Bayatis which I first read in Czech translation by Karel Petracheck, before I realized that they are a bit easier to understand in Arabic. I maneuvered some samples of the non-Arabic, Islamic-world literature into every issue, may be an essay on Arabic influences in India, a translation from Urdu poetry, an introduction to the work

of Jelaluddin Rumi or of Mohammad Iqbal. It was through the expression of surprise of our translators– here I want to mention in particular Magdi Youssef– that I learnt, how few Arabs, even the educated ones, know about the eastern Islamic peoples. In this way, I tried to present to them some of the immense riches of Persian, Turkish, Central-Asian and Indo-Indonesien Islam. After all, Samarkand and Bukhara in the early middle-ages, had been centres of Islamic scholarship. And doesn't everybody– Muslim or non-Muslim –enjoy the beauty of the Taj Mahal?

But it was not only the scholarly work of *Fikrun wa-Fann* that fascinated me; it was equally enjoyable to give shape to the magazine with the help of a first-rate specialist.

He taught me how to produce a classical revolution with the help of scissors and glue, to give aesthetic appeal to a page, to add a vignette at some place or a poem for fillings. Above all, it was a huge pleasure, when we worked together with the old, famous printer Augustin from Glückstadt, before everything was computerized.

The work brought other pleasures too. We travelled to museums and exhibitions, and Alberto tried to instill me with some understanding of modern art. This way I learnt a lot, although I may not have liked everything (my love for Margritte developed only later.)

Off and on we went to the theatre– from *My Fair Lady* to a fascinating production of Béfart's *La Damnation de Faust* in the Paris Opera. This much for my education. Whenever I went to Switzerland to work on the magazine in Unterägeri, we started with a ritual. We had our lunch in Zurich in the 'Walliser Kanne' and strolled through the Bahnhofstrasse– our walk invariably ended at Sprüngli's on the Paradeplatz, the paradise for gourmets. And then there was the small oister snack bar in the Bahnhofstrasse. Thus,

apart from my work I also learnt about some worldly matters.

But when I left for Harvard, the work in our particular style could not be continued. Critics found that our magazine was too elitist. But we didn't want to change the style. There were a number of complications which led to my taking leave of the job in 1974, after ten years of enjoyable work. Later, Alberto also resigned. Inter Nationes asked me to publish it all by myself. This I could not do and also, didn't feel competent to do. Others took over, I left it altogether. But off and on I recall the rich and enjoyable work

What has passed does not come back.
But if it set like a shining star
It will shine for long, and far.

Visits to Prague

During my first years in Bonn, contacts were established to colleagues in Prague. On my first trip to Iran in 1963, I had met the senior master of Iran Studies, Jan Rypka and his wife Maria. They invited me to visit them in Prague. Alberto knew Prague very well and he accompanied me there. I enjoyed the wonderful city as well as the surrealist theatre, the Laterna Magica, and met many colleagues who later became good friends. Rypka, who followed the old Austrian tradition of Oriental Studies, became something like a qutb, as the Sufis call it, the 'axis,' the 'Polar star' of Czech Oriental Studies. The scholar of Arabic, Felix Tauer, worked with him. He had distinguished himself by his excellent translation of the tales from *One Thousand and One Nights*. There was also a group of younger ones like Jan Marek who were important for my work He was one of the few Europeans who knew perfect Urdu and Hindi. He translated the poetic works of Ghalib and Iqbal as well as the revolutionary verses of the Pakistani poet Faiz. His travelogues (like *Dva kvat Pakistan)* on the political and

cultural situation of the two parts of Pakistan as well as his impressions of India were full of interesting details and excellent photographs. Jan and his wife Cyrila became like siblings to me. Several times I succeeded in getting him invited to lectures in Germany. He also attended all the congresses in connection with Urdu literature, even if it meant to go by bus from Prague to Brussels or Cordoba. At a congress in Cordoba in 1991 for the international Iqbal celebrations I was, in front of the hotel, thrown to the grown and somebody snatched my handbag. One of the favourite colleagues of Rypka was the Iran scholar Jiri Beckka, who specialized in Tajik literature. With extraordinary diligence he worked on the history of Oriental Studies in Czech literature. We too, became friends very soon and his residence below the fort, a house from the fifteenth century, was, off and on, the venue of happy gatherings. Quite often I was overcome by fear when the guests openly criticized the conditions in the country while the police were patrolling just outside the open windows– like in early August 1968, two weeks before the invasion by the Russians. Jiri also participated in the grand festivities of the two hundred fiftieth jubilee of Iran. On the long bus trips I requested him to teach me some Czech. He did it by starting with the words 'God' and 'angel' after insisting that he was an atheist. This pastime later became very useful for me. When J. Gonda published his voluminous work *History of Indian Literature* to which I contributed *Islamic Literatures in India* and *Sindhi Literature*, he asked Jan Marek to write the contribution on *Classical Urdu Literature*. But Jan declined, because he had no official clearance to publish in a capitalist country; why couldn't his sister Annemarie do the job? The other Urdu specialist, Alessandro Bausani, declined for health reasons and likewise, referred to his 'sister Annemarie'. I felt compelled to oblige. Luckily I was given Jan's Czech's

manuscript from which I took the courage to translate. But I took the liberty to transform the proletariat which spooked through the pages for ideological reasons, into derveshes, and all tyrannical rulers into normal kings. I knew that the poor scholar from the Eastern Block used such expressions out of necessity and not from his conviction.

Only once did I revisit Prague in the seventies, but the memories of the circle of Orientalists is very vivid in me. There was Ivan Hrbek, to whom the country owes a very good translation of the Quran. It appeared during the Russian occupation and was sold out in no time. There were the Vesely's who represented Arabic and Turkish, and above all, Karel Petrachek, the Arabic scholar with his unbelievably large hands, who was the first to draw my attention to the poems of Abdulwahab al-Bayati, which he had translated into his mother-tongue. I was fascinated and set about translating some of them. They were subsequently published in *Fikrun wa-Fann.* Some of the Orientalists I met only briefly, because in Prague too, there was friction among the colleagues which, for political reasons, were even more dangerous than elsewhere. It became obvious in the placement policy after the Soviet invasion.

PART V

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC (1967-1991)

With every call of life, the heart
Must be ready for departure and new start,
To find with strength and without strife,
New relationships in life.
There is a magic in all the new beginnings
Which protects and helps us in life's innings.

Hermann Hesse

A Congress with serious Consequences

The congress in Marburg was not without consequences. During summer 1964 Ken Morgan came to Bonn to ask me whether I would organize the next IAHR congress. For the first time it was to take place in the new world, in Claremont in California. We knew each other from Tokyo and from the Marburg congress. Ken was a person to whom the study of religion was a matter of the heart. He wanted to build bridges, and his books do not so much take the historical-philological viewpoint, but reveal the concerns of the believers. At the Colgate University in Upstate New York he had, in an idyllic setting, founded a religious center, "Chapel House", with a library, an art-collection and many records of religious music. An ideal forum.

It was my first trip to North America. In August 1965 I flew to Los Angeles. Two students received me. For three days I was the guest of Gustave E. Grunebaum, who had built up a large centre of Islamic Studies at the university. To many young, European colleagues it offered an

opportunity to work there temporarily. Later, under his guidance, the Levi-delle-Vida-Medal was created in memory of the great Italian Orientalist. It was awarded to an outstanding scholar and entailed a high-caliber congress. I enjoyed participating in these congresses, but never expected that in 1988, this honour would be bestowed on me. The theme of the congress was– what else could it be!– Maulana Rumi.

Colleagues showed me the strangely situated Los Angeles whose lay-out I never understood, even on later visits. From Los Angeles we went to nearby Claremont, the seat of the well-known Pomona College. I was put up with a friendly widow of a priest. The living room contained a harp, which added to my feeling of being among angels. My first impression was, when in the morning, I walked through the gardens to the future office of the congress, that I heard music from the bottom of a man who was mowing his lawn– at that time; transistor-radios had not yet reached Bonn or at least, me. I was surprised.

I shall not deny that on a free afternoon, we went to the nearby Disneyland where, for the first and only time in my life, I entered a MacDonald.

Organizing a congress for five-hundred participants was not easy even though some of the Marburg-problems did not exist here. However, there was one particular problem: Claremont was 'dry'. There was not alcohol within the limits of the town. How to keep the spirits of the delegates happy? Well, we put up an innocent mien and asked my dear landlady for her car– for some important jobs. We went to the neighbouring town, where we bought considerable quantities of spirit-raising spirits for the well-being of our guests. But inspite of these noble efforts the congress was not really successful. There was serious friction among the European and the American colleagues. The Europeans, under the leadership of the IAHR president

Geo Widengren, defended the traditional historical-philological line while the Americans wanted a human-related science (at that time, the sociological and theory-related Science of Religion was not yet so prominent as it is now). We parted not very happy. How should the work be continued?

One morning during the congress, Wilfred Cantwell Smith from Harvard asked me to see him. While sitting on the old-fashioned sofa in his anteroom he revealed to me his problem in his typical long and complicated sentences. There was a rich Indian Muslim, Mr. Ozai Durrani, a chemistry-man, who, by inventing the One-Minute-Rice, had acquired enormous wealth. He intended to give his money to a university, which would translate the poetry of the two leading Urdu poets, Ghalib (died1868) and Mir (died 1810). It had to be done in the style of Edward Fitzgerald who, one hundred years earlier, had introduced the Rubbaiyat (four-liners) of Omar Khayyam to the Western world. This job was about as difficult as translating the Duinese Elegies into modern Chinese intonation. According to him, Harvard was getting the money, but it was not possible to create a department for such a translation job. It had to be done within a wider framework. Who could possibly do such a job?

Without hesitation I said “Jan Marek in Prague. The Prague-school is first class!”

“For God’s sake! He is from an Eastern Block country!”

“Yes,” I said, “ but he is the right man for it!”.

“No, no, - who else could do it?”

“Well,” I said innocently, “there is Alessandro Bausani in Naples– a really great philologist with wide interests.”

“Oh no! He, in his youth, was in the communist party of Italy!”

"But he is a Bahani!"

"It's impossible! His past….."

I failed to understand him and continued: "The only other person in Europe who would be suitable is Ralph Russell in London."

"Oh God, he is still in the communist party!"

"I don't know about that," I said with slight irritation. "I don't know of any other person." I had failed to consider the reservations of the McCarthy era. Silence. "What to do?" More silence.

"Well," said Winfred, "we want you!"

"But I don't want it." I was confused. "I am not a specialist in Urdu. I don't feel fit to translate poetically this extremely difficult poetry into English."

I tried my best to refuse. But Harvard persisted. There were telegrammes, visits from colleagues– what to do? In May 1966 I travelled to Princeton for an inter-religious conference in the course of which I visited Harvard. I was repelled by the sight of the plain brick structures of Harvard Yard; there was hardly any green on the trees yet. How could one compare this to the beautiful Bonn University in the royal buildings? But I sat and negotiated with the dean. Later in Princeton, Wilfred, who, as an excellent scholar of Indian Islam pleaded for the Minute-Rice-money, introduced Jim Cherry to me, the lawyer from New York, who was the executor and we immediately, got along well with each other and his wife did not consider me "Teutonic", but explained: "You really look like a New York girl!" Could I hope for greater praise from her? Without Jim Cherry, my life in Harvard would have been much more difficult. He was a Harvard alumnus and knew every feature of life there, which was so strange to me. He advised me in judicial matters, tax-regulations and in things not related to Oriental poetry, but matters of practical life. It was he who convinced Harvard that the arrangements

desired by me were suitable for both sides, like, doing all lectures and seminars in one semester, and use the autumn-semester for my own study-tours and other plans. I remember Jim with gratitude. Without him, New York is now no more the same as it was in his days, with our long discussions– and how happily he shared my successes with me! And then we used to have dinner together, mostly Japanese. How much fun we had when the young waitress wanted to clarify my order for "Dry sherry": and asked innocently: "Dly serry - is dat without water?"

After the meetings with the dean and judicial advisers my fate was sealed. My immediate duty was to acquire Urdu books in India and Pakistan. The normally over-stacked Widener library had only three or four Urdu books which, by any stretch of imagination, was insufficient to start a new department with. Thus, I was compelled to start a new life.

Three Snowstorms

On my arrival in Boston on first March 1967, a few, hardly visible snowflakes drifted down from the sky. My old friend Dick Frye, who was an Aga Khan Professor for Iran Studies, received me and after a not really tasteful dinner in a "German" sausage-joint, took me to Harvard Square and into the Radcliff Graduate Centre. There I was given a practical, small flat for the duration of the first semester. "I'll pick you up in the morning," said Dick. Not anticipating anything I sank into my bed. At eight in the morning the telephone rang. "Sorry, I can't pick you up, we had a snow storm and I can't find my car under the snow!" What to do? Nobody had told me that for coming to Massachusetts in winter, the most important piece of apparel are boots. After some thinking, my Prussian sense of duty prevailed, and, overcoming my horror, I stomped through the snow, which covered my ankles. When I reached the department, which once in 1737 was housed in

Cambridge Street, I found just one person present, the secretary. No, in this weather nobody was expected to come. Even the excellent cook, Mrs. Black, had preferred to stay at home. I had to make do with some donated sandwiches– just like on the day of my inaugural dissertation in Marburg, where I could find nothing better than a thin soup from the People's Kitchen.

This was my start at Harvard. Soon, more surprises were waiting for me. They made me do a course in Islamic History for under-graduates, which was not what I had come here for. As it was, I was fully occupied with my own lectures and exercises in the field of Indo-Muslim culture. Moreover, what are undergraduates? This term exists neither in the German nor in the Turkish systems. And then: why should one tell the students every week from which book they should read which pages for the next lecture? Weren't they all intelligent creatures, who can find the material by themselves in the library? Apart from all the teaching jobs I used every free minute in the deepest basement of the library to peruse the books that had arrived from India and Pakistan, and to prepare a provisional catalogue. Winter didn't seem to end and my heart was in Germany, where Mama was by the side of her younger sister in Aurich as she was dying from cancer, and where my respected friend and teacher Heiler was also lying on his deathbed. No wonder, that toward the end of the semester I came down with phlebitis and was taken to the Harvard Health Centre. There, I tried to explain to the doctor the usefulness of leeches– creatures, about which he had never heard at all. When, one week later, he discharged me, my knee was swollen to the size of an orange. He said, unconcerned: "I am not interested in your knee, I am only interested in you phlebitis." The knee never returned to normal again. Oh, country of opportunities unlimited!

The second major snowstorm occurred when in February 1969 I returned from the Subcontinent to Boston. I had had only one day stop-over in Bonn. In Karachi and Delhi we had commemorated the one-hundredth death anniversary of Mirza Ghalib, and since his poetry was my field in Harvard, it had been my duty to participate in it. It had been wonderful to meet so many colleagues, particularly from the Eastern Block countries. I had to be back in Harvard on a Tuesday. On that day, the selection of the new graduate students to the department took place– a kind of Day of Judgement for them, which decided the academic future of the young people. The department had many sections, from Sumeric to Turkish, and for each not more than twelve or fifteen students were to be admitted. Most of them needed more or less large financial assistance, the decision for which differed according to the department. It was our job to examine the certificates of their various universities, the sincerity of the intention as well as their financial needs, and then place them into the sections of their choice. It was obvious that there were jealousies among colleagues; Hebrew and Assyrian Studies wanted to have three or four students for their subject, which conflicted with the always low enrolments in Turkish, Armenian or Persian Studies. We dreaded these meetings. But it was necessary for me to be present, to show them how seriously I was interested in my work even though for once, I had not read the files prior to it.

Short of Boston a voice came from the cockpit: "Snowstorm in New-England– Logan airport is closed! We are redirected to Philadelphia. In a day or two, passengers will be sent to their destinations." What to do? Could one proceed by rail? From New York, every morning at three a train left for Boston! A few courageous people went to the station and reached New York Penn station at twenty-two hours. The unbelievably uncomfortable room filled up,

because all Boston flights had been redirected. Centimeter by centimeter I pushed my incredibly heavy suitcase ahead, sat on it, and at two in the morning I was convinced that I would never reach Boston on time. At some time I again opened my eyes and was convinced that I was beginning to phantasize, because the person next to me just could not be real. Hesitantly I touched the phantom with my finger. "Annemarie, what are you doing here?" it asked me. I could just say: "Wilfred, what are you doing here?" It was my friend Wilfred Cantwell Smith who, coming from Toronto, wanted to reach the same meeting as I. When passengers were actually being admitted to the platform (in the USA this happens at the last minute!) he picked up my suitcase– and then we actually sat on the train. In Boston, through snow and slush Wilfred made it a point to find me the seemingly only existing taxi and deposit me safely in my home. Three hours later I appeared at the meeting, with a bit of a greenish-wan hue on my face. This, I felt, gained me the respect of some colleagues who so far, had been rather skeptical about their German colleague.

The third snowstorm happened in February 1978. On a Monday afternoon I had been working at home with one student of mine. When he left, again a few dainty snowflakes came down from the sky. Next morning I tried to open the door of my house– but I could not. About ninety centimeter of snow was piled outside it. State of emergency? The entire area around Boston, flights, trains, even Harvard, for the first time since the early nineteenth century, were closed. It took several days till I ventured outside, but for the time being, all communication remained suspended. On Friday Peter, one of my Jesuit students, rang up. "Are you coming for dinner tonight?" I confirmed and in the evening, clad in my moon-boots, I staggered to his place through mountains of snow. "Come over to the kitchen," Peter called. What a sight! On the kitchen-table,

five king-sized lobsters were crawling around. “From where did you get these?” I exclaimed. “Well,” he said laughingly, “This morning, for the first time the subway was running again. So Jack and I donned our *roman collars* and went to the harbour. The fishermen there are all Irish Catholics who were happy to see two priests who, moreover, became their first customers in four days!” We had a wonderful evening.

On Sunday morning, as usual, I rang Mama, and together we shared a hearty laugh about the lobster festival. In the afternoon a friend of hers rang her up to enquire how I had survived the snowstorm. She stumbled, and broke her hipbone. It was only next morning that, thanks to an attentive postman, she was found and taken to the hospital. Friends informed me and I at once flew to Bonn. In my bag I had the first copy of my book *“The triumphant Sun”* which had just arrived by mail. When she asked, with a slight tone of anger in her voice:“ What for have you come?” I was in a position to answer:“ To give you my new book on Rumi.” She soon was discharged from the intensive care and seemed to be mending well. But then her strength failed her (she was ninety-one years old). She passed away peacefully.

To whom should I now address the daily letters which I had been writing for years? I thought of Iqbal’s elegy for his mother in which he says:

Who will now wait at home for me and pray?
Who will be restless when letters reach you with delay?
Into your grave I shall the question sink:
Who in her prayer, now of me will think?

And yet, my mother, the much beloved “Aunty Mama” of so many young friends in East and West, is always present. She is like a protective shield, wherever I am.

Harvard– the Western Exile of the Soul

Of course Harvard did not only consist of snowstorms. But the icy winter with storms and winds coming down from Canada, made this area uncomfortable. Snow was to be expected even until May. In the absence of real flowers one could admire the glass-flower collection in the Peabody Museum; here, a huge number of flowers were, with scientific exactitude, presented in glass, for viewing and learning. My flat in Harvard Street was near the department and was quite comfortable - if you forget about the plague of many Harvard buildings, namely cockroaches. I and many others became expert in fighting them. Two streets further on, e.e. cumming was born, who soon became my favourite poet. Earlier in Ankara, I had discovered one of his early poems:

All in green went my true-love riding
On a golden horse and big,
Into the silvery morning

These verses always reminded me of a precious, medieval gobelin. During the grey winter days in Harvard I found comfort in his pertinent depiction of the wives of professors:

The Cambridge ladies live in furnished souls
they are not pretty and have a settled spirit.
Also, with the Protestant blessings of the church
the daughters, without fragrance nor shape, and full of eagerness
believe in Christ and Longfellow, both already dead
and are irrevocably interested in so many things.
Now, while writing this, one can always find
enchanted fingers knitting for– was it the Poles?
Perhaps; while the immutable faces, in low tones
gossip scandals of Mrs. N. and Prof. D…….

Cunning's verses are not always comprehensible with their sliced syllables and their unexpected new

formulations; but often there are charming lyrical moments as well as biting satires on the U.S.A.

To go by the rules of the sponsor, one of the assignments of running the department of Indo-Muslim Culture was the poetic translation of the poems of Ghalib and Mir. Before my arrival they had appointed a Pakistani to translate both poets into English prose. This raw-material– crude as it was– was then sent to American poets. This procedure resulted in some nice American verses, but they were distant like the sky from the sophisticated, rhetoric elegance of their originals. A Persian or Urdu poem is not one of personal experience as we know it, but an extremely complex, filigran work of rhetoric forms which have developed over the centuries. That is the reason why we wanted to give our students a solid foundation of Indo-Muslim culture, so that they may understand the comprehensive, spiritual development one needs, in order to really comprehend Oriental poetry. Our areas thus covered the history of Islam in the Subcontinent which started in the year 711, along with its languages, theological and judicial Arabic, then Persian which, since the eleventh century, was the language of literature and administration (which was largely used also by Hindus); then Turkish of the many Central Asian dynasties. Furthermore, the regional languages Sindhi, Punjabi and Pushto (Bengali was mostly taught at Chicago). Add to this, History of Fine Arts, which fell to Cary Welch. In short, we had to include all of Islamic Studies.

For Urdu I needed a lecturer. The first one, a Pakistani historian with a heavy Punjabi accent, became a problem, because at that time I did not know yet the rules for promotion or permanent positions. Harvard had the principle: “Eat, bird, or die!” Even in the beginning of the twentieth century, postgraduates of the university complained about Harvard’s *chilling indifference* toward

students and also, as I found out during the initial years, toward imported staff. I fought hard to overcome these unpleasant issues. After that, Brian Silver became my assistant, a tender soul and great musician. He is one of the few foreigners whose sitar-playing is admired also in the Subcontinent. He added a new colour to the instructions. According to the regulations he had to leave the department after eight years. He then became director of the Urdu-Hindi programme with the Voice of America. He recommended Ali Ansari as his successor, an Ismaili from Kenya. I had looked after him since his sophomore year in Harvard and in 1992, he became my successor. Due to his pedagogic talent he was able– apart from a few optional subject students– to raise the number of students to fifty or sixty in the first semester. This is apart from his successes in the Islam-courses. I was thus satisfied when I retired. My “Betajee” (dear son) continued the project.

We, the department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (NELC) were, during the initial years, housed in the large building, 1737 Cambridge Street. After a long time it was decided that we should move back to its original quarters, the Semitic Museum, 6-Divinity Avenue. Several years ago it had been taken over by Henry Kissinger’s office. The refurbishing went on and on; therefore, for two years, they put us into barracks. It most unpleasantly reminded me of my years of national service. In the basement a Kindergarden was housed which considerably disturbed our work. This change of place also put a stop to the joint lunches, where for 99 Cents you used to get a square meal. Moreover, the interesting discussions with colleagues and guest professors came to an end– from family planning in the Islamic middle-ages to rare Persian manuscripts, or the progress of crime-fiction of the thirteenth Imam which was just being written by a lecturer.

At times, I felt like writing novels about the life of colleagues and students.

I could have written about them more and more the longer I stayed there. I enjoyed going for lunch with my "little ones". In Marburg too, we had tried to at least invite the students for a cup of tea. I loved these opportunities, because through them, you understand much better why, suddenly, someone's performance dropped or a semester final work was not what it should have been. At times, there were problems with parents, perhaps the student or girl-student was love-sick, or the beloved cat had died, or– and that was quite often the reason– there was growing envy about grades. Envy was a major problem which at times, poisoned the atmosphere at Harvard. And not all colleagues understood how to tackle it.

Finally we moved into our real quarters. The Semitic Museum got its name because in the basement, a small museum of ancient Oriental excavations had been set up which was lovingly looked after by the curator. He always tried to convey his enthusiasm to children and laymen. The curator was Carney Gavin, an Irish priest, whose hearty laughs thundered through the entire building. I liked his ways, because they were different from the ways of the sandpaper souls of the New-England folks. The pride of the museum were photographs from the nineteenth century including such of Mecca. After a bomb attack on Kissinger's office they were found among the rubble in the loft. They were to be published one by one. Carney had established a network of relationships, which stretched from the European high aristocracy to the notables of Mecca. It was to be regretted that a new head of department, in the end of the 1980s, removed him from his office. Off and on, photo-exhibitions were arranged. I remember a fine exhibition of photographs of Indian mosques and the removal of the decorative details. I was

conducting Queen Noor of Jordan through the exhibition. As usual, Carney had arranged attractive replicas of artifacts which helped the museum financially.

A few minutes away from our department was the Divinity School and, what was of special importance to us, the *Centre for the Studies of World Religions* which, in a tone of loving satire, was called "God's Motel", because it really looked like one. Its purpose was to promote the inter-religious dialogue. The students, who came from a variety of religious traditions could get a room there. Many functions were held in the Common Room, strictly without alcohol, because Wilfred Cantwell Smith, who, for many years had been the director of the centre, did not think much of these devilish concoctions. (Thus, a blind Muslim student had problems when he tried to smuggle one or two bottles of this soul-destructing liquid into his room, because he could never be sure whether the master was around.)

Among our students there was strong interest in the inter-religious dialogue and God's Motel became a forum of all religions of the world. At times, a seminar was held there which lasted for a whole semester. The French Indologist Charlotte Vaudeville and I conducted a seminar there on the Hindu form of love of God, bhakti, and on love of God in Sufism. Both are very similar. Together with a Sindhi Hindu from Delhi, Motilal Jotwani, Ali and I worked on newly discovered verses of a Sindhi mystic of the sixteenth century. We enjoyed the complex interpretation efforts and its many dangers of amusing misunderstandings.

We found out how multi-religious the composition of the student-body was, when I offered a course on Phenomenology of Religion, based on Friedrich Heiler's work. With an attendance of over sixty students I counted forty denominations, from a Jesuit priest to a Ceylonese Bhuddist monk (whose huge boots contrasted with his

yellow monk's robe); from orthodox Jews to Methodists, from a Pakistani Wahabi to an American Sufi-lady.

In 1972 I read for the first time a lecture series on Islamic mysticism. It became very popular. Its result was the book *Mystical Dimensions of Islam.* It has been translated into many languages (recently, even into Russian). At that time I had a discussion about Suhrawardi's concept of the *ghurbat al-gharbiyya*, the "Western Exile of the Soul", and one of my Jesuits quite rightly remarked that this must be a hint of my 'exile' in Harvard. We all enjoyed the courses on Maulana Rumi during which we often forgot time and place. During some of the years however, frustration about the students prevailed. They were neither able to grasp how to scan rhythm in Persian poetry nor to understand the passionate love-poems of the poet. One of my most precious memories relates to an early Rumi-lecture of mine: one of the participants was John, who aspired for foreign service. In 1980 he was one of the hostages held in Iran. Many years later, in 1992, he by chance, was on leave in Harvard, while I held my farewell speech in which of course, Rumi played a prominent role. John asked me for permission to add comments to it. He reported to the students that, while he was being held by the Iranians, he recited poems by Iqbal and Rumi, whereupon his treatment by the guards changed. They recognized him as one of their own, who knew the best of their culture and loved it. He was no longer considered a foe, but a friend. I cannot imagine a more beautiful finale to twenty-five years of teaching in Harvard– mystical poetry as mediator between two seemingly different worlds.

The students who came to me either for their major subjects or for optional subjects were a colourful mix. The spectre stretched from Gulshan, 'Rosegarden', the charming Ismaili student from East Africa who was to me

like a daughter and with whom I often sat and listened to Joan Baiz; and up to Wheeler, whose English (like that of many others) I initially, could hardly understand– he had a very strong *southern drawl*, their way of speaking American English. Luckily some understood the Oriental languages better. He learnt them with incredible ease and later, taught them. But as typical Southerner he was rather intolerant even toward less gifted students. In his usual elegant style he played Scott Joplin. I enjoyed rag very much, but it was only after Veronica Jochum, at the end of a Schubert recital, requested a Joplin as encore, that I summoned courage to openly declare my preference for this type of music. Wheeler, in the course of time, became one of the best scholars and translators of Moghul architecture.

Then there was the handsome Rajput prince Jitendra, who studied History of Fine Arts, and his sophisticated French wife. Through him I met some Rajput princesses. Like the intelligent Rajmata of Jodhpur and Princess Susan from Baroda who, off and on, during their visits to the Boston hospital, rested on my old-fashioned sofa. The much loved tom-cat Tofan was something like the most important person in the household of Jitendra. We suffered with her the pains from the Harvard atmosphere and also later, when she died a miserable death from a brain tumor.

Mehmet, the Anatolian with the heart of a dervesh, after his dissertation on Turkish poetry of the Mameluk Sultan Qansu al-Ghuri, supported Oriental Studies in the sense that he in Washington, opened a shop with objects of the Silk-Route– carpets, jewelry, and many other things. He gave it the name Woven History. It showed visitors the richness of the Central Asian peoples.

Then there was Margaret of Folklore, and specialist on Afghanistan, and Maria, the delicate Ukrainian. She was the only one in all my years there who, in her doctorial

orals, could answer all questions, and that with a smile. Bill Graham distinguished himself through his remarkable activities in science and administration and became an indispensable member of the department. It was an enriching time when Hoseyin and his wife Mahasti, who was as intelligent as she was beautiful, came to us and brought along a touch of Iranian spirituality. Sometime Germans too, studied there, to whom the USA offered better opportunities for development than their own country.

Among the great variety of Ph.D. students were quite a number of Jesuits, who studied at the Weston College and who, at the same time, wanted to specialize in Oriental Studies. Pat was a lively Irishman who was working in Nigeria. Then there was Peter of Lebanese background. His brilliant intellect and humour made him a favourite of everybody. He did groundbreaking work with his dissertation of 'Satan's Fall and Redemption in Islamic mystical Tradition'. Later, Peter left the brotherhood, but not Orientalism. The same goes for Jack, to whom Islamic Studies owes good and readable books. There was also Toni from the Eifel-range, a huge man with a most tender soul, who died far too early from heart failure. He had served for five years as director of the Orient Institute in Beirut and, disgusted with the ways of the scholars and administrators, returned to Germany. My mother had been most fond of him. When she died, he happened to be in Bonn and was a good support for me.

Another group of students were the Ismailis. Gulshan was one of the first. From her dissertation I learnt so many things which normally, are not known to Islam scholars. She worked on a Sindhi-Gujerati epic of the sixteenth century, which contained the strangest combinations. In it, Prophet Mohammad appeared as the tenth avater of the Hindu-god Vishnu. Such oddities often appeared in Indian

Ismaili literature. From one of her research-trips she brought back a painting from Burhanpur which shows a sprightly Ali, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet and first imam of the Shias, together with his famous white mule Duldul, which is led by Hanuman, the monkey-king. Every normal Muslim would get goose pimples if he saw that!

The Ismailis who came from the tradition of the so-called Seven-Shi'ites in the eighth century, are playing an important role in our modern world. It was in 1840, when the Aga Khan left Iran and came to India. Even in the middle ages the Ismailis settled on the West-coast of India and developed their devotional literature there. It was after the arrival of the Aga Khan that they developed solid social structures. They became an active community through the famous Aga Khan III (died 1963). Education, particularly for women, is of major importance to them.

A part of the community migrated to East Africa and after the political unrest as in Uganda, many left and settled in Canada and the USA. There, they are a substantial factor in the economic field. After the death of the old Aga Khan his grandson, Karim Aga Khan, became his successor. He is now the *hazir imam*, the present imam, and every believer delights in seeing him. Karim Aga Khan is a Harvard alumnus and continued the reform work of his grandfather. He founded a department of Islamic Arts in Harvard, gave many scholarships to Ismaili students at the McGill University in Montreal, created the Ismaili Institute in London and many other cultural centres. For this reason, a number of Ismailis come to Harvard. Ali Ansari was one of them. And I developed a good relationship with the Aga Khan.

From among the students, I must mention Herbert Mason, who did his Ph.D in Arabic. He did intensive work on Louis Massignon and later, translated into English Massignon's huge work on al-Hallaj, who was executed in

922. He was a poet and in the early seventies, wrote a small piece on this martyred mystic. It was a reading-drama, which one evening, we staged in God's Motel. I played the mother of the caliph, who tried to understand the mystic and his ideals. It was a beautiful evening. I kept touch with the scholarly career of Herbert, till he became professor at the Boston University. Occasionally, he sent me one or the other new poem of his. He was the one who encouraged me to publish my English poems.

At times some odd types appeared. There was Greg. Because of his curly, black hair we called him Greg the Poodle. He was white like myself, but because of some ancestor he qualified for a scholarship for blacks. His performance then dropped and he did not pass the second attempt of the examinations. Moreover, he was a drug addict and had to leave the university. A year later he rang me up from Boston: May he invite me to a Valentine dinner? I went, and he told me that he was planning to open a restaurant in California and was now learning how to cook. And indeed, in the kitchen of a friend he had prepared a first-rate dinner. I hope that he was more successful with cooking than with Persian epics.

Just like Gurdjieff, the classical Egyptian Sufism had many admirers among the girls. At one time a slim dancer took part in a course of mine. He submitted a semester final work in calligraphy and in seven different colours. Another youth wanted to learn "the poems of Heifetz" from me. This was beyond me– till it dawned on me that he meant the poet Hafiz. "Oh, this is how you pronounce it?" he asked, and disappeared. I never saw him again. It needs to be admitted that the language skills, even at Harvard, are rather under-developed. Students do have to pass an examination in German, French or in another foreign language. Graduate students have to do so before their examinations (it is a pre-requisite for a Ph.D. or M.A.),

even in two foreign languages. But the results of the examinations are not so encouraging– mostly. For several years, among the audience of the general courses, were two ladies, no longer quite so young. One was an extremely elegant black jurist with a pension, who was interested in African Islam. The other was an English woman, Zoe Hersov, whose husband was setting up an institute for child psychiatry nearby. She utilized the time to learn Islamic Studies and other, related subjects. As a sideline she engaged herself in educational matters like counseling and so on. She showed a special love for Pakistan. One day, almost timidly, she addressed me with a problem. She had inherited a small fortune from her mother and was thinking of establishing a foundation for Pakistani girl students. Would I mind if she called it Annemarie Schimmel Foundation? I embraced her enthusiastically. The stipend, every year, promotes one girl student of whatever subject to finish her studies in England. Our first stipend holder was in the field of Romance Studies; we also had an artist, a natural scientist and others. The stipend is administered from Lahore. It brings interesting women to the West. We even had one blind girl. There have been some disappointments, too. But I am happy about this wonderful initiative, which carries my name, although I had no merit in it.

But how does one study at Harvard?

Dean Henry Rosovsky was, as he used to say, born on the same day and in the same city as Günter Grass. He had published a very entertaining and useful book: *The University, a Manual for its Owners.* He came up with a new development for undergraduate courses. It was copied quite a lot. Young people of about eighteen years were admitted, after they had passed their high-school examinations and after being thoroughly grilled (financial situations, need for scholarships are also looked into). They

then have to do one year of general introduction as freshmen. After that they take up two major subjects– let us say, French and Italian; also, one subject of general knowledge– History, Religion, perhaps, - and one subject of another faculty, like Physics. Their work is strongly guided by tutorials. If somebody wants to finish with an honorary degree, he has to write an honours thesis in his field of specialization. Some of these works are surprisingly mature. Then they may hope for a magna or summa cum laude. Even before they finish, all sorts of companies and institutions arrive, who have a good look at the finalists who, in most cases, find lucrative jobs. The dense network of alumni plays a major role in this.

The final day of the year of studies is the Commencement, which takes place on the first Thursday in June. Professors in their robes walk across the Harvard Yard and take their seats on the steps of the Memorial Church. It is a colourful picture. My scarlet-red robe from my honorary doctorate from Islamabad attracted many eyes. But once it was outdone by another gown, whose owner wore a sky-blue doctor-hat in the shape of an open umbrella with fringes. The students are lined up in the yard, in their black gowns and colourful berets. The procession is also joined by representatives of earlier years; alumni, who are celebrating their tenth or twenty-fifth anniversaries, are quite prominent. In the year 2001 some posters were held high saying "Class of 1931", carried by a person in his nineties, or, "Class of 1981," a group, that graduated that year. The ritual is fixed: the Harvard hymn, speeches by graduates among which there has to be one in Latin which mostly, is very funny. Then the honorary Ph.Ds. are named and after them, the passing-out students. They receive their certificates in their respective Houses. Finally, everybody shares in a happy celebration.

The alumni are the pillars of the university. Their financial contributions for the development of the university are enormous. Harvard knows the financial status of each of them and thus, demands high contributions from them, particularly if they see that someone has not engaged himself sufficiently. If the president calls for contributions of two or three millions for the construction of a new building or the upgrading of the boat-house or other things that are needed, the funds are sure to come in, and each alumnus is proud to be a brick in the spiritual or financial structure of his beloved alma mater.

Not all of the students take up a job immediately. Some continue studies here or at another university as graduates, up to the M.A. (Master of Arts) or doctorate. They apply to several institutions and then decide, which place is most suitable for them in terms of academics and also, financially. Others are happy if they get one of the many awards, which allow them to pursue their own interests, mostly for the duration of one year. To get this award, they must not only come up with the best results, but also prove their engagement in social or political issues. Once I was a member of the selection committee. There was a young outstanding mathematician, who wanted to spend a year in an East Block country to learn the noble art of juggling (I strongly supported it); another one wanted to study old church organs, or a girl intended to take photographs of children in South Asia. The selection let us perceive wishes and dreams of young people which normally, are not even known to others. Thus, one felt obliged to promote a redhead son of a farmer from the Middle-West, who wanted to investigate into a certain breed of cattle in Southern France or Italy. He added, that he could not guarantee that off and on, he might not go and look at gothic cathedrals or a baroque palace.

During the later years of my teaching career the anti-racial laws and also, the feminist movements were strengthened considerably. It then happened quite often that a coloured man, or a woman, was given the grant and not an equally suitable white person. It was also a new criteria for jobs. One of our secretaries cried:" Oh, John has no chance of getting that job as a priest! He is white, and, on top of it, a man!" Moved by such experiences, I wrote a limerick:

In Harvard, a frustrated youth tried to make his way,
Till he realized one day:
It's all in vain,
only as a female I can gain.
As such, in Harvard a star he became.

The real life of the students took place in the 'Houses' which accommodated three to four-hundred students each. One day Pat asked me:"Would you care to go with me to see an exhibition in Eliot House?" I seized the opportunity to learn what was behind these 'Houses', which played such a major role in the life of the students. Every undergraduate was accommodated there. My first visit to Eliot House led to my becoming an *Associate.* As such, I had the right to participate in all their functions and get free meals. Almost every professor was thus attached to one or the other House. Sometime later I spoke with Laura, who was the senior tutor there (i.e., the actual spiritus rector of the House). She was as charming as she was competent. I asked her whether there was a chance for me to get a small flat - three to four flats were reserved for professors in each House. Without Mama, who at the age of eighty seven, did not feel like flying to Boston every year, I didn't need a big flat. "But of course" said Laura, we'll be happy if you come."

Thus, at the end of the summer semester 1975 I left my residence, which normally, I sub-let or just gave to a

student during my absence. When I returned in the end of January, my Jesuits triumphantly took me to my new flat, which they had, in my absence, already partially furnished. The winter sun sent its rays into the living room, which overlooked the Charles River. There was a bedroom, a small study and a bath– but no kitchen. “I told them that you wouldn’t be cooking anyway!” Peter explained. And indeed, one small cooker and a water kettle were enough to make my breakfast and my evening tea. Every Friday was Senior Common Room which was lunch with Sherry (which made the food a little more palatable).

It was the Senior Common Room which made life in the House so interesting. There, we met many colleagues who otherwise, knew this rather isolated, exotic Oriental bird only from hearsay. The philosopher Van Quine was among them. Of all the colleagues he had most of the international connections and knew most of the countries and languages. We met quite frequently, although I generally, do not understand philosophy and his, even less than others. There was also the man of Comparative Literature, Harry Levin. It was always a pleasure to listen to his polished sentences. Yet, this lady Orientalist was surprised, that such a master of comparative literature knew so little of the literatures of the Orient. This does not only apply to the literatures. In the course of time I learnt that the curriculum was totally America-centric. Of the twenty-four or twenty five sections in the History Department, two thirds dealt with American history. Only quite late did we get one single section for Islamic History, and this only for Modern History. Recently, a section of Turkish History had been created. And then: there is a considerable number of courses on Christianity, some on Judaism, but only one single, general introduction to Islam. Little wonder, that the American Near East policy goes such strange ways.– Now, back to the Senior Common Room in Eliot House. Henry Hatfield,

specialist on Thomas Mann, was as much part of our group as Ed Sekler, the Austrian art-critic; there were a few people of natural sciences, but Master Heimert, American Studies-man, dominated the scene. From this colourful mix of the group I learnt a lot; it also added some spice to our not exactly first rate culinary pleasures. Apart from that, there was no other place in the world where you could receive the friendly scholar of Romance philology Dante della Terza simply with: "Hey, Dante!"

But how did the Houses function? The freshmen lived within the Yard, the enclosed area with the most important lecture halls, the enormous Widener Library and the Memorial Church. After their first year they were spread all over the various Houses, which were named after well-known presidents and professors. Everybody aspired to get into one of the River Houses, alongside the Charles River. The moment the ice melted, the rowers became active. Sports played an important part. The number of students grew constantly; at my time there were about twelve-thousand undergraduates. New Houses were being constructed outside the university area. In 1969, Harvard became co-ed and the strict rule was dropped, that Harvard Houses were exclusively meant for male students. The girl students were living quite far away in the Radcliff Yard, where they had their own Houses. They were also taught separately from the men. A curious diplomat mentioned to one of my girl students that it must be wonderful that gals and boys could now live in the same House. She answered laconically: "I don't think it's nice to meet your mistake over breakfast." The fact was that, particularly in the beginning, these changes led to psychological disorders.

However, not all problems could be attributed to co-ed; often they were the result of the merciless competition. Once, one of my students, a nice French boy, had a psychic collapse. I was upset and asked a younger colleague for

advice. He was unconcerned and answered: “Oh well, these things happen. The other day, again one of them threw himself out of the window!”

Several students lived together in small, furnished flats, which they have to vacate at the end of the academic year. I had to do the same, always pack boxes, because during summer, the rooms are needed for the participants of the summer-courses. At the beginning of a new academic year the rooms were again being allotted, so that no student may have to spend three years in a less suitable apartment.

Year by year the rooms became better, because in the forth year the demands grew. Students mostly worked in the night. Therefore, heating was at its best then, while during the day you often needed an extra little stove.

Every House had a resident tutor. They were responsible for certain subjects. They played an important role in the academic set-up, because there are subjects in which the student hardly gets to see his professor. He hovers like a spirit over everyone and leaves the practical need, above all, the corrections of seminary assignments or language drill, to his helping spirits. The Senior Tutor of a House carries heavy responsibilities, but the Master, whose wife acts as Co-Master, is like the king of a realm. He lives in a beautiful house in which often, functions take place. The prestige of a House and its trend in sports, social and spiritual life mostly depend on him. Eliot House was so lucky as to have for many years, the highly respected John Finley as Master, who taught Ancient Languages. His lectures were as over-crowded as the ones of another colleague living in Eliot House, Jack Bates, who taught Samuel Johnson.

Each House has some prominent residents. In our House, Benazir Bhutto lived from 1970 to 1972. Even when she was prime minister of Pakistan she did not forget her connection with Eliot House.

Among all the academic top-notches it would be wrong not to mention Hank, who became house-master and looked after us in a most pleasant manner. Whenever, at the end of a summer semester, I complained about the awful business of packing, or I cried about the bad or non-functioning heating– Hanke knew how to comfort us: “Don’t worry, young lady, we’ll fix it!” And that’s what he did. Even now we exchange greeting cards on Christmas.

The student body in our department put together with that of the the History of Religion were certainly a great mix. But the staff, likewise, was truly international.

Today, as I write this– on the tenth of September, 2001, “Aunt Ilse” would have been a hundred years old. Her passport, however, showed 1907 as year of birth– a ‘seven’ does resemble a ‘one’, doesn’t it? She keeps telling the story of her forged date with slight triumph in her voice, now that she long since, has become emeritus.

Aunt Ilse– she was Ilse Lichtenstädter– was one of the first German Arabists. When I was a student, I had read an essay of hers in the magazine ‘Islamica’: *The nasib in old Arabian Poetry*. I was enthusiastic about it. This is the way everybody should be writing!

But nobody knew where to find this admired lady for me. But twenty-five years later, I found her in Harvard, in the house of my colleague and friend Omeljan Pritsak, the Turkish Studies man from Ukraine, whom I knew since the final days of the war. After an adventurous escape from the Soviet Union he went to Göttingen to study there with Schaeder. Finally, he got to Harvard, where he not only set up Turkish Studies, but also Ukraine Studies.

Ilse was the daughter of a Jewish teacher from Hamburg. She had studied in Frankfurt with Josef Horowitz and after her dissertation and the sudden death of her teacher in 1932, went to Oxford. There, she earned a meager living as reader with the Oxford University Press.

Concurrently, she did a second Ph.D. through an Arabic publication. Later, she joined her two sisters who lived in New York– one of them in considerable wealth. But this did not affect Ilse, who, at the Asia Institute, earned her living the hard way and counted every penny till the last day of her life. She often spoke about Germany, Jewish colleagues who, in the thirties, had come to the USA, like Gustave E. Grunebaum and Franz Rosenthal. Rosenthal was the highly erudite and rather withdrawn master of Semitic Studies, whom we all respected and honoured deeply. I have never once heard a negative remark about him, even from a certain colleague– and this means to say a lot! Richard Ettinghausen too, was one of the immigrants, who changed the character of American Islamic Studies or rather, he actually created it. For economic reasons the American universities had so far, concentrated on Far East Studies, or promoted Ancient Oriental Studies by conducting important excavations. It was only when the German immigrants arrived, that Arabic and Islam Studies were given a consolidated position in the universities.

Aunt Ilse had experienced these changes. Sir Hamilton Gibb called her from New York to Harvard where, for many years, she taught classical Arabic. Her teacher Horovitz had been one of those German professors who, in the twenties, had taught at Indian elitist universities like Aligarh. This had awakened in Ilse the interest in the Subcontinent, and we discovered many common friends in Pakistan.

It must be said that it took Ilse quite a while to accept the younger German colleague. I think Mama played a certain role in it. It was she who in 1979 inspired Ilse to revisit Germany, for the first and only time. She experienced an overwhelming joy at our common trips to the Ahr-valley and to Maria Laach. Some friends had taken us along and throughout the trip, we recited German poetry.

Gradually I gained her confidence and learnt a lot about the life of an orthodox, but culturally totally German Jewish family. At Pessach I had the privilege to taste her self-made Mazze (pancake). It was mostly burnt, but this did not affect our friendship.

Once in a semester Ilse– small and vivacious– loved to invite students and some of the colleagues to her bash, her party. There was always a lot of merriment. Later, she took us out to some restaurant. At times, we met interesting guests at her place, like Harry Wolfson, a philosopher of history who, in the early twenties, had left his homeland Galicia and came to Harvard. He, more or less, spent his entire life in the library and had his meals in the Faculty Club. It was exciting to hear 'Uncle Harry' speak about his early years, even though at times, he fell asleep over it. The History of Religion owes Wolfson the notion of 'inlibration', against 'incarnation': The Quran is the 'inlibrated' book of the word of God, - the word that has unfolded in a book; while Jesus is the 'incarnated' word of God, the word that has become flesh.

Ilse embodied the German immigrants. But Isador Twersky of Jewish Studies, with his large black eyes, was like a figure from an old painting; he had a low, hardly audible voice in the faculty meetings. Sweden's representative was Richard (Dick) Frye, with whom I was connected through our common love for Iranian culture. He was lively and at times, quite controvertial. His arguments were like a restless spirit from the Wild East and he delivered them in one or the other numerous languages in which he was fluent. We were good friends. And he instilled the department with some of his liveliness. Thorkild Jacobson from Denmark was very different. He spoke masterfully and fascinatingly, and with unmistakable Danish accent on Sumerian and Accadian culture, though sometimes it was difficult to follow him acoustically. Bill

Moran taught Assyrian Studies, and the Englishman Robert Thomson was specialist in Armenian Studies. Of special importance to us was George Makdisi, the strict master of classical Arabic and specialist of the most rigid, theological school of thought, the Hanbalites. Muhsin Mahdi was an Arab from Karbela. He was a profound scholar of medieval philosophy. Later, he edited the earliest Arabic manuscript of *One-thousand and one Nights.* Both seemed to reflect the mentality of early Islam– the Omayyad-Syrian one and the Shiʿite-Iraqi one.

Shinasi Tekin represented Turkish Studies. Many other colleagues and guest-professors came to the department. One should think that such a small department, despite some internal differences and occasional friction, should maintain friendly relations among its members. But in the twenty-five years of my Harvard-time I have hardly ever entered the house of a colleague. Ilse was the one exception. Occasionally, Wilfred Cantwell Smith invited. Otherwise, ‘get-togethers’, if any, were limited to meetings in the Faculty Club.

For me, the situation changed with the arrival of Wolfhart Heinrichs in 1977. At first he was a guest professor but then became ordinary professor. With him and Alma Giese, I felt I had a family again. The students admired and respected Wolfhart while Alma, who was an excellent Arabist, became a pillar in our life and was loved by all. For years, the house in Arlington felt like a home to me. I was her house-cat, spoilt by good and beautiful discussions and delicious dishes. It was due to these two that my later years at Harvard became quite nice.

I have to mention one more pillar of my Harvard-time, one of the most important ones: S. Cary Welch, whom I met during my first semester there. He was a specialist in Islamic and Indian art and fascinated me by his deep understanding of it. He had no other academic

qualifications than a BA from Harvard; hence he remained a bit of an outsider in this strictly ordered cosmos of the faculty. But his lectures were enlightening. He displayed real love for the objects and his style was enchanting, if not always strictly academic. The unusual liberties that he took in his dealings with art quite shocked some of the colleagues who refused to regard him as an academic. "Why do you always attend Cary's lectures and tutorials?" Ettinghausen once asked me. I replied:" Because he teaches me to see." We, including his wife Edith, developed a beautiful and enriching friendship.

I spent interesting hours in his house in New Hampshire. Once we all roamed through the historical sites of the Deccan. We met again and again between Boston and Delhi, Bonn and Geneva. The work together with him in Fogg (now Sackler) Art Museum, where many of his precious miniatures and calligraphies are kept, are among my most beautiful memories; also our common publications. There were some exquisite exhibitions in the Fogg Museum under its director Cary and also, of Oleg Grabar, who however, had a totally different attitude to art than Cary had. He was more interested in its theory, the sociological implications of art, and not the aesthetic aspect of it. This was the cause of some friction among the History of Art people at Harvard. May be, this was the reason why this department produced a large number of leading representatives in the field of Islamic History of Arts at Harvard. Again and again I met some of the younger friends, somewhere between Australia and Vienna and, not to forget, in London. I can only mention one name– Mark Zebrowski, who died far too early. It was through Deborah that I met him and his friend Bob during one of my early years there. Only a few days before writing these lines I met Deborah again, as professor in Vienna. Mark had an excellent understanding of the Dekkani art, above all of the

sparklingly beautiful black-and-silver Bidri-wares. He displayed them in his house in London. I love to remember our common work for the symposium on emperor Akbar's temporary capital at Fatehpur Sikri which in Harvard, brought all the fans of Moghul art together.

Such symposia remind me of the many friendships which developed outside Harvard. During the initial years I frequently joined the parties of students where everybody brought along one dish; later on, the birthday parties at Samina's, the lively Pakistani, were always exciting. I worked together with Samina on several books. She contributed her impressive photographs from Pakistan. We, in the changing winds of fate, always treasured our relationship.

In the course of the years I came to know Boston more closely. At the very beginning of my time in Harvard Mama and I discovered, during her second stay there, a place, which did not appeal much to our friends: Roxbury, in the South of the city. One of my Muslim students took us there. A young Bulgarian Muslim had just set up a refuge for socially disadvantaged youth, mostly black. There, they were trained in a variety of crafts. Above all, there was a hand-operated printing press, from which you could get nicely printed cards. The eagerness and devotion of the young director impressed us. The rather gloomy-looking district became the source of our congratulatory cards. They bore a very beautiful Arabic inscription, which I had copied from an Indo-Muslim building. Everybody liked these cards, and the aid-project thus earned a few dollars.

One place that attracted us was the famed Arboretum. It is a large park at the outskirts of Boston that belongs to Harvard. It is known for its rare plants. I had seen only little of it, but was condemned to pose for a TV film among its blooming trees. There was a Turkish-Dutch team that intended to document one week of my life. They did not

only follow me to the seminars and into the lecture-halls, but even chased me to the Botanical Garden– rather unusual for me. Reciting Turkish poetry, I had to hover down from a hilloc. “No, once more please, - - no, the left leg must be nearer - - once more, third line of the poem - -” the way it goes with TV shooting: dash to the lilac-bush, walk out nicely from the lilac-bush– like a perpetuum mobile. After that, I never ever went to the Arboretum again.

My favourite spots were the magnificent museums in and around Boston– from Cambridge up to Worcester. With great pleasure I remember one seminar in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where I was able to show the students the rich collection of Ottoman calligraphy which had never been exhibited before. I explained to them the intricacies of script and illumination. But it was the Fogg Museum in Harvard which was my private little paradise. Regular calligraphy seminars were held there, because the manuscripts offered an extremely rich material for the art historian. There were some sheets of the ninth and tenth centuries, even masterpieces of Persian, Turkish and Indo-Muslim art scripts. The course on Calligraphy was my favourite subject. I believe that for the student of Islamic Studies, this course is a must, to at least know a bit about the peculiarities of the manuscripts, about the parchment and paper, about types of ink and illumination. He needs it so as to not only understand this art as such, but also the many mentions of calligraphy in Islamic literature.

I am always very glad when I see non-Orientalists attend these seminars simply for aesthetic pleasure. These courses and the ones held by Cary Welch on Persian and Indian miniature paintings complemented each other very well.

But it was not only the museums which filled my heart with joy. I must also mention some of the culinary aspects of my environment. There was that secluded, Spanish

restaurant, Iruna, close to my later residence in Eliot House. There, I never had to place an order; my favourite dish arrived on my table as if on its own. On Sundays I went to a wonderful fish-restaurant in the harbour of Boston, next to the lobster-pool, where the freshest of these delicacies could be had for a penny. Another fish-restaurant went through a strange metamorphosis: Margaret had told me about Legal Seafood, where in the evenings, she earned her study-fees by frying fish. It was an extremely simple place with wooden tables and plastic dishes. They served the freshest fish. One also met interesting people from the art-scene there. The place was not far from our Middle-East Centre and once every week between seminars, Maria and I went there, even if it meant stomping through high snow. One morning the radio announced that during the night, the restaurant had burnt down. What to do? Two, three days later, the owner, under the same name, opened a top elegant fish restaurant in the centre of Boston. What a coincidence! This now became our Sunday-restaurant.

The area around Boston is famous; many of the well-to-do inhabitants have their summer houses on Cape Cod or on one of the islands along the Atlantic coast. I did not feel attracted to that; the northern sea shore, which stretched along the Atlantic to the North, was more beautiful. There, in Salem, you could see the Witches' House with its seven gables, which Hawthorne had immortalized in his novel *The House of the seven Gables.* Then there were the great Jacob-shells and other treasures from the sea, which became our farewell-dinner. We mostly went there on one of the last Sundays of a semester and enjoyed the richness of the lilac and the blue ocean, at the other end of which was Europe, which I– God be thanked for it! - was to see soon after.

The area toward South, to the border with Connecticut, was quite charming. Thanks to an American girl friend who

looked after foreign and, in particular, after Pakistani students of the region, I, for the first time, saw a Trappist monastery. It was situated off the main road, on a hill. The church had burnt down a few years earlier and had been rebuilt most pleasantly with large, friendly rock-material. The windows were unusually beautiful, sparkling in light pink and deep purple in abstract ornamentation. The little church invited for meditation. We were really happy there. The Trappists also had a worldly aspect to them: For one, they were not altogether wrapped in silence (a young German, who had come to the USA after 1945, told us very openly about his problems) and secondly, there was a store, where you could buy items made in the monastery, above all, sweets. Of course we enriched the monastery's cashbox on each of our trips there, while Brother Leonard entertained us with his vivid talk. When one day, we again visited the place, it was very windy. I wore my black raincoat and a white headscarf. He gave me not only sweets, but a big kiss on the cheek, and two elderly ladies in the store whispered to each other: "Is she a nun?"

All around the Metropolitan Museum

I could never develop a warm feeling for Boston, although it is generally considered the 'most European' of all North-American cities. It was New York, which fascinated me, right from my first visit there in late summer of 1965, when, on my way back from Claremont, I spent a few days there. My old friend from Marburg days, Helmut Rückriegel, who worked there at the German Information Centre, took me right from the southern tip of the city up to the Cloisters, the Museum site, where one could see the most wonderful unicorn-carpets– the opposite of the ones in the Musée Cluny, about which Rilke had written in his 'Notebook of Malte Laurid's Boat': *There are carpets here, Abelone…'*

Perhaps it was these carpets which inspired me to dedicate a whole issue of *Fikrun wa Fann* to the unicorn.

There were many meetings and lectures which, time and again, took me to New York. One of the first meetings there was early in 1974. It was a symposium on *Rumi and Biruni*, the two best representatives of the medieval peak of Islamic culture, one, the mystic, the other, an historian and natural scientist. Peter Chelkowski from the New York University had organized it. Later, I frequently stayed with him and his warm-hearted wife Goga. In their living-room was a huge Persian painting of the battle of Kerbela from the Kachar time. But its bloody theme did not deter us from enjoying the delicious eats and drinks and the glistening lights of Washington Square beneath us. I hardly ever had to stay in a hotel. New York was full of orientalists, whose hospitality was truly Oriental.

For many years, my real New York 'home' was Jeanette Wakins near the Columbia University (106 Street West), near the bus route number 4, and filled with a literary atmosphere. The slender Jeanette with her deep voice, from a Lebanese family, was a genius of hospitality. In the evenings after a seminar at the Columbia University, colleagues from all over converged there, and the apartment seemed to expand miraculously with the onrush of so many colleagues from Boston, Philadelphia, and God knows from where they all came for a drink or eats; for the night, at least three guests shared the small apartment with a majestic cat. Jeanette, who had been the last student of Joseph Schacht, was a specialist in Islamic Law. She knew each and everything. She had the answer to questions of discussions on positions, recent publications in Arabic Studies or the latest dispute between colleague X and critic Y– she was informed about everything. My visits there normally started with my inviting her and Peter Awn to our favourite Japanese restaurant on Columbus Avenue. Even

Jeanette's cat, normally rather unsocial, comforted me when one evening, I reached home, dead tired after a one hour bus trip from Washington Square. I had had trouble with my lecturer, who fully deserved her name Despina. She was simply despotic the way she kept ordering ever new, technical changes to my book *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*. Exhausted, I went straight to bed. The cat, who normally hardly took notice of me, jumped up and did not leave me till the last of my tears had dried up. My book was the result of a series of lectures at the New York University. Actually, I should have dedicated it to her.

At the Columbia University I held the Bampton Lectures, the material for which I later worked into the Gifford Lectures. I repeatedly gave talks at the Iran Centre. Its director was the untiring Ehsan Yar-Shater. His assistant worked on the *Encyclopedia Iranica*, as well as on various aspects of Iran Studies. Ehsan was most pleasantly supported by his wife Latifeh. Many Iran fans from all over the world felt the grief and vacuum when she died.

For me, the most beautiful aspect of New York was the Metropolitan Museum, although there were many others as well. Nobody can forget Monet's *Lotuses* in the Museum of Modern Art. The Metropolitan Museum had a wonderful section of Islamic art, which had been set up by Richard Ettinghausen. That is where I had met him in 1967, when I stayed for the first time in Harvard for a longer time. Between him, his wise wife Elizabeth and myself, a warm-hearted friendship developed. We were all deeply shocked when in 1979, he died. Who would now be his successor? Was there anyone who equaled him in knowledge? When Cary Welch took over, a very different type of art specialist came into the Islamic section– a connoisseur, rather than a scholar. Thus it happened, that on Easter Sunday at seven in the morning, my telephone rang. It was Cary who wanted to know if I would like to work with him in the

Islamic section, so as to cover all aspects of calligraphy. “You are an incredible Easter rabbit!” I exclaimed, unkempt and without breakfast as I was; now, my dream became reality– the dream of my student days, to do something in the field of Islamic art!

After the director of the Met, Philippe de Montebello, had given his approval (later too, he always supported me in a very kindly manner), my first job was to organize a small, exquisite exhibition of Islamic calligraphy in a room newly added to the section. It was inaugurated in September 1982 under the title *Celestial Pen*. But at normal times, I was supposed to mainly read and identify inscriptions and texts, because historians of arts were not very competent, or hardly even knew a bit about Islamic languages.

Thus, during the semesters I had to make several trips from Boston to New York. The Thursday-lectures finished at ten in the morning. I then hurried to the airport to catch the eleven o’clock flight to La Guardia. Unless there was a traffic jam, I was in my office at half past twelve, where I enjoyed working together with the women colleagues and with George, who held the keys to all the treasures in his hands. Mostly I returned to Boston on Friday evening.

It was extremely satisfying to hold precious ceramics with Persian or Arabic inscriptions in my hands, or feel the most delicate paper of an illuminated volume of poetry, or identify an early page of the Quran on parchment! But the work became difficult when, in the section *Arms and Armour* I had to work through heavy armoury or mighty swords, which had more decorative than readable inscriptions– however this too, was exciting. Off and on we were offered new pieces. Afghan refugees wanted to give away a Quran which for them, was very precious, but did not have the quality required by a museum; or, some educated ladies got very upset that a dainty, Persian

manuscript from the early fifteenth century was not printed, but written by hand. "You mean they did that by hand?" they asked and not believing it, shook their well coiffured heads. So, a lot of entertainment!

In 1982, Cary and I had published a precious, small manuscript from the Fogg Arts Museum Harvard, a luxury edition of the Divan of the Persian poet Anvari (died around 1198). It had been copied in 1589 in Lahore and decorated with extremely delicate miniatures– a 'pocket-book' for the Moghul emperor Akbar who at that time, ruled from Lahore. May be, it had been ordered for his wife Salima, who had a library of her own. A few years later Cary, myself, and the colleagues from the Islamic section, together with my former student Wheeler, published an album, which had been prepared for Akbar's son Jehangir, and was later taken over by his son Shah Jehan. It contained precious miniatures: portraits of courtiers (Akbar had miniatures done of every important member of his court), of plants and animals. Pages of best Persian calligraphy alternated with the pictures. This beautiful volume came out in 1980 as *The Emperor's Album.*

In the meantime– in 1985– the greatest event of Cary's time had taken place: the exhibition INDIA, which had been his dream since long. We all shared in the work on the big catalogue, which contained specimen of all epochs of Indian art– from the 'primitive' objects with their powerful expressiveness, up to the most sophisticated pieces of art of the Moghul period. I experienced from a distance how one prepares a large exhibition. Because, after the end of the semester in June, I had to be in Bonn and from there, I had to travel to the congress for historians of religions in Sydney. I could not avoid it as, at that time, I was the president of IAHR. After the not really successful nor satisfying congress in the cold winter air of Sydney I flew to Los Angeles, where, thanks to the dateline, I reached

before the time that I had departed. In Boston I got somewhat used again to the U.S.A., with the help of the loyal friends Alma Giese and Wolfhart Heinrichs. From there I went to New York, where Jeanette had found for me a tiny room with a young Orientalist, where I, over several weeks of late-summer heat, nearly suffocated, although the owner and his family were very nice people. But, once I reached the museum, I forgot heat and everything else, over the final preparations and unpacking of the treasures. Never in my life could I otherwise, have touched the legendary, sexagon emerald of two-hundred and eighteen carat with its extremely fine engravings. Its normal place is Sabah Museum in Kuwait. How could I ever have dreamed of holding in my hands the tiny opium bowl of Jehangir, made of white jade and decorated with rubies, which looked like real flower-buds. And then a mighty terrapin, as giant turtle, crept out of a box, made of a single jade block, almost fifty centimeter long and thirty centimeter across, and allowed us to pat it. And not to mention the red velvet tent, which once belonged to the emperor Aurangzeb and, around 1675, fell into the hands of a Rajput prince of Jodhpur. It was placed in such a way that firstly, visitors saw it through a white marble grating. Even its owner, the Maharaja of Jodhpur, was fascinated by this arrangement. When the gala opening was over, I stayed back a few days more and stood in a corner of the museum, from where I had the best view of my most favourite object: calligraphy from the Deccan from the seventeenth century. In the empty spaces between the lines, which were not more than one centimeter high, whole landscapes had been drawn in finest lines. I liked drawing the attention of the visitors to this tiny work of art which, among the richness of precious objects, they might easily have overlooked.

The treasures of the Metropolitan Museum fascinated me again and again. I wrote seven little stories on my

favourite objects there. It was a picture book, which later appeared in French and German but, strangely enough, never in its English original.

After Cary's departure, Dan Walker took over and luckily, the happy cooperation continued; I owed him interesting new relationships in Cincinnati, where he had worked earlier in a museum. When I left America in 1992, what I missed most was the museum and the New York friends. New York, that includes Long Island, at the end of which lies a campus of the State University of New York, where William Chittick and his wife Sachico Murata teach. Their work on Islamic mysticism has opened totally new perspectives. There is nobody except Sachico who could open up, for the 'normal' Orientalist, Chinese translations of medieval Arabic and Persian texts. And nobody else had the idea to present the world view of Muslims in a book called *The Tao of Islam,* which interprets the harmony, the balance of Islam on the basis of long-time studies of Arabic and Persian sources. People coming from an East-Asian tradition in many cases, find it easier to approach Islam; they are not influenced by the Jewish-Christian traditions as we are, which often leads to wrong comparisons. And then, not to forget: nobody else could, from practically nothing, prepare such excellent Chinese and Japanese food as Sachico. Indeed, the days in Stony Brook with the Chitticks were always a wonderful combination of scholarliness and pleasure, spiced with humour.

My last visit to Long Island was in connection with a meeting, in which a small group of American scholars of religion met there, always in the last week of April. Everything stood in blossom, as if Long Island were one big park. But the learned colleagues hardly seemed to take notice of anything– they were lost in philosophical and sociological discussions, which dealt with religion– which is 'modern' nowadays– in a theoretical manner. The word

‘God’ was duly avoided. In the evening I went to New York City, and next morning I took, as usual, the bus near Jeanette’s house to go to the museum. In the northern part of the Central Park almond trees were in bloom among Japanese cherry-trees and oceans of pink flowers– spring was at its best here. Behind me, two black ladies– probably worker-women– were sitting; one of them told the other : “Isn’t it like the Garden of Eden before the Fall?” I got the feeling that these simple women understood God better than my highly learned colleagues.

During my frequent taxi-rides between the airport and the museum I got a good impression of the many aspects of life of the taxi-drivers, who loved to chat with the stranger. One was a Russian lecturer, another one a Turkish shepherd. One young driver was black and others were from a number of foreign countries. But most of all I was impressed by an elderly Jewish driver, who had decorated his senile vehicle with broad strips of yellow paper on which he had written in large letters:’ This is a masel- tow- (congratulations!) taxi. Be happy! Today for sure, something good will come your way. Masel tow! Don’t be sad!’ I asked him why he had fixed these encouraging words to his taxi. “You see,” he said, “ a lot of young people come to me, many are so sad or desperate that they want to throw away their life. Then I talk with them and try to give them a little hope.” Whenever I recall New York, I remember him too and hope that he himself is happy.

Nobody at that time could fathom that the pride of the city of New York, the twin towers in the South of the island, would be reduced to rubble and ashes on 11th.September, 2001.

Between Tallahassee and Vancouver.

New York was only one of the many cities where, in the course of the years, I travelled for lectures and conferences. Second in frequency was probably Chicago, which, through

the presence of Mircea Eliades, was a centre of religious studies. I took part in the work on the *Encyclopedia of Religion* and thus, saw Eliade off and on. I also met the colleagues of the department of Near East Languages, where Heshmar Moayyad taught, the sophisticated representative of Persian, who was an old acquaintance of mine from Frankfurt. They also taught Urdu there. I liked the city, which spread pleasantly along the Michigan Lake. At its shores the cold wind blew right through you. The neighbouring places like Evanston too, were quite charming. Heshmat proudly took my mother to the huge Bahai-temple, the first of its kind there. (The Bahai temple in Delhi resembles a white lotus flower, which rises up within a desolate slum area.)

I went almost as often to Los Angeles. In particular I liked Montreal, just one hour by air from Boston. There at the McGill University, was a very good Islam centre.There were mostly Ismaili students, sent there by the Aga Khan, who were studying with Charles Adams and Herrmann Landolt. Canada was a centre for the Ismailis, where I enjoyed lecturing. In my early years at Harvard I frequently visited McGill. I recall that on one Easter Sunday, I painted some forty Easter eggs with Arabic and Persian sayings, which were then given to the jubilant students in the hospitable home of Adams. I also lectured in Toronto, not only for the Ismailis, but also at conferences on History of Religion. I spent one charming evening in a roof-top restaurant with Joseph Campbell, whose wonderful books on mythology and its role in the spread of ideas of Heinrich Zimmer fascinated a lot of Americans and Europeans. It was always most enjoyable to discuss things with Joe. I liked his depth in the living world of myth, his understanding of the innermost levels of religion and his sense of beauty. Only later did I understand his relationship to the Eranos-group in Ascona.

It happened in Winnipeg that, to my utter surprise, I was elected president of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR). I recall my reaction to it when Zwi Werblowski brought me the news to my hotel-room: "Heiler would have been so happy about it!" Immediately after my inaugural speech a number of girl students demanded of me that now, after all, I should do something for the women. I also went to Edmonton, not quite an ideal place for me, although I met there an old friend from Turkish and Bengali days. Together with her, we warmed ourselves in the memory of the heat of Dhaka and Chittagong, because it was an icy cold day (it was the month of May!). And finally, there was Vancouver on the Pacific, a charming city at the bay. From the faculty club one had a magnificent view which allowed you to dream, that you could travel far, far away to the North and see nothing but forests and bays. But these were dreams; my reality was that I had to give lectures for Ismailis and other students.

At times, there were places with exotic names. When Gulshan was teaching in Tallahassee, I visited her there in Florida. My school friend Inge started her academic career in Chattanooga which I explored together with Mama. From there we went to Albany in Upstate New York, which meant going from the blossoms of the South to the winterly East. Flights of cranes crossed the icy lakes and wrote mysterious signs into the winter-sky. Joseph Peter Strelka, the intelligent Austrian of German Studies with whom I had been working together for a short time, gave us a wonderful time there. From there, Inge, via some peculiar detours, went to Iowa, where she taught German Studies and specialized in the effects of the Islamic Orient on German literature. Of course, I had to go to Iowa too, where, surprisingly, the first mosque in the western part of North America is situated.

My most extensive journeys were linked to the ACLS lectures. The *American Council of learned Societies* sends every year, one scholar, mostly in the field of religious studies, on a lecture tour to a number of universities. The speaker offers a series of five lectures, which must have at least a lose connection. The universities choose what suits them: one, two, or all the five of them. One can never be sure, who wants to listen to what. As far as I am aware, I broke all records. I delivered a total of forty lectures. From the foreword of my book which was printed later under the title: *As through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam*, I saw that I lectured at the Rice University Houston (Texas), Trinity College San Antonio (Texas), Knoxville (Tennessee), Duke University (Durham, North Carolina), University of Chapel Hill (North Carolina; three of my more important books appeared from there), University of Toronto, Princeton University, MacMaster University (Hamilton, Ontario), McGill University (Montreal) Columbia University New York and Union Theological Seminary New York (where I met Dorothee Sölle and conducted her through the Islamic section of the Metropolitan Museum), University of Colorado (Bolder and Denver), University of Chicago, and Evanston (Illinois). And finally, University of Alberta, Edmonton. All of them had to be adjusted during the spring semester at Harvard. But the effort was worth it. On what other occasion could I have seen the forests of Tennessee or the snow mountains of Colorado?

Apart from the winter travels for ACLS, I held lectures in the blossom-clad Eugene (Oregano) and at Berkeley's interesting campus. A later visit, after becoming emeritus, took me to Palo Alto in California, where I enjoyed the hospitality of Katharina Mommsen. We together kept evoking Goethe and Oriental poetry. By far the best were the lectures in Salt Lake City (Utah), the city of the Mormons. There, I not only enjoyed the company of the

colleagues, but also the friendship of a loveable Persian couple. They had lost their son very early and in his memory, they sponsored a lecture series on Persian culture. Nature in Utah is overwhelming, not only in the mountains. On my earlier visit there the preparations for the Winter Olympics had destroyed nature. But now I saw the strangest sceneries. They reminded me partially of Goreme in Turkey, and also of Afghanistan; but the yellow and coral-red hues of the rocks looked like having been chiseled by the hands of fairies. In between the lectures, tours were arranged, which I enjoyed a lot. The Great Salt Lake and the temple of the Mormons in Salt Lake City were very interesting. Luckily, there was coffee available in the university which elsewhere, is prohibited by the Mormons, just like alcohol (this too, discreetly camouflaged in a paper-bag,, can be taken into certain restaurants). To compensate, Utah is the centre of the ice-cream industry.

At one time we went from there to the Yellowstone National Park, which I wanted to see since my childhood. But it was quite disappointing. A large tract of the forest was destroyed by fire, and the geysers were also not that fascinating. But perhaps, it was all due to fatigue and the absence of the right kind of company.

The years in America had been a rich time, colourful and in some respects, overwhelming. I met people of different backgrounds, scholars and simple citizens, from elite-universities and beggars who in winter, lay across the gutters from where the heating-steam of hospitals or universities oozed out. I experienced some snowstorms and enchanting spring days, the Indian summer with gorgeous maple leaves. Their redness was even visible from the aircraft on the route from Canada to Boston; and then, loneliness, in spite of many friendships. “Annemarie, you are going to the loneliest place on earth”, my colleague Ken

Morgan, himself a Harvard alumnus, had warned me when I accepted the offer. And he was right. There was so much beauty, such wonderful successes, which I could never have dreamed about, many wonderful friendships; but the USA never became a home to me. Had it been the mistake of the exotic bird, that from the Western Exile she was craving for her home in the Orient?

Part VI

Journeying Through the Orient

To foreign lands I go,
Some useful work to do
Fulfilling His command.
His blessings guide my task,
What's good and righteous, grasp,
To serve His world's command.
He'll show me where to travel
The right path to unravel
And help in every way.
Health, cheer and life He'll give
In seasons and all winds I'll live
And all His words obey.
Paul Fleming, 1633, before his departure for Persia

Kuwait and Bahrain

Sometimes I envy the young students who, as a matter of normalcy, come for a summer course to Cairo, Tunis or Damascus. For me, it had been an overpowering experience when in 1938, I met two Arabs in Jena. I, for the first time, set foot in an Arab country in the end of January, 1958 on my flight from Ankara to Karachi. I had a twenty four hours stop-over in Baghdad. One of my Turkish students studied Arabic there and for a whole day, he showed me the city which did not at all look like a place from *One*

Thousand and one Nights. We visited some shrines, above all the one of the great Abdul Qadir al-Gilani, whose order, the Qadiriyya, has spread all over the Islamic world right up to Indonesia. In various countries of the world I kept meeting his descendents. His mausoleum was full of rose fragrance and was crowded with Indian and Pakistani pilgrims. Next to it, the Shi'ite sanctuary of Kazimain impressed me deeply; totally wrapped in covers, I visited the grave-mosque of the seventh Shi'ite imam, which was filled with mirrors and candles; but I felt confused and insecure. The onward flight eastwards was unforgettable; the black, fertile land between Euphrates and Tigris, which both fall into the Gulf, made me think of the country's long history.

It was almost four decades later, in 1996, several years after the wretched Gulf war, when I went to Kuwait, which was still suffering from the aftermath of the war. My Harvard student Ghada received me at the airport in the cool gentle rain; but I had too little time to bother about the weather, because Ghada had prepared a rich programme for me. This beautiful woman, a refugee from Palestine, had come to Kuwait where she had worked in the Sabah Museum for a long time. For many years she kept coming to Harvard, job and family permitting, to study Islamic History of Arts, and finally write her dissertation under Oleg Grabar and me. It was a translation of a medieval Arabic work on the treasures and gifts of the early Islamic dynasties. It is a book, which is a bigger fairytale than the narration of Aladdin's treasure-cave. Through her experience with museum work she was able to identify many objects or decipher strange descriptions of materials and gadgets. So, Ghada was my guide. I met the very dark-skinned successor to the throne and his impressive wife (she looks like the queen of Saba to me), who arranged a 'ladies only' dinner for me. I was a guest in the parliament,

which did not yet have any female representative. But an active woman was the rector of the university. I met many old friends. The German ambassador had once, learned basic Arabic from us in Bonn. Sheikha Hussah as-Sabah, founder and organizer of the magnificent museum, which had been destroyed and plundered during the war, was active as ever. There was yet another museum which, luckily, had survived the ravages of war: the Tariq-Rajib Museum. These days it was run by the Hungarian art-historian Geza Fehervari, whom I knew from London. I wanted to stay on and on, and could not decide whether the magnificent calligraphies or the jewelry, the precious gowns or the ceramics were more beautiful. But duty called– I had come to give lectures and, for the first time, in Arabic! Ghada was very proud that I had followed her promptings. Too soon I had to leave the hazy Kuwait, to go to Cairo, where it rained cats and dogs.

Kuwait was not the only place that has museums which thrill every fan of Islamic art. Bahrain too, has a small but rich museum. The Bait ul-Quran in the capital of the tiny state in the Gulf, just like the two museums in Kuwait, were established through private initiative. A. Jaseem Kanoo is the founder of this ‘house’. A small, architecturally very beautiful mosque, lecture halls and a library are part of this museum, also metal works and ceramics. Even modern art from the Arab world is represented. Shortly after I left in February 2000, an exquisite exhibition of ceramics decorated with calligraphy was shown there, created by my friend and former Harvard girl-student from Iraq, Wasmaa Chorbachi.

Bahrain is international: in the bazaar with its tempting gold-jewelry you hear more Urdu and Hindi than Arabic. Pakistanis constitute the largest portion of its population. Thus I was not surprised when I ran into some old friends: ladies, whose husbands were in Diplomatic service, or in

the commercial sector. One of my new acquaintances was a brilliant young man, an expert in Islamic banking. This follows the Quranic prohibition of taking interest for financial transactions. It is a kind of trade, in which gain and loss are shared equally by both parties, or suffered by both of them. The same gentleman interviewed me for hours for the TV; eight serials were to be aired later, during the fasting month of Ramadan. In the studio I, ironically, admired a modern wall carpet with a life-sized camel on it. After that, I could not prevent him from presenting me with an identical carpet!

One remark on this topic: why does a visitor receive so many gifts? When local institutions extend invitations, the fare and stay are being paid, and generous hospitality is offered which fulfills all wishes. But there is no honorarium for the lectures. In its place, there are the gifts. In Pakistan, I mostly got beautiful woolen shawls. But at times, these surprises do not meet the taste of the honoured guest; often, there are mountains of books. Their transport for an air-traveller is a major problem for the solution of which the embassy or a local government institution needs to be involved. For the lecture for the Bahrain ladies I received an immensely large copperplate, beautifully done with Quranic inscriptions but hardly transportable. We wrapped it into the camel-carpet.

Recently, Bahrain has been joined to Saudi Arabia through a long bridge. It is said that every weekend, cars are coming in from Arabia whose owners then give themselves to the enjoyment of alcohol, which is prohibited in their own country. It helps the Bahrain economy. We made an interesting excursion to see all the ends of the island, although it was cold, which is as pleasure for the heat-plagued inhabitants, but not for me. A cold storm whipped the poor palm trees which bent low, and the Gulf had white foamy crowns on the waves. Their colours

changed from a light turquoise-green to a deep tourmaline. Together with some intelligent Bahrain ladies who, although having studied in Europe and Canada, lived in strict hijab (veiling), I admired the tumultuous sea while we discussed the problems of modern Quran interpretations. This was the only time ever that I was being driven by a totally black-veiled lady, which she did very elegantly.

Syria and Jordan

In those days a cold-wave came over the Near East right up to the northern borders of Saudi Arabia. It seemed to me that I was persecuted by the cold at all these places which were actually supposed to be comfortably warm. The congress on *Islam in South Asia* (1977) in Jerusalem I survived only with the help to the woolen jackets which kind Israeli colleagues had given me– and that in 'spring' weather in the end of April! And Syria?

We had snow there– in March! By invitation of the University of Damascus I had come to Syria, and the rector of it had a name that suited the weather: Ma'barid– 'Coldwater'! Like many other Arabs he had studied in the former German Democratic Republic (DDR) and brought along a German wife from there. My companion, Hannan, a professor for Romance Studies, was a pleasant young lady under whose guidance I felt very comfortable. Damascus was not what I had dreamed. One of our Bonn-students who was working on his dissertation at the Archaeological Institute, took me through the old city and showed me the mighty Omayyad mosque. Perhaps I had seen it on too many photos, so that now the famous mosaics did not impress me so much as they should have; may be, it was due to the missing sunshine under which the building should have shone in all its splendor!

Of course we visited the mausoleum of Ibn 'Arabi, that theosophist- mystic, whose powerful system has influenced the religious scenario of Islam like no other. But even

nowadays, orthodox circles consider him a dangerous infidel. He was born in Murcia (Spain) in 1165, and after long journeys reached Damascus, where he died in 1240. He left a huge legacy which even now, has not been fully perused. But he creates more and more attention in the western world. I must admit that I am only partially a friend of his trends of thought which he expresses in idiosyncratic ways. But it would have been impolite not to visit his last resting place and speak a Fateha there. The mausoleum was all kitsch, but outside sat a meowing kitten which in its own way, praised God and His creatures who stroked it and gave it bits to eat.

I had a most interesting morning with the grand mufti, who expressed an ecumenical world view and I wished, that I could have stayed longer with him.

But my time was limited by lectures and visits to ministers. From there, under a rainy sky, we travelled North. Near Hama, at the site of the powerful water wheels on the Orontes, we had a cup of tea. And then the rain started, which stayed with us, even in Aleppo. I had very much looked forward to seeing this town– for one, our lecturer in Berlin had told us a lot about his home-town and secondly, I loved the poetry that came from there under the Hamdanis in the tenth century. There were powerful, rich-sounding verses of Mutanabbi– the favourite poet of uncountable admirers of the Arabic language. But I preferred the garden-poets Sanaubari and Kushachim. It was these two friends who sang, in graceful lines, the praise of the gardens and blossoms and covered all aspects of elegant life. Aleppo was also familiar to me from my studies of the Mameluks. Its mighty citadel was one of their most northern defence posts of that time. In August 1516, on the battlefield of Mardj Dabiq, North of the town, which is visible from the Turkish border town Kilis, a battle had

taken place by which the victorious armies of the Ottomans made an end to the Mameluk empire.

It was quite a disappointment. At least I could briefly see the beautiful old hammam, the public bath, and warm myself up a bit. I also had a glimpse of the modest grave of Suhrawardi, the master of enlightenment. He was the great mystical thinker from Iran, who was killed there in 1191, aged thirty-eight. His daring flight of thought seemed too dangerous to some theologians; or, perhaps, envy for such a genius was the reason. About three hundred years later, the ecstatic Turkish poet Nesimi was also cruelly murdered there– he too, a victim of narrow-minded politics.

Aleppo had promised a lot, but I only saw little. I didn’t understand why we were put up in a hotel with– supposedly– Italian cuisine, and I was not given the chance to taste the famous Aleppo food! During a break in the rain I made a dash to the huge citadel which I enjoyed, although the steps didn’t seem to end. But not a single of the once famous gardens was left. We were short of time, so I could not even see the old city. But I hope to do so some day– inshallah!

From Aleppo we went to the harbour of Ladhiqiya, whose director was a descendent of the great mystic al Hallaj. We chatted animatedly about mystical traditions which he knew well– he was an engineer! His wife was a lively German engineer. She told me about the political situation, the tensions between Sunnis and Alevites, the influential Shi’ite group, whose headquarters are in the forested hills near the coast. They drew a few comparisons between the Syrian situation and the former DDR. In the morning we visited Ras Shamra, the ancient Urartu, which is near the hotel by the Mediterranean. However, it rained so heavily that we could not see the ruins from the eighth century B.C. Tiny mountain plants raised their heads from the ground in between the ruins. We now went to the

South, to Damascus, and intended to visit Ma'lula on the way, that remote centre of early Christianity where they still speak an ancient Syrian dialect. With displeasure we looked at the changing shape of the raindrops and soon, we were wrapped in snow. We bravely stuck to our plan and, slithering along the road, we got down into the valley. We were four of us: Hannan, Sabine Hallaje, myself and the wonderful, untiring driver. We finally reached a nice hotel in Ma'lula. From there we could oversee the bottom of the valley with steep, rocky walls around, and the houses which were piled on top of each other. They looked like a Christmas card from the Alps. If the Aleppo poet Sanaubari had been here, he would not have been so enchanted by the snow which he described as 'Rose of the winter'. We visited the church, listened to the Syrian prayers of the old priest, and, to receive his blessings, we bought a bottle of the over-sweetened, sticky red wine. We were quite alive when we reached the capital. I completed all my lecture obligations and two mornings later, we quickly left for Palmyra. Even there, snowy patches glistened on the streets and were reflected in the clear morning light against which the vast ruin site stood out in golden colour.

Of course it also rained when I in 1993, for the first time, got to Amman. Sheikh Zaki Yamani, the former Saudi oil minister, had nominated me as a member of the al-Furkhan Commission. Its task is to catalogue and also, publish important Arabic manuscripts from anywhere in the world, particularly from marginal areas like the West-African states or Bosnia. The first, daylong meeting in which I took part, was held in Amman. Among all the great scholars from various countries, I still felt a bit strange, although we all knew each other from our publications. The discussions were exclusively in Arabic and my participation was more passive than active. For the evening, there was an invitation from crown prince Hassan ibn Talal.

I knew his wife Sarwat, or at least, her family, as she was the daughter of Begum Sha'ista Suhrawardi Ikramullah, whose house in Karachi was only a few steps away from that of my hosts in 1958. Begum Ikramullah was and is, one of the most fascinating women of Pakistan, a very delicate and energetic woman from Bengal. She has described her life in a fascinating book, *From Purdah to Parliament.* Its first edition carries the dedication: *"To my husband, who took me out of Purdah and has ever since regretted it"* The young woman, born in 1915, was brought up in traditional seclusion. She paints a vivid picture of the life of an elite Muslim family in the first part of the twentieth century. She took part in the Pakistan movement and worked under Jinnah. After the division of the Subcontinent she played an active role in the political and cultural scene of the country, whose ambassador to Morocco she became for a while. She oozed energy, and so does Sarwat, one of her daughters. In this way I knew Prince Hassan at least from the descriptions of Pakistani friends. We quickly built a good understanding. After dinner we continued for a while in the study. There, the scholarly discussion on Arabic manuscripts was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of an unexpected guest– a large, beautiful cat stepped in. All the scholarly gentlemen and myself fell over the the animal in order to pat it. "Love for cats is part of faith," goes an adage ascribed to the Prophet. A few years later at a dinner in the palace of the prince I reminded the company of this incident. Sarwat had tears in her eyes– the learned cat had died.

Prince Hassan was and is, a philosopher, and his great concern is the religious understanding among religions. For this reason he founded in Amman, the "Institute of Interfaith Studies." I was invited there in 1997. "A-aunti Annemarie?" a soldier at the airport asked me. Kamal Salibi arrived, the Christian director of the centre (whom I

knew since Harvard) and his Muslim assistant, a tall, loveable lady and refugee from Jerusalem. The days were filled with meetings and of course, lectures. I visited the university of Irbid and met many old acquaintances there, like Princess Wijdan Ali and her husband Prince Ali, in whose house I admired some of the most wonderful calligraphies. I was a bit surprised when Prince Ali conversed with an elderly lady from Iraq in Turkish! I felt the breeze of the old Ottoman empire touch me! The princess is a great sponsor of Islamic and modern art; now, she was the director of the Institute of Diplomacy where, of course, I also had to deliver a lecture.

Then there were surprises. The first one, right on the first day, took me to Mount Nebo, that mountain, from where Moses is said to have seen the Praised Land. One cannot describe the view across the Jordan Valley and to the mountains near Jerusalem. Biblical history touched me! I have rarely visited a place with such strong mystical power. A modest, old church sits like a crown atop the hill, in front of which a modern sculpture shows the Iron Snake. It was difficult for me to part from this place, but the icy wind drove us away and into a small restaurant on the way to the valley, where one of the usual touristic centres had been set up.

The second great experience was Petra. I feared, that it was too well-known from all the many brochures available on it, which describe the gate to the treasury which one can reach either on horseback or in one of the speeding carts. The route to it was as interesting as the destination itself. There was the old fort of Karak, which for a long time, was part of the Mameluk empire. I was much interested in it because in the fifteenth century, the then commander of it had been a man who had written one of the most important books on the interpretation of dreams. But where would we stay for the night? Our vehicle seemed to have hit a wrong

route, But– oh no! We reached a village, which had been transformed into a hotel landscape. Every house had maintained its original character, but was furnished with the finest products of Jordan's craftsmen. The bath and similar necessities were all super modern. And then the view from the entrance to the village! The rock-wall, behind which was our destination, shone in strange shades and hues of the setting sun and in the morning, sparkled in its light. The three of us - Mona, an American student and myself– were given over to this seemingly bewitched place (one exception was the noisy restaurant). Bewitched is also the way through the long, narrow gorge of Petra with its multi-coloured, steep rocks, and then the unbelievable sight of the mighty, pink portal which suddenly rises before the visitor's eyes when he comes out of that dark gorge. Our well-trained guide explained to us the complex, fifteen hundred years old irrigation system of the Nabateans, and other technical data, which I mostly forgot. I just enjoyed myself. The same year, when I had the honour of accompanying Federal President Herzog to a Near East country, I sat in one of the carts with Christine Herzog. She too, fully enjoyed the excursion. The rock-scape changed its character every moment. There were side-valleys and caves– a confusing and fascinating scenery.

The third surprise came just before my departure. At an evening invitation with the crown prince I met Begum Ikramullah. We enjoyed the delicious dinner (the princess had herself baked the meringue cake) and on taking leave, the host said:" We'll see each other in the morning." Why, I wondered, because by midday my plane was leaving. I reached the palace in my travel clothes just before nine o'clock– and what happened? In the presence of our ambassador and some colleagues Prince Hassan handed me a velvet case with a colourful, high order for "Arts and Sciences", as well as a set of a beautiful recitations from

the Quran. I was totally surprised! After our return to the institute Dr. Salibi produced a bottle of champagne. Such a surprise simply had to be toasted– at least among the Christians! On the way to the airport we made a brief stop-over in Mshatta, that desert-castle, whose magnificent façade, since 1913, is in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. The guard brought us a cup of tea and we enjoyed a moment of peace accompanied by a cricket-concert and many butterflies all around us. At our take-off we escaped a disaster from a burst tire and reached Frankfurt with only one hour delay– thank God!

The security personnel at the airport wondered what this strangely shaped piece of metal in my travel-bag might be, which appeared on the screen. I told them the story and asked them whether they would like to see the order. Oh yes, they said, such a thing one doesn't get to see every day. In no time I had a crowd of security guards surrounding me, who admired the golden, sparkling object. They seemed to enjoy it the same as I did, at least they thanked me very happily.

I met Prince Hassan again when in 2000, on the occasion of the award of the Tolerance-Prize of the Evangelical Academy of Tutzing to retired president Roman Herzog, he held the laudatory speech– a masterpiece, which moved us all. Two weeks later we met in London, at an Arabic celebration in honour of Sheikh Zaki Yamani's seventieth birthday. On that occasion, all of us, including Queen Fabiola of Belgium, happily danced an Arab circle dance.

Prince Hassan is a wonderful person. I remember how, after the inauguration of a water treatment plant in the Jordan Valley, he kidnapped President Herzog into his car and both of them happily sped ahead of us. Mrs. Herzog was quite amused about it. We all had expected him to be the successor of his brother King Hussain, but things turned

out differently for whatever reason. Perhaps this gives him the opportunity to follow his private interests and intensify his work for the reconciliation of, and understanding among, the religions of Abraham. The Catholic-Theological Faculty of the university of Tübingen in 2001, rightly so, awarded him an honourary doctorate.

Egypt, Sudan - and an Excursion to Tunesia

As a young student and scholar in the desolate city of war-torn Berlin I escaped by dreaming of Cairo. The emirs of the Mameluks with their cruel methods, the largely corrupt civil officials seemed to resemble the men who surrounded us here daily. I walked through the streets of my imaginary Cairo and tried to escape from the increasing destruction of the city for short whiles. It took many years till I, in 1961, saw Cairo for the first time– and that too, only briefly, on a stop-over of a flight from Frankfurt to Karachi. I stayed with my colleague Ishaq Musa al-Husaini, who belonged to the respected family of the Jerusalem Husainis. He told me about the sufferings of so many Palestinian families at the time of the founding of the state of Israel– these sufferings by now, are almost forgotten. My host though– he was a relative of the grand mufti of Jerusalem– tried again and again, through the history of the three religions, to find positive components in the relationships among the religions of Abraham.

Cairo was cold. Nothing except the citadel and the pyramids reminded me of the dreams of my youth. Later, I met the Dominican priest Anawati, whose works are witness to the best traditions of Islamic studies. There was more than that. Through the smile of Père Anawati the deadliest foes among peoples should have wanted to make peace with each other. A small remark: On my flight to Karachi in a Lockheed Electra of the KLM, two engines failed.

When in 1984, I again came to Egypt, an old friend, Kurt Müller, was the German ambassador. He too, was a specialist on the history of the Mameluks. It made me feel quite at home there. The old city became more familiar and the Qaitbay Mausoleum, which I had outlined decades earlier in my book *Land of Light,* was almost as beautiful as I had dreamed it to be. Also, just before leaving for this journey, I had rapidly read through Robert Irwin's Mameluk novel *The Arabian Nightmare*. In the book, this excellent expert on medieval history, drew a vivid picture of a type of Cairo with which I was familiar through my studies (the result was, that soon after, I translated the book). Together with Trude Müller I roamed through the Khan Khalili. Doris Behrens Abouseif, a copt, showed me hidden Mameluk memorial buildings. We developed a fine relationship. It was saying a lot about certain things that this solid historian of art was not accepted as a professor in Germany, but was given the most prestigious professorial chair for Islamic art in London. Of course I also gave lectures in Cairo and I enjoyed this beautiful autumn week before I left for the Yemen together with Trude.

Again many years went by till I saw Cairo, this time in connection with a meeting of the al-Furqan Foundation. From my room in the Hotel Semiramis, I had a view of the Nile, and on the other side, the new opera house with its touch of Japanese architecture rose amidst a jumble of buildings. Coming in from Kuwait there was a sandstorm followed by heavy rain, which made the air so cold, that caring friends set up a small stove in my room. My protecting angel was Ahmad Farrag, the producer of a very successful TV serial, *Nur 'ala nur,* "Light over Light", which presented Islamic ideals. Apart from our meetings we enjoyed some entertainment. There was a theatre-play, *al-ginzir,* "The Chain", in Egyptian dialect and with an excellent cast. The play showed the religious-political

problems and the early stage of terrorism. I did not mind that I hardly understood anything (I later read the text) of the rapidly spoken Egyptian-Arabic. The acting was a joy in itself. At the conclusion of the al-Furqan moot we took part in festivities in honour of an old Arab poet, where I heard nothing but the splendid, classical Arabic. In between, I met the minister for religion, Zaq-Zouq, who had done his Ph.D. in Germany and married a German lady. He had visited me in Germany long ago. I met him and Ahmad Farrag almost daily. One morning I went to Magdi Youssef, our former chief– translator for *Fikrun wa-Fann.* Then I roamed through Khan Khalili to buy a few gifts. But even such outings could not be done without journalists and the unavoidable photographers. The scholarly work was far less tiring than the 'normal' life with its very late lunches and midnight-dinners. Therefore, on the fourth morning, I felt a bit queer, in spite of all the happiness of being together with friends. On the way to the opera –for a poetry recital I overlooked a tiny step, fell down, and together with spectacles, hat and necklace was being raised by Yamanis who like in a fairy-tale appeared from nowhere. I listened to a few poems and then left to see the then sheikh al Azhar, Gad ul-Haq. Meanwhile, my right foot was swelling with remarkable speed. While I was having lunch with the grand mufti– the present sheikh al-Azhar, Tantawi– the minister for religion Zaqzoug spoke about my small accident. Tantawi bent down very low and had a serious look at my foot. "Waram, waram kabir! Lazim chufi ad-duktur" (a big, big swelling. You have to see the doctor). Thus, by order of the mufti I was taken to hospital by Ahmad Farrag. I left there soon after with a mighty plaster of Paris cast, dyed in shocking-pink! In spite of the pain I laughed heartily at that, and spent the evening at the grand dinner where I received the admiration due to me– but without any food! But I had to abandon my plan to

go from there to Beirut and Damascus for lectures. In the afternoon the good spirit of al-Furkhan, Dr. Ahdaf Suwaif Hamilton, who was a well known woman writer (who writes in English) took me to the Mameluk graves, so that I could offer a brief greeting to the 'friends of my youth'. The next day, my doctor Christian Kellersmann and the elephant-sized driver of the Kuwaiti embassy received me at the Bonn airport. An orthopedic doctor from Bonn replaced the huge but uncomfortable cast by a small one.

About three months later on a Wednesday, the Egyptian embassy rang me up. I should be in Cairo on Saturday to receive an award. I gave a deep sigh, but it all worked out alright. At the Islam Congress which was just about to end, I met a number of acquaintances. In the evening our former ambassador, Murad W. Hofmann, and I drove to an extremely plain hall somewhere in the town, where President Mubarak shortly before his departure for God knows where, presented me with a beautiful, colourful medal (in Pakistan they do it more ceremoniously). Next morning, with the velvet case in my bag, I flew back home.

On the next occasion, in 1999, Cairo was on my route between Khartoum and Tunis. The days in Khartoum were most interesting. Our ambassador, Dr. Werner Daum, a specialist above all on the South Arabian world, had organized everything perfectly. Khartoum and its environment remind me of Sindh, where the great rivers– here, the Nile, there, the Indus– flow through the land bringing both, fertility and destruction. At first, on Friday evening, we visited a number of Sufi-groups and I was allowed or rather ordered, to speak to a group of women, who sat on a platform behind a wooden screen. My wise words in Arabic language on the love of God and poetry, produced not only among the women, but, according to our ambassador, also among the three hundred men who were down and invisible to me, loud sobs. Everywhere the

presence of the Mahdi is felt, who lived there some one hundred years ago and had been very active. Omdurman, now a centre for mystics, was his home area. Most of the time seemed to be spent with lectures and interviews. I have hardly ever experienced such a perfectly prepared, one-hour TV interview as in Khartoum. My interlocutor came from an old religious family. He, in his huge white turban, was not only very decorative, but he even had read a surprisingly large number of my publications. I met politicians and highly educated, politically active women; I had discussions with women-poets– but nobody ever touched the topic of the developments in the deep South of the country, where a large number of tribes with different languages, resist the Islamization.

One day I had the opportunity to go North, to the archaeological sites of Meroe and Naga, which were looked after by Germans. The small, black pyramids of Meroe seemed to be growing out of the orange coloured sand. They resembled a collage of strongly coloured, glazed paper against the bright blue background of the sky. And Naga, dating back to the time of Christ, looked like an illustration of biblical stories.

The Blue Nile continued to carry its grey waters in its flow, and I flew to Cairo, where I was to help with the book-fair and speak at the Goethe Institute. This time, my stay seemed to be quite perfect. At the book fair I was most pleased by the pavilion of al-Furqan, in which I discovered numerous photos of mine, although at that time, I had done only one publication in their book-series. One announcement was of particular interest to me: my lecture on “Rückert as a Translator”, which had been rendered by the Arab Press as: “The German Orientalist Friedrich Rückert speaks about his translation of the Quran!”Rückert is alive!

With some young German friends I roamed through the old city where again, I was impressed by the glass-blowers. I also visited my beloved Qarafa, the old graveyard, where so many great personalities of Islamic history are buried. Nowadays, houses have usurped much of the land. Again we visited Ibn al-Farid, the bard of mystic love, whose ode in praise of the celestial wine of love I had translated many many years ago:

To cheer the friend, the beloved, wine we drank thus,
Before the grape was created, the drink alone intoxicated us.

For the first time I saw the modest burial place of Dhu'n-Nun, in whose adages and prayers the Quranic idea keeps recurring, that everything created– air and water, trees and birds, sun and moon– constantly praise the greatness of the Lord. With satisfaction I saw that the mausoleum of Ata'allah had been beautified: the walls of the bright room held sayings of the medieval master, whose piety has given to the Islamic world some of the finest words of wisdom. His small book *Hikam*, "Words of Wisdom", is loved and read from Morocco to Indonesia. I had translated it in 1985. For me, it has become a Vademecum:

The fool asks: What will I do today?
The wise man asks: What will God do with me today?

In this way, I enjoyed Cairo, and not to forget, its cats. (I had written the text to the beautiful book of photographs *Cairo Cats* by Lorraine Chittock.) Instead of running to the tourist-crowded pyramids of Gizeh, the director of the Goethe Institute one afternoon took me to Dahshur, where we admired one of the very first pyramids. It gave me a sense of the incredible effort of people over four thousand years ago, who moved thousands of boulders with a weight of twenty tons each and, over a period of twenty years, joined them to create this perfect form.

A special surprise for us was that the pharao, who was buried there, had, for us, the late-born ones, dug a bottle of champagne in the sand, so that we could refresh ourselves.

Next morning we were off to Tunis at four degrees ‘warmth’ and in pouring rain. Tunis would have been for me a wet-cold memory had it not been for the kindly directress of the Goethe Institute there, who took me into her house. Half dead and ice cold I gave a lecture in Arabic on the role of mysticism for the understanding among religions. The reward followed immediately: the visit to the grand mosque (Sidi Oqba Mosque) in Kairuan. It fulfilled another dream of my youth. I have rarely seen a more impressive mosque than this one (built in 678). Its columns and decorative writings were of incomparable simplicity and became a model for many others, right up to Gulbarga in southern India. With an effort we tore ourselves away from this truly numinous place. Then we strolled through the alleys which were familiar to us from Macke’s and Klee’s paintings; there was a lot of sparkling blue in them, and a lot of cats. What a contrast to the sea-side crowded with tourists, who could feel nothing of the sublime peace of this mosque. Its image accompanied me, when I flew back the next day.

Morocco

Just as I had surprised Mama on her seventieth birthday with a voyage along the southern coast of Anatolia, we planned to go to Morocco for her eightieth birthday. We spent one week in Fez, Rabat and Marrakesh. It was my only touristic experience. I could not really enjoy it, because hardly two months later, on first March, I had to take up my job at Harvard.

Many years later I was invited to Morocco for lectures. This trip I enjoyed much more, not the least through the hospitality of our ambassador, Dr. Bartels. I gave lectures at various institutions in Rabat, and also in the Islamic

Centre of Casablanca. We visited the huge mosque there, which had just been completed by King Mohammad V, when a tremendous rain swept us off our feet. The mosque looked like a ship jutting out into, and defying, the sea, which surrounds it from three sides. The Morrocan craftsmen had done their best to give shape to the finest details of the decorations in the style of classical Maghreb art-tradition. But the enormous inner hall had no soul. Perhaps, it needed the masses of faithfuls to come to life.

In Rabat I discovered a number of friends, above all the director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation there, Manuel Weischer. Since his study years in Bonn, a close friendship binds us together, which rests on our common love for mysticism and the spiritual aspects of religion. Our discussions always revolved around the interest in another world beyond the material world. A very different person is Fatima Mernessi, the lively and intelligent sociologist and women’s rights defender, whose books have been creating a lot of attention in Europe and America. Earlier, I had met her in Harvard, but now we had a better chance to talk extensively about feminism and other developments. In May 2001, she came for lectures to Bonn, as guest-professor– a lecture series founded by me (see page 324).

In the picturesque city of Fez I lectured at the university, which has an excellent department of German Studies, in which I spoke on such a demanding subject as “Rilke and the Orient”– and that in German. The stay in this old city, so beautifully situated at the foot of the mountains, was far too short; and also, the excursion to the former royal city of Meknes.

In particular I enjoyed Marrakesh, where Jaafar Kansoussi had made the programme which included many lectures. For the first time I spoke on Maulana Rumi in Arabic. He, luckily, had also written several dozen verses in Arabic. And again a wish of mine got fulfilled here: In

the mausoleum of al-Jasuli I experienced a recitation of the dala'il al-khairat. This book of meditation of the fifteenth century with phrases of blessings for the Prophet, is loved and read even in the furthest corners of the Islamic world. But I was most happy when I met again Juan Goytisolo whom, some time earlier, I had met in Avila. There, in the city of Santa Theresa, a repelling city of icy winds, Luce Lopez-Baralt had organized a congress of comparative mysticism. Luce was a woman from Puerto Rico and had studied Arabic with us at Harvard. She mostly devoted her time to the spiritual and literary relationships between the medieval-Iberian world and Islam. Representatives of Latin-American and Spanish literature had come and it was not easy for me to follow all the lectures- except for the proclamations of Ernesto Cardenal, whose main contribution to the congress was his constantly repeated "Amore!" There, I could understand Goytisolo better than anybody else. His novel *The Secrets of the Lonely Bird,* even in its English translation, was difficult to read. But I was fascinated by the power of his eloquence and his imagery. We conversed about Islamic culture, Sufism; we criticized the Mevlevi-group that had performed a dervesh dance which had little in common with the authentic ritual. Now in Marrakesh, we continued our talks. He lived in a house in the Medina, not far from the Jamaat al-fna, the large square in the centre of Marrakesh, which he had described so wonderfully. Juan had been in Bosnia and had visited Muslim minorities in various regions. I was enraptured by his talk and sincerely regretted that my Spanish was too weak to read his books in the original. He accompanied me to Jasuli and listened patiently to my lecture. When I returned the next time, he held a short speech in Arabic to honour me on my birthday. He presented me his book *Gaudi in Anatolia*. In its title-story he experiences the strange rock and cave landscape of

Kappadonia in such a way as if Gaudi, the creator of the cathedral of Barcelona, was still busy creating this bizarre world.

The next visit to Marrakesh differed only little from the present one: lectures…visits…. But there was one difference: the first time I stayed in a nice, small hotel, but now I was, for three days, guest of a charming family in the Medina. A retired higher government official with his pretty wife and his daughter, who was a teacher of French. They all looked after me. My bedroom, like all other private rooms, was on the first floor, surrounded by a balcony. At night it was a bit difficult to find a certain locality, having to go down so many steps without a handrail. So what! The atmosphere was so pleasant, that I felt like a member of the family. And often, the little cat Warda, "Rose", settled down on the pink, silken bedcover and endeared this place– and Marrakesh– to me even more.

This last journey there had yet another, special climax: together with some friends I went up into the Atlas mountains to Timlan, to see the impressive mosque of the reformer Tumart, which had been restored with the advice of the art historian Christian Ewert. The sight of it was too beautiful: the sparkling blue spring-sky, the rich emerald green of trees and meadows, the snow-covered mountain-tops of the Atlas, and in the middle of the solitude, the reddish-brown stone structure from the twelfth century with its pure, beautiful proportions. On the way back we had a glimpse of a holiday camp-site where holiday-makers were bustling about. It could just as well have been in Mallorca or Florida! We left them quickly and enjoyed all the more the last surprise of the day: one of our companions, a professor (Berber, not Arab), took us to his village, where we were entertained most deliciously, with all the specialties of the country. From the number of plastic table-cloths spread one on top of the other we could assess, how

many courses were yet to come, because at the end of each course along with the crockery, the used table-cloth was removed. In this way we always had a clean table-cloth to eat from, whether it was kouskous or pastilla or…or…. I felt as if I were back in the Khyberpass in the Pathan area of Pakistan: the same hospitality, the same generosity among the rather poor population. But in the Islamic world, the guest is a gift from God, as it is expressed in a very early, Arabic poem:

High, my slave, the flame let be,
For the passers-by to see;
If you bring a guest to me,
You are free!

Yemen

"I feel the breath of the All-Merciful come to me from Yemen."This adage has been attributed to the Prophet Mohammad, when he heard about the pious Yemeni shepherd Uwais al Qarani, who converted to Islam without having ever seen the Prophet. But it was not only this beautiful legend which attracted me to Yemen. It was after all, the country of the Queen of Saba, the land of incense, of mysteries, the 'happy Arabia'. Even as a young girl I was enthused by the book by Hans Helfritz, 'Chicago of the Desert'; but in those days one could only dream about travelling to Yemen and Hadramaut; the locked country opened up only gradually after 1997.

My former student Gerd R. Puin lived in Sanaa, to work there on an important cultural project. In 1971, during the process of repairs to the loft of the Grand Mosque, fourteen large sacks with Quranic fragments were found. They date back to the early centuries of the Islamic era. In Islam, it is prohibited to destroy a Quranic text (as is also the case with the Tora in Judaism). These much-fingered manuscripts had probably been stored there when the mosque was being built. The German government

supported the examination of this material and now Puin was in Sanaa while Ursula, the petite Austrian restorer, worked through the largely unreadable, tiny fragments. I felt that she just needed to use a magic formula to glide over a cauliflower-like piece of pergament to make it readable and smooth. I had come there together with Trude Müller from Cairo, and we lived with them. We admired Ursula, who also trained Yemeni restorers. We all together strolled through the old city of Sanaa and admired the photogenic high-rises, which always remind me of a gingerbread-house, dark like cinnamon and with sugar-white window-frames. Sheikha Hussa from Kuwait was there just then, to buy antiques for their museum and we all bravely climbed up to the roof of the tallest building. The view was grand– but, oh my, why do Oriental houses have steps with risers of different height? I heard that the mafraj, the assembly room, was on the top-floor of the building. There, the men of the house meet daily between fifteen and eighteen hours to chew qat, although it is very expernsive, and try to solve the problems of the house and the world. Once or twice I participated in such meetings and dutifully, chewed the delicate young leaves of the qat-bush, which are supposed to have a slightly intoxicating effect– but not on me. It was rather unpleasant that one could not spit out the green fodder but had to accommodate the growing ball in the left cheek; I felt like a goat with a tooth-ache.

We drove through the vast landscape with the old forts of the imams and enjoyed the bazaar, where in those days, one could still get beautiful coral ornaments; also, the typical silverware, which is mostly produced by Jewish artisans– belts of many links, and elegant, small bags for ammunition. Fourteen years later, you hardly found anything of this kind. It is beneficial that a German firm has taken up the project of cleaning up the unbearable amounts of plastic garbage and other signs of civilization.

On our visit in 1984, Barbara was also present. She was one of my former American Ph.D. students, who was working on the medieval history of Zabid. It was but natural to go to this old city in the Tihama. It was an incredible drive. Leaving Sanaa at 2200 meters height behind us, we had to cross two steep passes which hold a narrow valley between them. From the second pass we rolled down the tightly winding curves and reached the Red Sea. In Bajal we refreshed ourselves and I bargained for a typical Yemeni gown for little money. Chinese workers had built a fine road to the harbour of Hodeida, from where we turned left and reached Zabid after one and a half hours.

Zabid has since long been of interest to me, since I read that the great mystic Hallaj had, in the Arabian desert, produced for his companions delicious sweetmeat from nowhere. Later, it became known that the same had gone missing in a bakery in Zabid. Unfortunately, such delicacies were no more available. But Zabid has yet another, very solid historical significance. It is situated on the way between Aden and Mecca, and became a stop-over for pilgrims from India, who settled there for weeks, months, or for the rest of their lives. In this way the town became a centre for Islamic Science, to whose significance the numerous mosques bear witness. As late as in the eighteenth century, one of the greatest scholars of religion and languages of his time, Sayyid Murtada az Zabidi, spent many years there, after he had left his home in Delhi and before he continued to Egypt. The world owes him gratitude for the mighty Arabic encyclopedia, taj al-‘arus, ‘The bridal crown’, as well as for ten volumes of commentary to the main work of imam Ghazali. The house in which we stayed also reminded of the grandeur of the past of Zabid. The Bait al-Waqidi was richly decorated with stucco work and painted in many colours from the inside. The mafraj on the sixth floor looked over the

gardens of palm-trees, which reminded me strongly of India. Water etc from the empty 'bathroom' ran through the wall into the open. The irregular courtyard was crowded with people and cats. Barbara took us to the old scholar, whose rich library she often used, while we visited the ladies of the house. There, we learned all about the institution of easy-care-babies: they lie in folded linen-sheets which are attached to the bed-posts of the mother like a hammock. Underneath stands a tin– no pampers required!

I insisted on going to the so-called grave of Uwais al Qarani, which lies a few kilometers away in the desert, with kitsch-décor and guarded by a rather unholy looking man. He told us that mostly pilgrims from the Subcontinent come here.

Ursula managed to return in her Landrover so fast as if it were a Formula-1 Race. On one of the peaks and, at the holy time of Qat, a tire burst; still, we reached Sanaa safely.

And of course, we had to see Marib, the old dam, whose final collapse in the sixth century led to the decline of the rich agriculture. It so happened that a delegation of very important German industrialists, on their return from an export-oriented trip through the Gulf States, spent a few holidays in Yemen. They requested Puin to take them to Marib. They took me along. The remains of the dam, those often photographed five columns on which small boys were climbing up, were indeed very impressive. While the learned Orientalist was trying hard to enlighten the gentlemen on art and culture, an air-conditioned van appeared, from which tables and chairs, plates and glasses tumbled out. Thus, after everybody had been sufficiently educated, we were treated to salmon and similar delicacies, last not least, with German wine. The Queen of Saba would have enjoyed this display of Western civilization. She might have felt that those spirits, which King Solomon had

sent to her through the air as messengers and carriers, had returned to her in modernized form. A further excursion was more to my taste. Ursula, Trude and myself went together with an impulsive Iraqi lady archaeologist, Salma ar-Radi, to a mosque. It had been built around 1500 and had been restored under Salma's directions. It was a wonderful place with precious interior decorations, the last relics of a time, when Yemen was still ruled by the Mameluks from Cairo. Since this place was situated on the route from Aden to the interior of the country, it had enjoyed a strategic importance. We enjoyed some delicious fish there, which was served on Chinese newspaper pages, and watched women walking in colourful gowns through the streets like large, red blossoms between the grey-brown mud-houses. After our return I kept dreaming for a long time of Bilquis, the Queen of Saba, who somehow felt familiar to me:

Beloved sister Bilquis,
You surely will recall with ease
How we played in those two gardens
By Marib's waters sweet.
The language of the birds you spoke,
Your smile melted gold,
Lions guarded your abode
When by you so told.
A bird was carrying your crown,
The wind held high your throne.
Carried off by a weather-storm
You got to Solomon.
You spoke in the voice of birds' song,
Gold melted when you breathe,
For a sea of fire I do long,
A trough of pearls of tears,
Because your wanting ceased.
Love and devotion

Deepening happiness in motion;
But Marib's river all but drained
Ashes only there remained.
We walk through burning sand,
Our birds their song have spent.
But you, Bilquis, enchanted sorceress,
Dis-being in love, your smile wins over death
The second journey to Yemen took place in 1998.
This is a story of a sort,
Which, full of wonder, I now to you report.

Thus a Yemeni poet from Ma'bar sang five-hundred years ago (1598). He had settled at the Indian Malabar coast. In not very classical Arabic he tells, in the style of comic adventure, about a Hindu-ruler of the Malabar coast who, together with the local Muslims, fought against the Portuguese besiegers. When we travelled through the small town of Ma'bar on the way from Sanaa to Aden, I sent him greetings with the clouds that drifted over the wide valley with its terraced fields. And his verse had a certain relevance to our journey. A lot had changed since 1984. The inhabitants of Sana had grown to 1.43 million. Everywhere in the country were construction sites, iron bars pointed to the sky. But fortunately, they continued building with the traditional rock-material, and each window is crowned by a semi-curved skylight, in the stucco grid of which green-yellow glass pieces are studded.

The strange stories began right after my arrival, when I accompanied our ambassador, Lady Helga Strachwitz, who was highly respected in the whole of the country, on a weekend trip. We went to see a mosque of the twelfth century. It was some twenty five kilometers outside Sanaa. It has been excellently restored by the Yemenis, under the supervision of a French female archaeologist. It was a jewel of Islamic architecture, with a multi-coloured cassette ceiling, a wonderful prayer niche full of arabesques and

interesting inscriptions. We were on our way back, not yet far from where we had started, when we saw a car stand right across the road. The director general of antiquities (educated in Germany) had just told me about the tensions among the tribes. The car of the ambassador and ours got clearance to continue, but the car with the soldiers, which the government had sent along for our protection, had suddenly disappeared. The tribes had taken them hostage. Because they considered it their own job to grant protection to guests (this, anyway, was one of the versions which soon began to circulate in the capital.) In the evening they turned up, hale and hearty, and with a hearty laughter we chased away our initial anger.

In the afternoon we went to Tula, which looks stuck like a swallow's nest among the rocks– a small town of beautiful, hewn rock, artistically built and decorated. Each of the narrow, high houses is a piece of art. A museum illustrates village life in touching scenes. 'Old woman feeds cow', made life-like from paper maché. In the semi-darkness of a stable, we saw a woman, who stuffed with immense patience some sort of sticks into the muzzle of a cow, which emerged from a still darker corner of the stable. We had to admire a bridegroom's room, a bridal chamber and finally, the celebration scene at the birth of a baby in surprisingly expressive paper-maché. Only one stuffed hyena, which had once taken a wrong turn into the village, had suffered the fate of all stuffed hyenas.

Magical light lit the unending landscape, when in the evening, the sky began to glow in red and gold, and pink cloud-veils drifted across it. But these clouds were not a good omen. Next morning, it started to rain and the Suq in Sanaa which is normally overcrowded with people, emptied within minutes. We took shelter in an old caravanserai which, with German aid, had been converted into an art centre. The sun shone brightly again the next day, when I

left for Aden together with the German cultural attaché and a guard from the Yemeni foreign Office, Ahmad. We were delighted by the medieval town of Jibla. Here, Queen Arwa had ruled in the fifteenth century, a wise woman, whose palace-ruins were visible high up in the mountains against the rocks. Her mausoleum is in a simple mosque and the kindly imam allowed us to enter, even though it was prayer time. We were enthusiastic about the changing scenery, just as years ago on the journey to Zabid.

When we reached Aden about five in the evening, it turned out that we did not need to do a round trip of the harbour: it had rained so heavily for eight hours, that at many places the water came up to the ankles. The people clearly showed the connection with India (Aden had been ruled for one century by the British from Bombay); one looked like a trader from Gujerat, the other like a descendant of a Moghul with forebears from Central Asia. And then the smells, oh, they reminded me so much of Karachi.

I would have loved to explore more details of the city with its volcanic cone-shapes, but time was short. In the morning I had to give a lecture. Heavy thunderstorms diverted the attention of the students from my wise words with which I tried to overscream the loud squeaks of the numerous fans of this former socialist training centre. Soon after that we were off on the shortest route to Sanaa, and hoped to be there by eight in the evening. But on the top of a pass we were stopped and Ahmad shouted “Sel kbir”, “Great flood”. We would not be able to get beyond a certain point. Well, we decided to make a break and had tea in Yarim, a small place before the next pass. Licking flames from the kitchen threw strange patterns on the walls, while a youth turned Chinese newspapers into small wrapping pieces. Ahmad made inquiries for a way out of this dilemma. Should we turn back on the dangerous road,

via the pass to Taizz? Of course there were no hotels. Or, spend a night in the car? Just then Ahmad came to us grinning broadly: He had found some accommodation for us!

A white Mercedes drove up in front of us and took us across rocks and boulders to a garden. There, an impressive Yemeni of middle age emerged from his car, with a dagger in his gown or rather, his belt, like all Yemeni men. He greeted us warmly: “The house is yours!”He took us to the mafraj and soon returned with cardamom flavoured tea. He enquired about our wishes for dinner. We found out that he had done his Ph.D. from England, and was the owner of the local pharmacy. He belonged to one of the leading families of the country. Ahmad had, in his shop, used the telephone– that’s when he learned about our plight. With an air as if it were but natural, he put his large house at our disposal. His charming wife and the children came to greet us. The daughters, before getting married, would first attend college! I was given the parents’ bedroom where I found– oh wonder of wonders!- a European bathroom, in which things even functioned. In the morning we were greeted with a cup of tea, were told some details about the house and garden and were, with their blessings, sent on our way - no, please no thanks! There is a fine Arab adage which says: *la shukr ‘ala’l-wajib*, you need not thank for something that is your duty. Then we rushed to the hill-torrent– but it didn’t exist anymore. It had, so to say, turned into a Diesel-stream. The tribes had been upset about a further increase in Diesel prices and had occupied one of the busiest traffic crossings South of Sanaa. The large demonstration had been broken up in the morning and except for a few soldiers, nothing unusual was to be seen. Such events anyhow show how independent they are from the orders of the central government.

Soon after that we travelled from Mukalla on the Indian Ocean to Hadramaut. I had dreamed of it even as a child. A very few years earlier, such a visit would not have been possible; only after the unification of the two Yemens one could get into the interior of the country. The Yemenis kept drawing parallels between their unification which they achieved in 1991, and the German one. Hadn't we had the same fate?

The land was heavily eroded. All three scenes seemed to converge here: that of the Grand Canyon, of Central Anatolia and Afghanistan. Off and on some two wheeler cart appeared on which invariably, two fully veiled women squatted, whose black figures were crowned by a one-foot high straw-hat with a broad rim. There were high mud houses which needed constant repairs. The quite baroque palace of the former sultan al-Quaiti in Seyun evoked the image of a connection to the rulers of India. Sultan Ghalib al- Quaiti lives partially in London, where I occasionally, met him and his family. He is a nephew of a very dear friend in Hyderabad (Deccan), and is thus related to the Nizam of Hyderabad. He bore an amazing resemblance to the portrait of a Deccan prince of the seventeenth century. Our friendly companion turned out to be a member of one of the most important families of theologians, and we had long talks about his family, the Aidarus, in Indian Islam, and about the emigration from South Arabia to Indonesia and Malaysia which has been going on for centuries. We also learnt how many relatives of our host had been murdered in the time of the leftist regime– at the same time when Sultan al-Quaiti, who was then studying in Cambridge, was dethroned; only a few years ago he was allowed to return to his country. The evening came down over the garden in Tarim, where we had tea in a small palace which was painted with unbelievably garish colours– irrealistic, like so many things,- but not as much

as the French tourists who, on our return, were splashing around the hotel swimming pool.

One event chased the next. (I shall not talk about the hordes of journalists who didn't seem to understand that after two hours of interviews in Arabic, one does feel tired!) We went to Betbans near Sanaa, high up on a very green rock at the edge of which, one could recognize a synagogue. Here, mostly, Jewish silver smiths had been living who left for Israel after the state was founded. High up on a rock we saw Caucabad, which in the sixties had been bombed by the Egyptians. Later, we were invited for lunch with the oldest family of Yemen, which takes pride in its descendence from the Himjatite kings– it is quite interesting how proud Yemenis are of their long pre-Islamic history. In the end, there was a literary session in the embassy, in which four poetesses recited poetry– all of them totally wrapped up in black except for the eye-slits. The verses were full of melancholy, or anger, there were verses in free rhythms and often surrealistic imagery. The frequent imagery of the mirror as well as of the dream was an indicator.

It was a moving experience and a most beautiful finale to my ten days over there. Perhaps, our Yemeni-Indian poet really did refer to our journey, when he wrote:

This is a story of a sort,
Which, full of wonder, I now to you report.

Saudi-Arabia

For some reason or the other I, in 1986, received an invitation from Riyadh. A great number of telephone calls were made to me in Harvard, and finally, on a fine day, I traveled via Frankfurt to Jeddah. When we approached the royal empire, all the ladies were given a black head-scarf of chiffon. The Arab ladies covered their elegant dresses with the long *abaya.* In Jeddah we changed planes to Riyadh, where I had the feeling to be quite alone in the vast airport.

Then, two gentlemen took me to a hotel– and still I did not know why I was here. In the morning, I, like all the suddenly appearing gents, were photographed for passes. Then I was given to understand that the whole thing was for a celebration of a poet. Luckily, I found a Turkish colleague, who also did not know why he had been invited. I conversed with him in Turkish, and the numerous gents were not sure what to make of these two strange fellows. From a city-tour I got a good overall impression of the place: there was a fine university which I liked, and I enjoyed lunch sitting by the side of the rector, Professor al-Turki. I learnt that the delicious *Camel Cocktail* which was being served, was a wonderful concoction of orange, carrot and tamarind-juice mixed with mineral water (later, I also learnt that apple-juice mixed with wine, was here called *Saudi Champagne.)* In the evening I was, unluckily, invited by a group of educated ladies who could not understand, how a person might read, write and translate a language, but not speak it (at that time I had hardly been in any Arab-speaking country). It was quite awkward for me, but my knowledge of the language was enough to understand the rather frivolous remarks they made about their husbands and men in general. It was interesting for me to see their residence– of course, totally in western style– which was sanctified by a framed piece of the kiswa, the black curtain of the Kaaba; such pieces are gifted to notables or honoured guests. I was given a companion, a Lebanese woman living in Riyadh. This was quite pleasant for me. I visited picture exhibitions and was surprised, how little classical, Arabic calligraphy was represented there. Finally, we assembled in a huge amphi-theatre type hall, where His Majesty listened to a recital of poetry. One of the poets, so it seemed to me, was very old, and his young son recited his odes, which were written in perfect, classical Arabic (the expert knew in advance, what the next rhyming word would be). Finally,

we paraded before the king and he shook hands with us. Thus I felt honoured, and remembered this scene when, in November 2001, I gave a short speech at the King-Fahd Academy in Bonn, which he had founded. The occasion was his twenty years of ascension to the throne. I felt no real inspiration, therefore, in memory of that celebration, I recited several verses of the great Arab laudatory poet, al-Mutanabbi.

At times I recall this first visit to Riyadh, at the end of which a photo-journalist asked me whether I would care to come back some day. I, without wearing a headscarf, said: "Yes, if I were given a chance to visit the grave of the Prophet in Medina". I was sure that this would not be aired. But four weeks later, a Pakistani colleague, who teaches at the Umm al- Qura University in Mecca, wrote to me: "We were so pleased to see you here in Mecca on TV, and to hear, that you wish to visit the grave of our beloved Prophet." So, at least my TV image had visited the sites of the Hejaz, I had done a virtual pilgrimage. But no real visit to Medina materialized to this date.

In autumn 2001 I again received an invitation to Saudi-Arabia. When preparations were finalized– as usual in the last minute, on 12th October– I found myself again in the capital, this time in the State Guest House. I could not recognize the city, which now seemed to be nothing but a twisted net of motorways. In between them were insipid high-rises, but also a few very beautiful modern buildings which seemed to increase in numbers every day. My programme, so it appeared, had been mixed up somehow, perhaps under the pressure of the political changes. "Programme" meant, that after my midnight-arrival, the ambassador and his wife received me– but next morning early at nine, I was woken up to give a lecture. But even now I was not given a programme.

In the women's university I spoke on my favourite topic, Friedrich Rückert, which is always well received in Arab countries. This was the end of the "programme"for me which, for the rest, seemed to consist of sight-seeing; but the sight of an elegant super-market did not enthuse me much. A charming and competent professor for classical Arabic, Nora ash-Shamlon, guided me, and we saw the great library with its most modern, electronic miracle machines, as well as a 'book-hospital' for the restoration of old manuscripts. We also saw the centre for social work, where women are being educated. They make precious gowns there, partially after traditional models– nothing short of dreams. I was particularly impressed by the mini-gown for the aqiqa, the first hair-cut of a new-born prince: cover, dress, cap and tiny little shoes of dark-green, gold-embroidered heavy satin. They also produce ceramic items there, paintings and many other things that are also sold there. The directress was a daughter of King Faisal who had been murdered in 1975 and, like many Muslim women of good families, she had that beautiful, calm face of great clarity. I recalled my women friends in Iran, Afghanistan and Indo-Pakistan, who all possess this spiritual beauty, a balanced and controlled mind.

Dr. Nora also took me along to a wedding, where, after ten in the evening, more than four hundred women assembled in gowns so beautiful or so extravagant, that the eyes of the unsophisticated woman from Bonn got quite confused. The black abayas were put into plastic-bags and handed over at the reception. There was unbelievably loud music, and decorative Philippine maids brought coffee, tea and sweets. The younger women danced till at two in the morning, the beautiful bride arrived (a university lecturer). But we then did not wait any longer for the bridegroom and the meal to arrive.

Nora also showed me a ‘farm’, a real paradise in the middle of the desert. It was an estate with an irrigation system, gardens and unusual houses– a dreamlike phantom. Through our ambassador I met a number of interesting Germans and also a dear Pakistani friend, ambassador Asad Durrani, who had earlier, been accredited to Bonn for a long period of time. Since the programme was so chaotic, I decided not to go to Jeddah, where I had planned to visit friends, but stay two days more in Riyadh. It pleased the male colleagues, who had so far not heard my lectures. I, of course, gave a second lecture and a long, ex tempore speech on the history of Oriental Studies in Europe. I was quite proud of myself, because the learned gents thought my Arabic to be very good. In the evening Nora came to the hotel in tears, and we recited the famous poem of Imru ‘lqai, which begins with the words “quifa anhki”– “stand still, the two of you, and let us cry.” But, perhaps, we might meet again.

Iran

In paradise you cannot find
The path along the shore of Ruknabad,
And not Musalla’s bed of roses…

Thus sang Hafis, when he described the beauty of his much loved home-town of Shiraz. Therefore everybody, who has a life-long attachment to Persian poetry, should again and again, and over longer periods, visit Iran. Strangely enough, I had always missed out on this. On the one side, my long stays in Turkey as well as in the Indo-Pakistan areas had prevented me from staying in Iran over longer periods of time. But then, the cultures of Ottoman Turkey as well as of Indo-Pakistan are strongly influenced by Iran; now-a-days Afghanistan has become a most important area in the history of greater Iran. And the earliest Persian verses have come to us from today’s Uzbekistan, from Samarkand and Bokhara.

Whatever the reason– my first visit to the 'actual' Iran in 1963, has almost entirely escaped my memory. Of course I gave some lectures at the Goethe Institute in Tehran. The most important thing that happened to me there which obliterated all other memories was the chance-meeting at the airport of Tehran with my old Czech colleague Jan Rypka and his wife Maria, on whose wings I went to Isfahan and Shiraz. Nothing better could have happened to me, because there was no better scholar on Persian and Ottoman literature than Rypka. His *History of Persian Literature* is a standard work for every Orientalist. He still used criteria of Marxist –oriented appreciation of literature, but in private he rejected the communist doctrine (see page 166).

My first visit to Iran was like a brief prelude. Three years later I took greatest pleasure in participating in a congress for Iran Studies under the patronage of the Shah in Tehran. At an excursion to the mountains we saw the latest successes of the 'white revolution', where they showed us the educational efforts in rural areas. The real climax was our visit to the Zorkhana, where we admired strong men, who effortlessly, whirled their clubs and performed other difficult feats– not for the sake of sporting success, but from a spirit of religion, of deep faith, to honour the Shi'ite imams.

I recall a reception in the imperial gardens, where the air was filled with music and I had wonderful discussions on Sufism and music with my colleague Seyyed Hossein Nasr. He had been trained in Harvard as natural scientist and later, spoke about modern Islam on mystic lines. He found wide approval among western listeners. He tended toward an intellectual direction of Sufism, the idea of Ibn 'Arabi, while I represent the emotional side. But we both adored Maulana Rumi; our birthdays fall on the same day and month (but not year); both facts made good friends of

us. Nasr has had a close relationship to the ruling house and for this reason, he had to flee his country after the revolution. In his scientific home, the USA, his ideas were on several occasions, sharply rejected till finally, he was given a chair in Washington.

The third and most exciting visit to Iran took place in 1971, on the occasion of the two thousand five hundredth year of the Iranian dynasty, which was being celebrated with immense pomp and show. It was also strongly criticized by many. One of the features of the celebrations was a congress of Orientalists, for which we were flown in a special plane via Paris to Shiraz. We were, unlike the nobility, not accommodated in princely tents, but in hotels in Shiraz, where we were also treated generously. The early morning visit to the grave of Cyros in Pasargadae was beautiful. There was *son et lumière* in the mighty palace-ruins of Persepolis, where the fire of our enthusiasm was, with the help of considerable amounts of a liquid, not extinguished, but nourished. The liquid was, of course, not water. We had an advantage over the royalty at the time of the great parade in historical costumes, because where we sat, we had the sun in our backs, which fact was helpful for taking photographs. It was a happy gathering, where American and Russian colleagues without inhibition, met in the rose gardens of Shiraz, which looked exactly the way I had imagined them from poetry. For the first time I met Henry Corbin with his intelligent wife Stella; a grand-seigneur, who was primarily interested in Shi'ite gnosis and in Ismailis. Nevertheless, he arranged for us to see precious texts from medieval mystical literature of Persia. Years later I saw in Shiraz the modest grave of Ruzbihan-e Baqli (died 1209) who in his visions, saw rose-clouds and was enveloped in roses of divine love– an experience, which probably only a mystic from Shiraz can have. When I read Ruzbihan, I thought:

In Shiraz
God revealed Himself as sparkling rose.
The glow
Is only a reflection, a weak one,
Of His bright light.

All blood
Runs in the veins
Of a single rose-petal,
All floods
Of the seventy-seven seas
Are one dew drop
Shining on this blossom.
From the fragrance of longing –
Deep, most internal ground of His love –
He, in the evening,
Created the nightingale..

Corbin had also published the Arabic and Persian works of Suhrawardi, the master of enlightenment, who had been murdered in Aleppo in 1191. His small, meaningful animal-fables are particularly charming. However, Corbin's French style is even more complex than that of his master Massignon. In his early years he had translated Heidegger from German into French. His study on *L'homme de lumière dans le sufisme iranien* (which, from sheer enthusiasm, I translated as The emerald Vision) gives a fascinating picture of the mysticism of light in medieval Islam. The meeting with Corbin was therefore, one of the peak moments for me of the two thousand five hundred years' celebrations.

I took great pleasure in the encounters, listened to lectures and enjoyed the long bus-rides which took us to various destinations. "Miss Schimmel, you seem to be enjoying yourself very much!" the bitter-tongued wife of a colleague hissed toward me disapprovingly. The only

possible reply was: “Oh, well, you see– once in two thousand five hundred years!”

Laden with gifts and in a happy frame of mind, I returned home. Some of the Shiraz-friendships continue to this day– as with Jes P. Asmussen, the Danish man from Iran Studies in Copenhagen. Through him, I got repeated opportunities to visit Copenhagen over the coming decades, giving lectures there, enjoying the hospitality of his family and discovering the treasures of the Davids-Collection with its precious Arabic and Persian manuscripts and wonderful items of Islamic art.

One can hardly imagine a greater contrast of this joyous festival with the brief re-visit in Tehran in autumn 1977, when I with Christian Bürgel, were stuck at the Tehran airport, because the Ariana airline, for whatever reason, reached the Iranian capital only the next morning. Therefore, we decided to see friends at the Goethe Institute. The city was crowded with protesters, martial poetry– encouraged by the Goethe Institute - was recited all over town, and masses of people pressed along to attend the mass meetings against the Shah’s regime. Unrest was everywhere– the revolution began to set itself in motion– a revolution, the outcome of which these early fighters had never imagined.

It was only eighteen years later, in 1995, that I went to Iran again, by invitation of the government. These few days were very interesting; Tehran had become a metropolis, which I could partially overlook from my window in the guest-house of the foreign ministry. They showed us the museums and really spoilt me.

Together with a Persian lady friend I strolled through the bazaar, where next to expensive carpets with the portrait of Ayatullah Khomeini, some others, of frivolous nature, could be seen, with drinking scenes and scantily

dressed ladies. There was also no dearth of Christian motifs.

They fulfilled my urgent wish to go to Meshhed, to see this most sacred place of Shi‘ite Islam, where the eighth iman, Reza (Rida, died 817) is buried.

The flight to this most north-eastern city was delayed, because all aircraft were needed for the transport of pilgrims to Mecca. When we reached the airport, we found there not only Hassan Lahuti, who had translated my voluminous book on Rumi, *The triumphant Sun,* into Persian, but also Allama Achtiyani, who had written the foreword of the translation. This was a special honour, because he is one of the leading theologians of Iran, a man full of deep, mystical wisdom. So I enjoyed Meshhed and visited the shrine with its golden dome, which had just been renovated. I recalled my visit to Kasimain, some forty years ago, where the father of imam Reza lies buried. As usual, a lecture had to be delivered. We celebrated Iqbal’s birthday, as we had done so often in Pakistan, Germany, England and elsewhere. Then I was given the option to travel either to Shiraz or to Isphahan. I chose the memory-laden Shiraz. In the airport restaurant I “enjoyed” alcohol-free beer and had to listen to a jazz-style version of the Ode to Joy. It did not suit my present mood. But the meeting with the colleagues from the university of Shiraz was very inspiring (the four female colleagues sat rather quietly in a corner). I was impressed when I was told that one of the German Studies men was working on Thomas Mann– one may say generally, that interest in German literature is very high. When dusk fell, we, for the second time on that day, visited the grave of Hafis which was, just like the mausoleum of the wise Saadi, very well maintained. His ‘Rose Garden’, the *Gulistan*, had been for the first time translated into German in 1654. Young people were all the time standing under the dome, which rests on high, slim pillars and

covers the grave in which the great singer rests. He had not only left a mark on Goethe, but was a model of beauty, wisdom and elegance for everyone who loves Persia. I asked the guard to interpret to me the *fal*, the prediction, which I had found in the Divan of Hafis. It was a bit unclear and unfortunately, I had not written down the verse. I only listened to the positive end and not to the warnings of "annoyance and anguish". But soon after I returned from Iran, the persecutions against me (see page 317 f) started because of the peace prize. They even attributed my this journey to Iran as collaboration with the mullas. In fact, it was the first time that I visited the beautiful country after the fall of the Shah, while other colleagues had been there and participated in a number of celebrations– for Hafis and other great men.

In recent years there were several opportunities for brief visits. I spent most of the time with lectures and interviews. One lecture in the Theological Faculty of Tehran, which is mostly attended by women, was particularly tough, because I had not only, as usual, to appear with the headscarf, but I was being wrapped totally in black. I admired the women, who over and over again, do exceptionally good work– in public offices, as computer specialists, as TV announcers of the weather service, as writers and film directors. The faculty of literature honoured me in 1999. Large flyers were hanging at the entrance. I was happy and surprised; also about the encounter with a painter on the steps of the magnificent Great Mosque of Isphahan, who painted small pictures on camel-bone and presented one pretty drawing to me as a souvenir, because he knew 'the German lady' from TV. The sparkling Isphahan had not lost its charm and, like in old days, men sat in the evenings under the large arches of the big bridge, the Pul-e-Khwaju, which is a masterpiece of architecture of the sixteenth century. They had joyous

picnics there, while the setting sun threw strange shadow images on the walls, and the Zayindarud was shining.

When in summer 2000 president Khatami came to Germany, I saw him in Berlin and Weimar, where he held a charming speech– as if Hafis himself were present. When we parted at the airport in Erfurt, he said laughingly:"Why don't you come along!"But this was not possible– I even didn't have a headscarf with me.

There is hardly anything that gives me more pleasure than the growing friendship between Iran and Germany. I keep meeting friends, who have come from Iran; Persian concerts are being organized; many Iranians, who have lived here for years, or decades, are long since integrated as doctors or elsewhere in academic professions. The copying-shops in Bonn are all run by Iranians. Many of them, although the laws in their country are so rigid, try to continue to profess their culture and acquaint the public with the arts of their country, so as to minimize the very many prejudices of the West. In this connection I had a very fine experience in November 2001, on the occasion of the closing ceremony of an important Christian –Islamic Dialogue in Vienna. Since many years the highly motivated director of the Theological University of St. Gabriel in Mödling, Pater Andreas Bsteh is trying to get going a dialogue with the non-Christian religions. After intensive work, an important volume on talks and discussions between Catholic priests and ayatollahs appeared during which time cardinal Schönborn visited Iran in this connection. Now, the successful conclusion was being celebrated for which I delivered the key address in the presence of cardinal König, cardinal Schönborn and Ayatullah Khamenei and Ayatullah Tashkin. A unique event! The warm and happy mood among spiritual leaders created a special atmosphere. Gratitude was in the air, and hope for the future. In the end I, together with the

representatives of Iran and Europe, celebrated that one person, who, time and again, is evoked as the binding force between Orient and Occident - Maulana Jelaluddin Rumi.

Afghanistan

There were direct flights between Tehran and Kabul– and what fascinating flights! Landings and starts held tense moments; the small Ariana aircraft was always overbooked with passengers and freight and through much circling, it could barely manage to lift itself out of the rather narrow valley. The overland route from and to Pakistan was more beautiful. In the course of centuries, so many armies had marched through the Khyber Pass and, coming from Central Asia, poured out of the rough highlands into the fertile plains through which the Indus flows, which expands itself into the Five-River-Land, the Punjab. I did this trip once in a car of the government, and the poor vehicle laboured up the vertical rockwalls of the Tang-e-Gharu as well as my thirsty companion and dutiful driver. At a time, when the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were very tense, (for this reason, flights had been cancelled), the arrival of an official Pakistani car created a lot of attention in Kabul. Kabul: that means, memories of Germans and Afghans. There was the German school (a taxi-driver in Bonn recently recalled his participation in its inauguration as a small boy). And there was the German embassy, where I always felt at home, particularly during the years when Franz Joseph Hoffmann and his wife Evanette resided there and we discovered that we had been to the same high school in Erfurt, and had suffered under the same strict teacher of French. The Afghan government kept finding a pretext or the other, to celebrate some international memorial day, either for Maulana Rumi, for Sana'I or Ansari, no matter what the political situation might be. Even the fall of the king and the removal of Daud did not change that– till 1978.

On my first visit I came from the Iran Congress in Tehran and stayed in the Kabul Hotel. A few days later, Geqorge Morgenstierne arrived there, too. This Norwegian scholar was, probably, the greatest specialist on the gradually dying, small languages of the Hindukush, and a noble man with the modesty of a true scholar. When we had breakfast, he spoke to the servants in their dialects, and soon our table was the centre of a group of men from the Wakhan, from Nooristan and God knows what other valleys, to whom the ageing scholar sang songs in their mother tongue. "Oh, my grandmother used to sing this,"one would call out, and another one was happy hearing a nursery rhyme which the younger generation did not know any more. As an exchange, sound recordings were made, language samples were collected. I was proud to be of help in translating from Dari (the Afghan form of Persian) into Persian, because Morgenstierne was not so perfect in that as he was in Pushto.

Kabul– there was the grave of Babur, the founder of the Moghul dynasty who, on his many adventurous passages from Farghana to India, established his headquarters here. He loved the clean air of the heights; here, most of his children were born, and when he died in 1530 at the early age of forty six, he desired to be buried in Kabul. One of his wives fulfilled him this wish. She brought his earthly remains back from Delhi, from the heat of northern India. I am not sure whether the mausoleum has withstood the cruel fighting of the past two decades and still represent the old glory of Kabul.

I cannot forget Saleh Parvanta, whose private library contained most precious manuscripts in Arabic and Persian, which he proudly showed to the impressed guests. He was hoping that Christoph Bürgel and myself would prepare a catalogue of these treasures. Then, the catastrophe came over the country. In 2000 I met the once very jovial

Parvanta in London– a bent man and hardly recognizable. But it was generally believed that his library in Kabul still existed. For how long? God knows best.

I met yet another remarkable man in Kabul, the Dominican priest Serge de Langier de Beautreceuil, whose work on Abdullah-e-Ansari (died 1089) I had read earlier with greatest interest. His studies of the medieval mystical theologian had brouoght him to Kabul, and the longer he stayed there, the more the manuscript retreated into the background; he then devoted his life to the Afghan children and youth. His book *Mes enfants de Kaboul* draws a vivid picture of the problems, and catches the atmosphere of, the country that he loved so much. I recall an evening with the director of the Goethe Institute, when we sat in a corner and discussed Sufism, mystical experiences and Persian texts for the education of the soul. We totally forgot our surroundings. It was one of those hours, when the spiritual world overpowers the 'real' world and penetrates it. We nearly missed hearing the late call for dinner. –Later, my life took me to that place where Beautreceuil's 'hero,' Abdallah-e-Ansari, had been working: to Gazurgah near Herat, not far from today's border with Iran, which is relatively new. In the fifteenth century, Herat was the thriving capital of the Timurids which, under the rule of Timur's great-grandson Husein Baiqara, was a centre of Persian culture. The last of the 'classical' poets of Iran, the talented Jami (died 1492) lived there, and the master-calligrapher Sultan-Ali copied the Divan, the poetry collection of his overlord, again and again. These poems, (not too brilliant) had been written by the prince not in Persian, but in Turkish. The court of Herat was probably the most important centre where Chagatay-Turkish was developed as a written language. Sultan Husain Baiqara's minister Mir Ali Shir Navai, was the driving force behind this literary movement. Everywhere in the neighbouring

according to country Uzbekistan, one can see the statues of Navoi (according to their spelling). For the Turk population of Central Asia he is more or less their patron-saint.

By order of Husain Baiqara the mausoleum of Ansari was expanded. We were quite moved, when we stood in front of the structure which is surrounded by a small graveyard. The walls were decorated with appellations of God, made of large, coloured tiles. Absorbed believers sat and stood between the gravestones, or on the steps of the shrine. A very artistically worked, black coffin with rich script decorations was proof to the skills of the stone masons of the fifteenth century.

Many years earlier, around 1940, I had bought a booklet which had been published by the Kaviani-Press in Berlin, just like many other Persian and Urdu works.This publishing-house had been set up by exiled Iranians after the first world-war. Among the volumes was also the *Munajat Abdallah-e-Ansari* –small prayers in simple Persian prose mixed with short verses. I loved these simple words. When we had to leave Berlin, I stuffed the small booklet into my coat pocket. Off and on, while waiting somewhere, I translated one and the other piece of it. Even now the small booklet, in so many copies and prints, is a vademecum for so many believers. The tree near the grave was full of nails, which were put there by needful people who had made a vow. The mausoleum is said to be still intact and it is hoped, that the blessing of this friend of God may finally bring peace to this tortured country.

In the North of the country we visited the town of Balkh, the home of Jelaluddin Rumi, which had been destroyed by the Mongols. Only the wall gives an idea of the size of the town in those days. Later, the centre of the town somewhat recovered from the destruction; the grand Mohammad Parsa Mosque of the fifteenth century is proof to the activities of the Naqshbandi-Order, whose place of

origin, Bokhara, we later on visited repeatedly. Near Balkh we had a chance to participate in a Dervesh-dhikr, the Remembrance of God. The master of the order, Sayyed Daud, told us that these rites date back to the tradition of Jelaluddin Rumi. But this is doubtful. Nevertheless, it was a magical evening. Sayyed Daud, like uncountable other innocent people, fell victim to the war in his country.

One story of the Mathnavi tells about the great ascetic saint Ibrahim-e-Adham who, like Buddha, went ‘ From the Home into Homelessness.’ Rumi uses the rhyme Balkh – talkh, “bitter.”The memory of the bitter history of this town and the endless catastrophes that broke out again and again over this unhappy country leaves a bitter taste in the memory of Afghanistan and its hospitable people.

On the way to Balkh we crossed the Salang Pass, which had been built by the Russians, and history came alive again. Since one century Russia has been trying to gain influence over Afghanistan and eventually, get access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. The TV aerials in the North of the country were all placed northwards, in the direction of the Soviet Union. Perhaps it was more than a chance happening, that the Russian invasion in 1978 took place exactly one century after the British-Russian war.

Leaving Kabul, one could reach Ghazna in the South-West within a few hours. Some one thousand years ago, it was the centre of a mighty empire, from where the Turko-born ruler Mahmood (ruled 999-1030) conquered the north-western parts of India. Many legends were woven around him– may be because of his friendship with his slave Ayaz, may be as the destroyer of idols in the Hindu-temple of Somnath. At his court, Persian poetry flourished, Firdausi wrote his *Shahnama* there, the Book of Kings, which, in fifty thousand verses, tells the story of the old rulers of Iran, and later, inspired numerous poets and painters. Till today, the names of the heroes of the great epic are alive in

Iran, in Muslim-India and in Turkey. But hardly any of the later poets achieved the fine, never exaggerating descriptions of nature of Mahmood's court-poet Farruchi. Unsurpassed is the beginning of one of his eulogies, in which he praises poetry as a precious gown:

With a caravan I came from far, from Hilla town,
Spun of heart, of spirit woven, I wore a gown.
A gown made of the word in silk so fine,
A gown, patterned by the spirit and of delicate design.
Each thread from spirit twined, in pain will make
New thread, split from the heart with ache.
This gown the like of which does not exist so fine,
Not recognized, not comparable with others of the time.

Does it not evoke directly Rückert's remark on translations?

Youself to the spirits do betake
How they, moving quite invisibly, the robe of words create.

In 1966 I visited the mausoleum of Mahmood. I could not desist from stroking his wonderful coffin of grey-yellow marble with its intensely intertwined kufic inscription; and I recalled how just this, twenty-five years earlier, was the cause of my missing the summa cum laude in the oral defence, because at that time– oh shame!– I was not able to decipher this very complex form of writing. But now I was happy to touch the original. The two huge towers of Ghazna looked so familiar to me– they are reproduced in every book of art-history, as they are unique with their geometric décor of baked tiles. The twisted inscriptions appear unreadable. Only they were left of the old city, which had been destroyed by the Ghuzz a few years after the last great poet of the Ghaznavid court, Sana'i, died in 1131.

In 1973, the ministry of culture had organized a memorial celebration for Sana'i. Ghazna was colourfully decorated and 'in praise, with many a fine speech' at his grave, in Kabul, on TV and radio, we spoke about the man, who was the first to write a mystical didactic poem in Persian, which became the ideal for so many dozens of later works. This highly talented courtly poet, who also wrote charming lyrical verses, had, with his work *Hadiqat al-haqiqat*, the 'Garden of Wisdom' created a work, in which he combined practical and highly spiritual stories in metric patterns. One of his famous stories is the Indian parable of the blind men and the elephant, which is one of the most popular didactic poems of the East: a group of blind men tries to recognize the form of an elephant. But each person describes the part of the huge animal that his hand had touched: as a pipe, a column, a throne, or as a carpet; but nobody knew what the whole animal might look like. That is because– so Sana'i teaches us– nobody can recognize the whole of God, the unimaginable; each person knows him only from one partial aspect. The German language has a concrete formulation for it: begreifen– nobody can 'grasp' God.

Faruchi had sung of Sistan, his homeland. This old, cultural area in South-Western Afghanistan was of great interest to me. Our Bonn colleague Klaus Fischer had for years, done field-work over there and had walked through, measured and described this much neglected area. Together with a German teacher-couple a trip there was organized. From Kabul we moved in a south-western direction till we reached Bust in the evening. There we found a tiny rest-house, simple and clean. Kindly, but with determination, I turned out a young scorpion from the bathroom.

At sunrise we looked at the famous Taq-e-Bust, a wonderful arch of baked tiles, a remnant of a medieval palace. Exactly in its centre we saw the sunrise of equinox;

it turned the half-decayed inscriptions into gold. We travelled along the Helmand, saw ruins and castles and palaces, witnesses to the activities that went on here till the Mongols, soon after 1220, destroyed the sophisticated irrigation-system and thus, condemned this province to death. Yet, in this early autumn sunshine, Sistan was filled with a melancholic beauty.

We turned North so as to get to Kandahar before nightfall. It was the home of the Durrani clan, the origins of the latest Afghan ruling dynasty. Nobody could imagine that twenty years hence, it would become the centre of the Taliban. The city was surrounded by kilns, and I remembered the Sindhi lines:

The potters oven, all but covered,
Exudes its heat from every side.
We, our glow do hide,
And burn only from inside.

We as strangers, were not allowed to see the greatest attraction of the city: the khirqa-e-sharif, the relic of a coat of the Prophet. Iqbal, in 1934, when he visited Afghanistan, dedicated a deeply-felt ode to it. At that visit the founding of the university of Kabul was decided. There was nothing of the fame of the Durrani dynasty, nothing of the revered relic - Kandahar was crowded with hippies from all over the world, who enjoyed there drugs unhindered, or made a small break on their journey to their nostalgic destination, India. But we did find accommodation and longed to be back in the quiet, transparent atmosphere of Bust. In the morning we left for Kabul. It was the fasting month, and our hunger grew, because no eatables could be found. Our host, the delightful and Orient-experienced Dr. Schmidt-Dumont, had promised us– rather as a joke– to feed us on oysters on our return. Thus, kilometer by kilometer, these little creatures assumed greater and greater, finally, mythical proportions in our fantasy, till they resembled

dragons which, in Firdausi's *Shahnama,* were slain by the hero.

The most beautiful of my journeys to Afghanistan was the one in 1966, when I arrived there from Tehran. Mahboob, daughter of Asadullah Siraj (at that time ambassador in Ankara) were at the airport. Like many Afghans who had attended the Nejat School, she spoke excellent German. Our enthusiasm for Maulana Rumi had brought us together; Meliha, lecturer for Persian at Ankara University, became the third in our group. "Welcome,"said Mahboob, and after embraces she asked: "Could you please give a lecture in Dari on Maulana at the university? If so, you may speak a wish: you may either go to Herat, or to Bamyan."Without hesitation I chose Bamyan. The mighty Buddha statues attracted me, which now have been destroyed by the Taliban in their religious zeal. And a lecture in Dari– well, I felt I could handle that, even with my library so far away. In Tehran, they had not exactly criticized my old-fashioned Persian pronunciation, but were rather surprised; now, in Afghanistan, I felt safer, because there the language had retained its ancient sounds of vowels (e / i, and o / u, are differentiated). A person occupied with classical literature is used to the medieval forms.

So, we got going to conquer the mountains of Bamyan! Mahboob had given me two pleasant companions to go along with me. A rather rocky path lead us through different kinds of landscapes; by the side of a brooklet we stopped for a picnic and had delicious fruit. The car laboured up and up, over high passes and past red-hued rock castles, which looked like a stage set for a fairytale. In the afternoon the Bamyan valley spread out before our eyes. From the two rock-caves the two huge Buddha statues stared at us. At their sides were a large number of small caves, in which earlier, Buddhist monks had spent their

days and nights in meditation about the transitoriness of life and the hope of resurrection from the painful cycle of births. We approached the statues and were silent with wonder. Central Asia had been a centre of Buddhism for centuries. Its traces reach up to the northern parts of Pakistan. Some Buddhist thought has been taken up by Islamic mysticism. And here, in this remoteness, the two giant figures stood, so it seemed, in eternal peace.

The rest-house on the opposite hill looked over the wide valley; in the setting sun the red flowers before the verandah seemed to flare like a fire, and the statues gradually sank into the dusk. At night, the stars shone from nearby, you thought you could touch them. “What about a quick trip to Band-e-Ameer?”my companions asked innocently and with a roguish smile. “It only takes two to three hours.”How could I resist? Next morning at six we left the valley and entered a very different world. One that belonged to Central Asia. Instead of harsh rocks, the mountains were now like dunes. No dark paths encased in the snow-mountains of the Hindukush; instead, an immense blue sky. On the right, blue water sparkled off and on and finally, we reached the last of the seven lakes which had been dammed up between the hills. I have never seen such blue water, like a flawless sapphire the lake lay in the ring of a yellow hill. It was like seeing a happy dream. At the opposite slope there was a small shrine, which was just being cleaned by an old woman. It reminded me of the story that the fourth caliph, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, had dammed the water here (hence the name ‘reservoir of the prince,’ i.e., Ali). A cat looked sleepily out of the entrance of a cave. It was lucky that I had brought many photo-reels along; on the other hand, the sight of this landscape was so unique, that taking photos seemed like a sacrilege to me. Finally, we had to tear ourselves away from it because ten hours journey were ahead of us, and the

roads were dangerous. In the dark, we nearly drove into a flock of sheep. But we were lucky and recited Rumi's verses.

If a tree could move, along with roots and leafy dress,
He would not feel the axe, nor would the saw cause him distress.

Around ten at night we reached the hotel, tired and with aching bones. But extremely grateful– and, it seemed, that the excursion had a good effect on the lecture.

I came to know and love Afghanistan. Not only the traditions of Persian culture fascinated me; in the course of time I began to understand more about the Pathans, about their strict code of honour and their language (Pashto). The two greatest Pathan poets, Khushhal Khan Khattak (died 1689) and Rehman Baba (died 1709) are buried in Pakistan, East of the artificial border, the Durand-line, which the British had drawn up. In recent years a mausoleum has been built near Peshawar for the heroic Khushhal, the 'Father of Pashto literature.' It lies slightly off the great Grand Trunk Road, which connects Afghanistan with Delhi and further on, with Bengal. The rebel against the Moghuls wanted to be buried in a place where he would not hear the clatter of the horses of his foe. Rehman Baba too, the religious bard, whose finest poems express his deep trust in God's wisdom in simple images, has recently been honoured with a fine mausoleum near Peshawar. On a cool evening, we went there to listen to the derveshes' tunes– not very harmonious, but very passionate, while the flames of the warming fire cast strange figures on the walls.

The *landey* or *tappa,* are perhaps more beautiful. These are haiku-style verses of nine plus thirteen syllables, which are invented by men or women. At one UNESCO meeting long ago, Morgenstierne had taught me some:

Oh, place your hand on top of my hands,
Long after I'll remember such placing of the hands.

One learns a lot about the proud Afghans through the exclamations of a young girl:

My beloved fled from battle hard –

And now I rue the kiss that yesterday I gave him.

In summer 1978 I had planned a trip North with my British colleague Ralph Pinder-Wilson, who at that time, was the director of the British Archaeological Institute in Kabul. We wanted to see Badakhshan, the narrow strip between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan, where the most famous precious stones come from, the deep-blue Lapis Lazuli and the la'l-e badakhshi,the Balas-ruby of so many songs (actually a spinel). I had a yet greater interest in Yunghan, where in the late eleventh century one of the most interesting figures of Persian literature had lived: Nasir-e-Khusroo, an Ismaili missionary and author of a travel journal, of philosophical works and powerful poetry, which is often most topical. But in those days the clouds on the horizon began to threaten: Iran was about to topple the Shah, in Pakistan the Bhutto-era ended with his execution in 1979, and in Afghanistan the Soviet invasion was imminent. Friedrich Ralph was thrown into prison, which he accepted with the stoicism typical for him, till he was set free in 1981. The merciless fighting in the country, the rise of the Taliban, initially considered as helpers who, in their role of fighting the Russians, received the support of the USA; the dreadful fury of the opponents: Afghanistan, used to fighting, went through, and is still going through, immense suffering, made worse by droughts and similar natural catastrophies. In this country, instead of wheat being sown, landmines are placed in the ground. Anyone who loves this country and knows its proud inhabitants grieves in the face of so much misery. How will it all end? Afghanistan has a long memory when it comes to foes and occupation forces. I kept recalling a ballad by Fontane,

about the British army in 1845, which perished there. Its final lines run as:

One returned from Afghanistan
And what will happen now?

Central Asia

In distant land, afar,
Under shimmering star,
In the Turk's land
There lies Samarkand.
Silk of whiteness,
Gold and jewels of brightness,
Colourful velvetband
Comes from Samarkand.
Pearls and turquoise precious
Fruit of trees and fields in freshness,
Sweetest sugar cand
Comes from Samarkand
Mosques and castles grand
Fairies'and magicians' land
Hearts in lovers' hand
Dreamland Samarkand.

This song I had written toward the end of the war for a friend's new-born baby as a nursery rhyme. At that time I could not fathom that half a century later at lectures in Uzbekistan, audiences would sing it to me in German, Russian and Uzbeki. In September 1994, in a jolly mood, I recited it on my first visit to Samarkand. I had always dreamed of Samarkand which was, till the collapse of the Soviet Union, hardly accessible to us West-Germans. However, soon after the opening of the Central-Asian states, two gentlemen from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation stood in my door and asked for advice for their planned activities in Uzbekistan. This really was not my area of specialization. "Will I also get to see Samarkand?"I asked quite innocently. They answered with a yes.

The office of the foundation in Tashkent was formally inaugurated in late summer, 1994. The director, Wolfgang Schreiber, (his pet-name in Uzbeki was Walichan Sharifov) and his efficient team organized the inaugural ceremony. The topic of my speech was about German contributions to the understanding of Uzbekistan and its culture. My colleague from Tashkent, Dr. Suleymanova, talked about the effect of Schiller's work in Uzbekistan (by the way: Schiller is also very popular in Iran; the number of translations of his dramas into Persian bears witness to it). It was an exciting trip, right from the landing at the airport in Tashkent, where we were being locked up in the VIP lounge of the airport. We had to wait there endlessly for our passports– apparently the officials were playing cards with them. It was quite exotic. (Even now, you need angelic patience at a Central Asian airport.) The hotel was a typical Intourist-box; but the city as such, which got largely destroyed by an earthquake in 1966, was quite pleasant with its wide, tree-lined avenues. Moreover, they have a fast and cheap subway system where the trains come every three minutes. The fare equals the price of a cup of tea. But even that was a fortune for the poor population; a studied person earns about twenty dollars a month. - But on every subsequent visit things were getting better and better.

The first excursion of the participants of the congress was to Samarkand (nearly three hundred thousand inhabitants), where we held a session in the beautiful university. Afterwards, in a cold, strong wind, we saw the historical centre of the town. The mausoleums in the Shah-e-Zinda with their blue tiles in beautiful designs, arabesques and calligraphy, were exactly the way one imagined Samarkand: a fairytale-city from the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The Registan-Square with its large madrissas looked somewhat deserted in this cold, but later I discovered its charm. In the small museum of one of the

madrassas the first exhibit is a manuscript from the time it was built, of Timur Ulugh Beg: a collection of sayings of the Prophet Mohammad, which starts with: “Seeking knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and woman!”This saying we kept repeating at all our meetings.

Samarkand is the city of Timur, the great Timurlain. Traces of his buildings are visible everywhere. Three years later we visited Shahr-e Sabs, the birthplace of the ruler. They were just repairing the huge palace. The magnificent tiles had mostly fallen off, and the new ones reminded me too much of bathroom tiles. It seems they cannot reproduce the gently shimmering colour (the problem of restoration of medieval buildings is common to all countries in the Orient; I remember earlier attempts in Turkey, plastering up wonderful Seljuk ruins with cement, or unsuccessful endeavours of this kind in Pakistan). Really beautiful and impressive is the mighty mausoleum of Timur (died 1405) with its high, graceful dome, which is decorated with huge, Arabic letters. Folklore has it, that Russia was soon drawn into the war, because in 1941, the grave of the ruler had been opened; for many centuries there existed the prophecy that a catastrophe would come over the land if the rest of the ruler was disturbed.

On our second visit in 1996, we concentrated on the person of Timur, whose sculptures decorate all the cities. Well, this great conqueror had not been exactly a democratic ruler, nor bothered about human rights and the like. So we had to praise him rhetorically, but often this became very troublesome. I think I spoke about the cultural life of his time– he was a contemporary of the great Hafiz; Goethe, in his *West Eastern Divan* made him say:

If Allah had wanted me to be a worm,
He would have created me as one.

“Paying tribute with many a fine speech,”Samarkand celebrated the ruler, who had brought along from all the

countries that he had conquered, the best artists and artisans, from Anatolia to northern India, who decorated his capital. After that, there were art performances. Händel's *Il Tamerlano* was performed (luckily only in parts), by musicians in European dress. It is quite interesting how the figure of this conqueror inspired the imagination of the Europeans. The main reason was that in 1402, he beat the Ottoman sultan Bayezid I near Ankara. With this conquest, he hit the Ottomans, who were feared in Europe like an arch enemy, in a way which made him an ally of the Christian states of Europe. It was for this reason that in 1404, the Spanish sent Ruy Gonzales de Clavigo to Samarkand, to start political negotiations there. These political connections became the theme of an Uzbek opera, of which we saw one act in the beautiful theatre. There he sat, in royal estate, Timur, elegantly clad in silk, and the embassies were each represented by a ballet, which danced folk-dances from the various regions of the world–Holland, Spain, and God knows what other places. It was really funny. But even funnier was the rather young composer who, after roaring applause, lifted himself most labouriously out of his arm-chair, because he was so fat, that he could hardly move. We applauded long and loud and were grateful for all the fun.

On our first visit we continued from Samarkand to Bukhara, my favourite place in Uzbekistan. It is quieter than Samarkand and with its several structures from the earliest centuries of Islam, it appears more peaceful. There is the mighty Kalyan minaret with its mosaics made of tiles from the twelfth century. Also, there is one of the most beautiful buildings of the early Islamic world: the mausoleum of the ruler Ismail the Samarid (died 908). The rather small, cubic building looks as if a carpet with geometric designs has been transformed into tiles; there were innumerable designs on walls, doors and windows.

One of the first poems in modern Persian was written for the ruler, who is buried here. When once, the ruler stayed away too long in Herat, his court-poet Rudaki wrote that song, the initial lines of with have inspired dozens of Persian poets right up to the nineteenth century :

Bu-yi ju-yi Muliyan ayad hami

The fragrance of the river Muliyan continues coming

The fragrance of the charming friend continues coming

Upon this, the prince is said to have hurried back to Bukhara with crossed reins. Legend or not– the poem as well as the small mausoleum are beautiful and resemble each other in their combination of simplicity and sophisticated form.

Even before the poem and the mausoleum were created, Bukhara was a centre of learning. It is the place of al-Bukhari (died 870), who wrote the most reliable collection of Hadiths (sayings of the Prophet). This collection is the most important post-Quranic source for the actions of Prophet Mohammad and for his exemplary role in Islam.

In the old part of the town were some small museums and shops with tempting cloth and carpets. I too, fell victim to the attractions. No, not to the low priced Bukhara carpets in their warm colours tempted me, but in a tiny booth a coat smiled at me– a delicate green and pink silk from ikat-weavers, almost worthy of a museum. Fifty dollars! It was like a gift! And since my dear friend still had some space in her suitcase, I surrendered to the temptation.

If I had been a disciple of the the friend of God who is buried near Bukhara, Baha'addin Naqshband, the great saint of Central Asia, I should not have bought the coat. He, during his lifetime and after his death (1389), through his disciples and followers, exercised a tremendous influence on social life. A century after him, Obeidullah Ahrar was the spiritual ruler of Central Asia, and to this day the

Naqshbandi order is one of the liveliest sufi-orders. They have a considerable following even in Europe. They practice silent meditation and during the Soviet era, worked against communism through their teachings. It was therefore, nothing out of the ordinary that the Adenauer Foundation took active part in the jubilee celebrations of the founding of the order in Bukhara, before we went to Samarkand to honour Timur.

On our first visit we had gone to the mausoleum of the sufi-master. Mrs. Suleymanova and I had circumambulated the grave, which is under a vastly spreading tree. A sufi, one that seemed to have come to life from an old miniature, gave us some of the healing water, and the imam of the mausoleum told us that after world-war II, he had been in Weimar with the Russian army.

At the time of the memorial celebrations of the spiritual leader in 1996, the mausoleum had been completely renovated. The Turkish president Turgut Özal had been the main sponsor, who made a large donation. He was close to this order. At the moot in 1996, the central theme was no longer political statehood of Baha'addin and his followers; it had been difficult to derive the notion of democracy from the role of a leader of souls, who demands total obedience; this time the emphasis was– and I think, rightly so– on 'work ethics'. In the centre stood that word, which I had also heard in Pakistan*: dast be-kar, dil be-yar,* "The hand at work, the heart with the divine friend."It relates to the Quranic word (Sura 14; 17) that the true believer works, goes to the market, but keeps his heart with God. The central idea of the education of the soul is *khalwat dar anjuman:* the believer is alone with God, even though he may be in a crowd and in daily life. The *dhikr*, the constant repetition of a religious phrase or of one of the names of God, is not spoken aloud, but is repeated in the heart. This led one of the Central Asian participants to

compare Baha'addin with Luther, as he too, "had cleansed the religious service from loud proclamations of piety."

Before we started our celebrations in honour of master Naqshband, we had visited Chiva in the south-western end of the country, which was a touristic attraction near the border with Turkmenistan. We were urged to visit a new hotel in Urgench, the nearest, lively town. The reason perhaps was, that it was the result of some private initiative, which was still something unusual here. It was very new indeed, and thus we were received as the first guests, who always bring blessings. After dinner, some musicians performed and when a snake-like moving lady dancer joined them, some of our group too, could no longer sit quiet. Very soon, programme and duty were forgotten, and we turned with the rhythms of the dance, against which Baha'addin had inveighed passionately. Even our spherical style Jesuit priest circled the floor with a blissful smile and outstretched arms, like an angel. Our wonderful field doctor, who was herself a Naqshbandi from Cologne, was not given to sadness either and joined the merriment.

Chiva is fully restored, a bit too fresh, but the beautiful clay-architecture and the turquoise coloured domes render a fine image of a traditional town. In order to do the right thing, we did not only visit a snake farm which supplies venom for medicinal purposes, but also a stag-fight. The huge animals, headlong, dashed their heads into each other in a way, as if tanks were colliding. I wondered what happened to the brains. Had they been earlier, removed genetically?

After we had duly honoured the memory of Timur, of Baha'addin and Naqshband, another great thinker of the area had to be celebrated, a man, who doubtlessly is one of the greatest scholars not only of the Orient: al-Beruni (died 1048). He came from Chwarizm and worked for a while at the court of Mahmood of Ghazna. There, he got inspired to

write his work on India. Starting in the year one thousand, Mahmood had expanded his empire from Ghazna to the West and north-western parts of India. Biruni's *Mali'l-Hind* is the first attempt worldwide, to look at foreign cultures without prejudice, much before the study of comparative religions became known in Europe. Of even greater importance is his *Chronology of Ancient Peoples*, an amazing work, which examines time and systems, calendars of festivals and traditions of all peoples known to him. This work over the centuries has not lost its value.

But, where exactly is Chwarizm? Nowadays it hardly exists under this name on any map, but in ancient times and in the early middle ages, the area around the Aral-Lake, between steppe and mountains, was very important; it approximated today's province of Karakalpakistan. Well, let's go there! I flew from Tashkent to Nukus, the capital of Karakalpakistan. This area is particularly affected by the drying up of the Aral-Lake. Where once, the waters of the lake lapped the shore, one can now see nothing but steppe, for miles….. the result of the mono-culture of planting cotton by the Soviet Union. Nukus was a surprise. We– the interpreter of the foundation and myself– were received by a beautiful, elegant lady, Gulistan. She was not only deputy prime minister of the province, but also a well-known poet. Late in the evening we went through the usual heavy meal. In the morning, a wish of mine got fulfilled: together with Gulistan we crossed the border and entered Turkmenistan. At that time it was possible to travel with a visa of any Central Asian state to all the other, neighbouring ones. This has been stopped now, since Uzbekistan, for fear of terrorists, has gone into isolation.

The journey took us to Cohne-Urgench. In this place the great visionary Najmuddin Kubra had been working, who was, in 1212, killed by Jenghez Khan's hordes. Since I had read Fritz Meier's work on him, I have been impressed

by his symbolism of colours. Now, I wanted to see his last resting place. It was a beautiful, simple mausoleum near other graves and palaces, rather lost in the vast steppe. On the way we visited a vast grave-yard on a hill, on which the grave of a medieval princess was quite remarkable. A large cat stepped over the coffins as if she were the guard.

Nukus held a big surprise: a museum with thousands (around eighty thousand, it is said) of pieces of art from Russia. In the twenties and thirties, a well-to-do Russian art-lover had brought paintings and small sculptures from Moscow and Leningrad to this remote area of the former Soviet Union. They were then mostly considered deranged art, just as cubism, expressionism and practically all important movements of the first half of the twentieth century in Germany. They were all represented there but of course, only partially exhibited. This surprising museum is far too small.

Spoilt by overwhelming hospitality, we then flew to Urgench and from there, travelled to Biruni.

Biruni is a small town, which probably only recently, got its name to honour the medieval scholar who might have been born here. In this area, there are still a number of buildings of Zoroastrian times: palaces and fire-temples, which are slowly being excavated. In the sands all around us, small lizards were dashing about between sparse blossoms. The place itself, however, sparkled in anticipation of the great festival. When early in August, Wolfgang Schreiber had inspected the venue, there was just one, huge and shabby barrack for the noble guests; now, six weeks later, it had been turned into a hotel which was surprisingly good. Since the room of honour had been reserved for me, I had to wait a while, till they had turned out the large TV set. In the meanwhile, another room was being done up with silver-sparkling tapestry and brocade-style bedcovers. But when the bathroom was ready, only

desert-sand of best quality came out of the taps. They tried a third room and there, everything was working alright.

In the hotel garden was a terrace and a gazebo, in which Uzbek girls sang tunes by Hildegard von Bingen– absurd, but touching. Of course some intelligent speeches were held and we tried to inspire the youth to do mental work. During the meals, toasts and speeches by everybody were offered. And since plow is only palatable with the help of Vodka, these toasts were quite welcome.

But what is plow? It is the national dish of Uzbekistan, a rice-pillaw unfortunately cooked in cotton-seed oil, which has the effect that the rice and all its ingrediences seemed to expand in the stomach like a heap of hackled cotton. As entrée there was as usual a tasty soup which was so greasy, that one might have appreciated it in the cold of January but not at thirty five degrees Celsius. One of the appetizers was smoked horse meat or horse sausage which tasted quite alright. But the guest would rather prefer the delicious fruit for which this area since olden times is famous.

The latest journey to Uzbekistan took me, after all, to the Farghana valley, which separates this country from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The senselessness of drawing up borders during the Soviet era and also, soon after independence of the Central Asian states, becomes evident here: the Syr Daria, the ancient Jaxartes, flows through several countries where the inhabitants speak Turkish or Persian, but are separated by recently intensified checkposts. But I managed to fly, at the end of the elongated valley, to Andijan, the birthplace of Babur (1484-1530), the founder of the great Moghul dynasty. In the university, which has a good department of German, Mrs. Suleymanova and I were welcomed with mighty bunches of gladiolas. Both of us lectured from different points of view, on Babur. My Uzbeki ‘nephew’, Bahodir, whom I knew since his time as interpreter in the embassy in Bonn and

who also is an excellent scholar of Arabic, translated alternately into Uzbeki or Russian. Next morning we met a fat Babur-enthusiast, who had, on a hill, built a Babur memorial, similar to his last resting place in Kabul. It had wall paintings– wonderful kitsch, but also a great view over the vast landscape. One could even reach the top with the help of a rope-lift with colourful, tiny cabins. At an extremely heavy lunch in his garden (with real Munich beer!), the Babur-fan told us about his plans to keep the memory of Babur alive. It was quite tiring, but well meant.

Then we continued our journey through the country: beneath the memorial to the great astronomer al-Farghani (Alfraganus, died 861) the next reception committee was waiting for us with bouquets of gladiolas which, like their predecessors, slowly perished in the luggage compartment of the car at thirty-five degrees Celsius in the non-existing shade. Instead, we ate the next plow at three in the afternoon, and the third one after a visit to the ikat weaving centre in Marghinana. But the visit to this last weaving centre was worth it. There, they still weave ikat by hand. It was fascinating to see how the silken thread is twined, stretched, tied and dyed as warp. And in a process which seemed incredibly labourious, the threads were woven into the mono-coloured weft. The room with the weaving chairs looked like a colourful garden. We learnt, how many designs there are and their names. We also learnt how incredibly low the wages are. Yet, these young women at their weaving chairs were radiant, because they knew how lucky they were to have a job at all in this area of high unemployment.

After that– back to Tashkent, of course with a few meters of ikat silk in my bag. Several lectures were to be given there, also an introduction to a translation into Uzbeki of my book *My Soul is a Woman*. One lecture in the recently founded theological faculty was very informative.

There, students learn Quran recitation, Quran commentary, Quran translation, on the computer. They don't have to think anymore– and you notice it from the disinterested reactions of the students. The faculty is supposed to work against the danger of religious extremism, but I don't quite see, how.

On this last trip in summer 2000, I had come from Tajikistan, where I was to give a few lectures; after all, the terrible, internal fighting had stopped. When I checked in at Bonn airport, the Lufthansa lady asked flabbergasted: "Are you going there of your own free will?" How much free will! For years I have been wanting to see this country.

Tajik Airlines, which flies once a week from Munich to Dushanbe, was a Tupolev. I shared the business class with an American lady from the World Bank. We refueled in Corbin on the Black Sea in pouring rain. There, a gentleman joined us, who looked familiar to me– he was the former Turkish consul general from Cologne! It was my good luck, because we landed one hour early. Due to him, the Turkish ambassador appeared out of the dark. He helped us through immigration, which, due to our early arrival, was more chaotic than it normally is. He looked after me, till my hosts arrived from the German embassy. My room in the hotel Avesta– remember the Zoroastrian past of this area! - was sheer plush. The water-closet did function occasionally– other such installations I won't mention because I want to stay polite.

I had a number of fascinating days in this open, tree-lined and rather new city. I met a large number of interesting people at my lectures, people, who longingly waited for news from the big wide world, from which they had been more or less cut off for such a long time. There was the son of the best known Tajik writer Sadruddin Aini; there was Munira, the daughter of a composer, who tells a lot, and from various view-points, about the complex

history of the region, of suffering, persecution and flight, In her house we held a symposium on Maulana Rumi, which was accompanied by gentle dervesh music. I met my former Ph.D. aspirant from Harvard, Rafique; he was an Ismaili, who was here the coordinator for the future university which was donated by the Aga Khan. One midday we went to the gushing mountain stream and ate tiny trout, just as we had earlier done in Afghanistan and northern Pakistan, while sitting on large, stringed beds on which colourful sheets were spread. One could feel the unity of these areas around the Hindukush. Afghanistan was so close! Our ambassador M. Meyer had just before my arrival, been to Badakhstan, that long tip of Afghanistan, in which the mausoleum of the Ismailite poet-philosopher Nasir-e-Khusrao was situated, which I had wanted to see in 1978. I might have done that even now, because this area lies under the command of Masood and not under the Taliban. But my time was too short for such a rather uncomfortable undertaking. For consolation, the ambassador presented me with a piece of Lapis Lazuli from the most important mine of the province. On my last night, the Iranian ambassador gave a farewell dinner at his residence. He had designed his garden in the style of a Shiraz rose-garden. During this evening we recited mostly Persian poetry, and farewells were sweetened for me through a large jar of mountain honey.

From there I went North to Uzbekistan. It was a wonderful trip. For years, the land route between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan had been made impossible by all the internal fighting. But now, I travelled together with a DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) lecturer in the solid car of the embassy. This journey I had long since dreamed about. The journey across the mountains, a spur of the Tien-shan with two three thousand meter high passes, was breathtaking. Every turn offered a new view:

meadows, bushes, yellow blossoms, red cliffs, grey-greenish fields which all together looked like a modern piece of textile– and in the background the two and four thousand meters high mountains, snow-clad against the blue sky. We forgot about potholes. On the pass the snow was just beginning to melt and looked like a wall of multi-coloured marble. When we got down to eighteen hundred meters, we found a resting place. Its sun-umbrellas however, looked elegant only from a distance. The car was being washed Tajik-style: someone poured endless numbers of buckets full of water over the vehicle. Gradually we approached the plain. There, in the small settlement, I saw everwhere large jars with a yellow content. I was surprised at these quantities of mountain-honey by the roadside. But it turned out to be petrol, which was displayed this way for sale in the absence of regular petrol pumps. After eight hours we reached Khodjand, formerly Leninabad, at the banks of the Syr Daria. We found an elegant hotel there. Since there were uranium deposits in the area, the authorities had to come there quite frequently. My room-maid, a pretty Tajik girl, was delighted that I knew that her name Maulude indicated, that her birthday was on the same day as the one of the Prophet, maulud. She probably had never met a foreign guest with whom she could talk in her mother tongue (Tajik is actually, like the Afghan Dari, a somewhat obsolete form of modern Persian studded with some Russian words in between). For me too, there was a surprise: the imam of the mosque, which was as new as all the mosques in this former part of the Soviet Union, knew me; two, three years ago he had seen me on Tajik TV, when a very decorative lady journalist had interviewed me in my house in Bonn. The tall, slim, wooden pillars of the mosque were artistically carved in the style which, for centuries, is typical to the area of the Hindukush and adjoining, hilly

areas. I knew them from the wonderful wooden mosques in Swat in Pakistan. The dinner hosted by the ambassador is also worth mentioning. We sat in a small restaurant which was built into the stream, enjoyed the fresh fish and admired the fine view. The inn-keeper was a well known sculptor, whose works decorate the town.

It was more or less by default that I, twice, got to Kazackistan. At the end of a lecture tour through Uzbekistan, I was asked to give some lectures in Almaty and Bishkek. I accepted the invitation, because I hoped to be taken to the town of Turkestan, where the great Turkish sufi-master of the twelfth century, Ahmed Yesewi, lies buried in a mighty mausoleum. But to get there from Almaty, a long, long train journey had to be undertaken. From Tashkent, it would have been only a few hours away by car, but apparently the Uzbeks did not want me to know that. So, on a bright, sunny morning, I landed in Almaty. The director of the Goethe Institute was at the airport, somewhat overworked, because just then a German cultural week was taking place in Central Asia.

Several times a day he had to go to the airport under circumstances which were far from ideal, to collect a piano, or, the next time, three violins and other cultural items, maneuver them through customs and somehow, send them onwards, three flying hours away, to the new capital Astana, so that German culture would be spread as widely as possible. He handed me over to an interpreter, a nice woman but without any idea of Islam or Sufism. She was much more familiar with the terminology of economics, which, understandably, is more important to the Soviet Union and its successor states. The hotel was modern and drab, and in the morning everything was grey in grey in a cold rain. I had been spoilt by the sun of Uzbekistan and had not brought any winter clothes. But what was worse was that, even with my rudimentary Russian, I noticed that

the translation was not really correct, to put it mildly. The director of the Goethe Institute and the German ambassador tried hard to cheer me up. But even the second lecture did not improve my mood. On top of it, it began to snow heavily. So I decided not to continue to Bishkek, but to return, as quickly as possible, to my familiar world. I succeeded in doing so, after I had changed my daily allowance into a beautiful, velvety, fur-rimmed hat.

Almaty– never again! So I thought. But when in spring 2001 the DAAD rang me up and asked, whether I would hold the key address at the moot of the stipend-holders…. Just two days away…. I did agree, and the days there turned out to be as pleasant as the earlier stay had been unpleasant. I even met my former interpreter with pleasure. I also met a number of interesting colleagues. The city with its broad avenues and strange, monumental sculptures showed itself at its best. A young orientalist, whom I knew from Tashkent, sleuthed me through immigration and customs. My stay had been exactly fourty eight hours. To be honest, this trip had been less tiring than a train journey from Bonn to Erfurt, which I had to undertake a few days later.

Pakistan and India

Why have I always been so enthusiastic about Pakistan? It must have been due to the fairy tale of Padmanaba and Hassan, which kept holding me under its spell. In my childhood and youth though, there was only the one and undivided India; but even then, Islamic India was more familiar to me than the many, strangely shaped gods of Hinduism. The burning of widows, though prohibited now, makes me shake and shiver all over. In the eighties, a Sanskrit scholar from Yale– Sanskrit people normally do not like Islamists– asked me: “Annemarie, why do you have such an awful job?” The only possible reply to that was: “Because in my earlier life I had been a

Hindu-widow who did not want to be burnt!" "Well, then you don't deserve any better", he answered, and I am glad about that. But with what enthusiasm I kept looking at pictures of the magnificent buildings in Delhi, Agra, Lahore and Lucknow in Sattar Khair's pictorial volume! Muslim literature of India was hardly known in Europe. Nobody really knew that Persian literature, which had been written in the Subcontinent since the eleventh century, amounts to many times more than the one written in Iran. By way of an example: I had been asked to contribute to the *History of Indian Literature*, which the great Dutch Indologist Jan Gonda was just preparing. I looked through the table of contents of the planned volumes and saw, that there was no indication of "Islamic literature". I asked, why these literatures (Arabic, Persian, Turkish) were not included. He answered quite innocently: "Oh, I did not know that there was such a thing. But do go ahead, write something about that". If at all, it was Urdu that was known to some extent during my student days, which at that time, was mostly called Hindostani. In Berlin, Hans Heinrich Schaeder had encouraged me and thus, I booked myself in for a course in this language. The lecturer, Tarashand Roy, had left his home town Lahore before the first world war and I doubt that he, as a Hindu, knew the classical Urdu literature really well. Instead, he knew German poetry really well and loved to speak about Eichendorff, while making a big impression on his German audiences through his decorative turban. The Iqbal poem which he taught us, *parandah ki faryad,* "The Complaint of a Bird"was not really one of the best verses of this poet. But then I discovered *MY* Iqbal at the same time, but in another way, through an article by the British orientalist Reynold A. Nicholson, whose selection of Rumi had impressed me earlier on. Nicholson, in the magazine *Islamica*, had analyzed the *Payam-e-Mashriq,* the "Message of the East",

of this Indo-Muslim poet. I was enthused by the idea that an Indian poet had invented a scene in which Goethe and Rumi met in paradise and agreed on the conclusion that “Intellect comes from Satan, and from Adam, love”. I knew even then, that here I had touched on a future field of work.

In 1947, the Subcontinent was divided– an event that we, suffering under the war effects in Germany, hardly became aware of. In our country with millions of refugees, the news of millions of Muslim refugees moving from India to their new country Pakistan, and millions of Hindus migrating to India, was hardly noticed. In 1949, a fine magazine, *Pakistan Quarterly*, was started, which introduced the new country in the West of the Subcontinent to me. I contributed one or two articles to it (one was about women in Islamic mysticism) and for a honorarium, I requested some books on Iqbal. In the end of 1951, Hanns Meinke (see page 79) sent me two of Iqbal’s poetic works. This settled things for me. Soon, his *Javedname* and large parts of the *Message of the East* ‘Botschaft des Ostens’ were translated into German verse. My lectures on Iqbal and above all, my annotated Turkish translation of the Javedname (see page 118) brought me the first invitation to Pakistan, which soon became a second home to me. In 1965, I described my first impressions of it in my book *Pakistan, ein Schloss zu tausend Toren* ‘Pakistan, a Lock to a Thousand Gates’. Thirty years later appeared *Berge, Wüsten, Heiligtümer,* ‘Mountains, Deserts, Shrines.’ Now, I shall limit myself to a few remarks and details.

My first trip in spring 1958, even now, seems like a dream: in 1998 we celebrated my fortieth jubilee there, on the occasion of which I, among other honours, was made honorary citizen of Islamabad, a city, which at that time, had not even been planned.

It took me some time though to get used to the idea that the harbour-town of Karachi was made the– temporary

- capital of the new country, without a real history, without infrastructure. The well organized city of Delhi fell to India, although since the thirteenth century, it had been the centre of Indian Islam (and after the uprising in 1857 it became the seat of the British administration). In Karachi, I enjoyed the hospitality of S.A. Vahid, whose book on Iqbal was the first one of my Iqbal collection which I had received from the government. During those days, I saw Lahore and for the first time, met Javed Iqbal, the son of the poet-philosopher. Our close friendship exists even now. However, he is a Lawyer and tends to see the works of his father as political statements, while I am mostly impressed by the religious considerations of the poet and his fascinating combination of classical, traditional forms of Persian poetics with daring, modern ideas. As a historian of religion I admire his intuitive understanding of different religions, which he expresses with great clarity in his *Javedname* which was published in 1932. In this book he describes his celestial journey in the company of Maulana Rumi. There are influences of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, of Goethe's *Faust*, (which for Iqbal, outshone all other works of occidental literature), and of Dante's *Divina Comedia*. Since 1958, I participated in countless Iqbal-Days in Pakistan, Germany, in Turkey and India, in the USA and Canada, in Iran; and everywhere, they reflected the then emphasis of Pakistani politics; at times Iqbal was a strict Muslim, at times a socialist, even a socialist critic cum revolutionary messenger, at times a sufi or, the anti-sufi, or anti-Western– in short, the interpretations changed according to the political weather, year by year.

On the same trip I discovered a very different aspect of the country. I visited Makli Hills, that mighty necropolis, some seventy kilometer from Karachi. Since the late fifteenth century, thousands of rulers and scholars are buried there. Very fine, decorated mausoleums in various

styles, mostly in yellow sandstone, stood out among the graves and the visitor is fascinated by the richness of art-masonry on walls and windows. These were partly done by artists and artisans from Gujerat. In between them, I discovered a large mausoleum which seemed to originate from Turkestan, and some of the designs and decorative patterns reminded me of Samarkand and Bokhara. It is a fascinating place, of which the books on Islamic architecture hardly seemed to know anything.

At the end of this visit in the company of Pir Hissamuddin Rashdi, I listened to the music of two street musicians in a dusty lane of the nearby town of Thatta. "Where can I find something about the rulers of Sindh?" I asked. My companion looked down on me with the arrogance of a Pir and said in his husky voice: "I have written about it, but you cannot read it. It is in Sindhi!"Telling ME, that learning a language is beyond me– oh no! Six months later Pir Sahib received my first letter in Sindhi, because I realized, what a treasure I had discovered! A most melodious language with a complex grammar, particularly in the system of verbs. How can a poor foreigner ever pronounce the six different versions of the letter d correctly, or speak an implosive h? But this language harboured a treasure of mystical poetry, whose traces took you back to the early sixteenth century, when Qadi Qadan sang his dohas. Friends always recite one of it:

Lokan sarf nahu mun mutali suprin

Leave grammar and syntax to the people-

I study my beloved!

Two centuries later Sindhi poetry reached its peak in the *Risalo* of Shah Abdul Latif (died 1752), whose beautiful mausoleum in Bhit Shah we visited later. The *Risalo* is loved since two and a half centuries by every Sindhi, whether Hindu or Muslim, and the verses of Shah Abdul Latif have become proverbial. At the end of the

nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries the province of Sindh produced an enourmously talented writer, Mirza Qalich Beg, (from a Turko-Caucasian family) who worte more than four hundred works– among others, translations from Shakespeare up to Christoph von Schmid's *Flower Basket*. Sindh owes him tribute for the first women's educational novel (Zinat, 1892).

While I was still unaware of these things, I wondered about the empty plot at the side of a mausoleum of one of the Sindhi princes, which was reserved for a lady. Wouldn't it be nice to be buried here? This idea has always been remembered in Pakistan. I have also been offered a mausoleum in Bannu near the tribal area, and suggested and offered one near Iqbal's mausoleum in Lahore.

My companion on this fateful trip to Thatta and Makli Hill, Pir Hussamuddin Rashdi, was a member of one of the leading sufi families of Sindh. The other branch of the family was that of Pir Pagaro, "the one with the turban," whose followers during the freedom struggle of the Muslims against the Sikhs in 1830/31, had fought in the north-western part of India. These Hurr, the 'free"ones, who owe their master unconditional obedience, had also played an important role in the fight against the British in the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century. The British author Hugh T. Lambrick, as a jurist, had attended trials against the Hurr and, on the basis of notes of one of the fighters, he wrote his fascinating novel *The Terrorist*.

Pir Sahib's branch of the family was more given to scholarly work; his magnificent library has always been a great attraction for me, because there I always found some rare book or manuscript, and met many scholars from Pakistan and Iran. His older brother, Pir Ali Mohammad, played a highly active role in politics, as a minister and later, as the country's first ambassador to China. The house in Karachi, in which 4a part of the clan lived, has often

been my destination. There, I did not only meet the scholarly master of the house, but also his aged mother, his silent wife (she had no children) and uncountable sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews, and it was quite difficult to keep them apart in my mind. It was only the youngest of the wives of Pir Ali Mohammad, a lively, very intelligent Bengali woman, who did not live in purdah; she came into the traditional family like an exotic butterfly. She taught me the customs and practices of an aristocratic, Sindhi family. The fact that one of the wives of Pir Ali Mohammad was Christian, the other Hindu, did not seem to bother anybody. Every morning the eldest son visited his mothers to enquire about their needs. Once I was a bit surprised when he answered my question, how he had spent his Sunday, with a slight smile of embarrassment: "Oh, I spent Easter at my Christian mother's house."

My hosts, the Vahids were not happy with my frequent visits to Pir Sahib's, because they feared their influence on me and a change of mind in my appreciation of Iqbal and the ideals of Pakistan. I might instead concentrate on the culture of just one part of Pakistan, which was alien to them. Gradually, I began to understand that even at that early time, the conflict between Sindhis and Muhajirs, was an issue, which later grew into such catastrophical dimensions. After all, so the arguments ran, these Sindhis had done nothing for Pakistan– they even wanted to turn their province into a separate state! Why, why did I have to go to a concert of Sindhi music, and of all places in the house of G.M. Syed who– which I newcomer did not know at that time– was fighting for an independent Sindh, while my hosts belonged to those millions of Muslims, who had left their home in India in 1947. They came from Ajmer, the most important centre of Sufism in India, and had lived for a long time in the area of the Nizam of Hyderabad. For them, as for millions of Muslims, Pakistan was an

independent Muslim country, a dream– but they never thought, that their old homeland would from now on, be closed to them. “I thought the relations between India and Pakistan would be like the one between Germany and Austria” said S.A.Vahid, and he certainly expressed with that the opinion of millions of Muslims. The exodus of an important part of the Muslim intelligentia had necessarily, led to tensions on both sides. This was particularly applicable to Sindh, from where the Hindus, the formerly leading intellectual class, had mostly left the country (there are a few settlements of them in Balochistan and in the Thar desert), while the major part of the population came from rural areas. The actual power rested with the landlords and sufi-pirs. Sindh was an area, where people were proud of their language, while the new migrants mostly spoke Urdu, which they were not willing to accept. (Punjab had accepted Urdu as their literary language since the eighteenth century, while only Sikhs used Punjabi as written language). I, gradually, began to feel the shadows which were later to cover the whoe country, which had become particularly vulnerable by the early demise of its first head, the ‘Great Leader,’ Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah just one year after partition. This was followed two years later by the murder of the second one, his successor Liaquat Ali Khan.

I loved ‘my’ Sindh and visited many villages, many shrines; musicians became my friends, they sang for me in moonlight and on boats, in a large garden somewhere in the North of the province. I could never get enough when they sang the old tunes. Accompanied by flutes, by the double-flute, and the various percussion instruments– above all, when Allan Faqir with his acting talent changed songs into pantomime, at times on the stage in Bonn, or at a sunset in Mitthi in the middle of the Thar desert. I was a frequent guest in the Sindhi-Adabi Board, an excellent institution

which publishes classical Sindhi literature and whose publications on Sindhi folklore are vastly treasured. I learned a great lot from these books about proverbs, customs and traditions. And I enjoyed the fairy-tales and religious songs, which N.A. Baloch together with his team, had collected with such devotion. Young poets and writers met there, and Ghulam Rabbani Agro slowly rose from there on the bureaucratic ladder and later, was a loyal companion to me on many of my journeys. I shared many an amusing event with him.

I always loved the humour of the Sindhis. To this day I recall how we laughed about the most innocent jokes while we were riding through deserts or mountains.

Being in Sindh, one has by all means to go to Moenjo Daro, that grand archaeological site, which is witness to the early and sophisticated civilization of the Indus valley. Its excavation and documentation was, to a large extent, done by some of our German friends under the sponsorship of UNESCO. In a great number of photographic exhibitions and symposiums, Michael and Alexandra Jansen, have promoted the cause of this large, dead city. My first trip there came about on first March, 1958. On the morning of this day we, under the patronage of Mumtaz Hassan, had formally inaugurated the excavation of a place which is the oldest Arab settlement in the Subcontinent: Bhambore, close to Karachi. Mumtaz Hassan was at that time secretary finance of the government of Pakistan and probably the greatest enthusiast in matters of the history of his country. He was as much fascinated by the origins of Muslim rule of India as he was about the works of Iqbal (the Iqbal Academy is his creation). Hardly any German could have matched him in his knowledge of Goethe. This man was one of the most important figures in the early history of Pakistan. He read in Arabic, Persian and in his mother tongue Punjabi, as well as in English and Urdu, the two

most important languages of Pakistan. He seemed to know all relevant literary passages and quoted them by heart. Over and above that, he had a wonderful sense of humour. He was a close friend of Pir Sahib. The third person in that group was M. Aman Hobohm, whom I knew since his days as imam of the Berlin mosque, who looked after German culture in Pakistan. Later, he was appointed in the German foreign service. When nowadays, we meet in Bonn, where he is director of the King Fahad Academy, our talks invariably take us to Karachi, to Mumtaz Hassan and Pir Sahib, and we remember past, happy days when we had such great hopes for the country.

In the afternoon of that first of March, we boarded a train going North East. We sat together with Abdul Haye Habibi, the Afghan scholar, who for whatever reason, lived in exile in Karachi. The vastly read scholar, at every station– and there were lots of them– improvised a Persian four-liner till we all fell asleep. In the morning a car was waiting for us at Larkana. We had breakfast in a large, elegant house, whose wide steps were filled with innumerable flowerpots. It was the house of Bhutto, a neighbour and family friend of the Rashdis. This was my first contact with this family, which later was to play such an important role in politics, a family, that since long, had been involved in the politics of Sindh, even before Sindh in 1937, was separated from its old administrative centre in Bombay and became independent.

Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto came to Bonn for the first time when he was foreign minister. He knew me, because all Sindhis knew the German woman who loved their language and wrote about their literature, held lectures on it and thus, revived a century's old tradition. In the forties of the nineteenth century the German missionary Ernest Trumpp had been active in Karachi– at that time, nothing but a miserable fishing village. Later, he published his great

Sindhi Grammar. He also had collected the poetry of the mystical singer Shah Abdul Latif and published the first printed edition of his *Risalo* in Leipzig, although he, as a sober Protestant missionary, had no taste for mystical poetry. (One should also mention that he analyzed the grammar of Pushto, Balochi and a number of other local languages of today's Pakistan) Anyway, for Sindhis he was a legendary figure– and now there was another German, to continue the Sindhi tradition! In the seventies there was considerable interest in Sindhi. Pyar Ali Allana, the wise and active minister of culture in Sindh, (who was a son of the former mayor of Karachi, a leading Ismaili and close assistant to the Aga Khan) had the idea to organize an international congress on *Sindh through the Centuries.* A considerable number of scholars from all over the world came to attend it in spring, 1975.

The peak of it for me was that I was honoured with an honorary doctorate from the University of Hyderabad; it was the first one in my life, which was later followed by honours from Peshawar and Islamabad universities. A German colleague, who never excelled in any form of friendship for me, now went out of his way to carry my handbag and entertain me charmingly.

In the meanwhile, another relationship had developed. In 1969, Benazir Bhutto, the eldest daughter of Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto, joined Harvard. She was among the first batch of girl students to reside in Eliot House, after Harvard had gone co-ed. We used to call her Pinkie. She passionately campaigned for the unity of her country during the crisis with East Pakistan and the resultant division of Pakistan, just like her father, who's favourite she was. She turned Pakistan into a reality on the mental map of Harvard, where so far, only India had played a role. I was concerned that she was more interested in American history and its constitution as well as in hockey, rather than in the history

of Indo-Muslim culture and Urdu. A better knowledge of her own culture might have saved her later from several wrong decisions.

During my later visits to Pakistan which, since 1973, became an annual feature (at times, bi-annual), I saw Bhutto frequently. He often invited me to tea, even if it meant to rush by air from Lahore to Islamabad and back. He gave the orders in the style of Oriental landlords. But we always had inspiring conversations. And on one occasion he recommended me a book by Pir Ali Mohammad Rashdi with the title: *uhe dinh uhe shinh*. "(Where are) those days, those lions?" I doubted whether I would ever fully read through the huge volume in Sindhi; but then I got so fascinated by the brilliant style of the author and by his art of description, that in the evenings, when I sat together with my mother in Bonn, I translated the most beautiful passages to her: precious, small sketches from the daily life of the province, of the big and small actors in it, of Muslims and Hindus, and how they co-existed before partition.

But times changed; there was now strong opposition against the PPP (Bhutto's People's party) and in 1977, the military took over the reigns of power. They accused him of rigging the elections and of many other things. During the months of the trial of the former head of state, all people who were interested in Pakistan wrote to General Zia-ul Haq. Even my mother from her hospital shortly before her demise, was deeply concerned about the trial, which then ended with the execution of this once so enigmatic leader of the people. I was in Harvard. Sanam, the younger sister of Benazir, lived in the same House. We were aghast! For two years I refused to go to Pakistan; but then the homesickness drove me back there, as well as the worry about Pir Sahib, who was suffering from terminal cancer.

Among the letters, which I wrote at that time to Islamabad, was one to the minister of justice, A.K. Brohi, another Sindhi. In that letter, I recited a certain verse of Shah Abdul Latif:

Mulk sa mansur

The whole realm is Mansoor (Hallaj, the martyred mystic)

How many more will you kill?

But even that had no effect. With the execution of Bhutto, several decades of rivalry between two brilliant men came to an end.

I had met Brohi, a well known jurist, quite early on in Karachi. He did not appear like a Pakistani, but rather like a South Indian pandit: very tall, rather dark and his name indicated that he came from a Brahui family. The Brahui are a small clan of Dravidian origin, who, since time immemorial, lived in Balochistan. Perhaps they were related to the people of Moenjo Daro. The remnants of the Brahui, who were later driven away by the Arians and speak a very complex Dravidian language, used to live in the mountainous areas bordering Sindh. Brohi was an excellent expert on western and eastern philosophy and mysticism, which could be described as theosophical, but not as emotional. It was a trend which, in the second part of the twentieth century, attracted quite a number of orientalists, like René Guénon, Frithjof Shuon, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and several others, who found their way to it. Brohi, at a number of occasions, tried to draw me in as well, but that was not my world. Yet, we kept a nice friendship– he visited me a number of times in Bonn. His large turquoise ring seemed to sparkle all by itself.

Through Brohi I met Allana Kazi, the former vice-chancellor of the university of Sindh who, like Brohi, represented a mystically influenced philosophy or, a philosophy influenced by mysticism. He and his German

wife Elsa lived in their secluded house in Hyderabad. Elsa appeared in the same fashion as she wore forty years earlier as a young girl in a Weimar girls' hostel. It was quite uncanny, this sight of a woman who, after living for a long time in London, had returned to the homeland of her husband, but refused any contact with the 'crowd'. She was truly shocked when I enthusiastically, told her of the colours and smells of the bazaar of her town, which she had never visited! With the help of her husband she translated a lot from Shah Abdul Latif's *Risalo* into English. And she painted– painted childish pictures, not worth mentioning, but Brohi considered them masterpieces which he wanted to offer to the Louvre, because Allama Kazi was his guru, his mentor. After Elsa's death the scholar drowned in the Indus. Accident or suicide? Probably he harboured a deep wish to follow his beloved wife into the other world. Everybody who knew him, thought, that he had followed the example of a heroine of Sindhi folklore: Sohni, who, searching for her beloved, drowned in the Indus.

Brohi was a complicated person, highly intelligent, brilliant, but in a very different way from his antagonist Bhutto. When he spoke about mystical and philosophical themes, he forgot time and place and people. A Pakistani friend gave us an amused account of how his lordship (and he always played the role of a lord) ate his meal in the rest-house of Sehwan: "…and then he took the rice grains (a pushing movement of the right hand across the plate) and talked constantly of the universal soul." Obviously, the universal soul was much more important to him than the chicken curry.

Brohi, known as a brilliant jurist, rose to the rank of minister of justice under Zia-ul Haq. His word sealed Bhutto's fate, because Zia trusted him completely. The simple officer, who always admitted his low education, even emphasized it and tried to learn from others, so as to

understand better the history of his people– he had a huge admiration for his minister. Thus, decades of rivalry of these two most intelligent men– one, a great landlord, the other, a self-made man from Sindh– came to a tragic end. “Brohi is a sufi! Why didn’t he save Bhutto?”asked his friend Nasr in utmost consternation.

Against all the criticism that has been expressed about president Zia, one should not forget the statement of a certainly unbiased woman. The German leprosy doctor Ruth Pfau, in her memoirs, gratefully mentions, that with no other president of Pakistan, where she had been working for decades, had she found so much help and understanding for her work as with Zia-ul Haq, who himself had a handicapped daughter.

But all this happened much later– at a time, which for Pakistan was a kind of watershed. When in 1958, I visited Pakistan, I also came to Peshawar, which was an attractive city in those days. The visitor would delight in the colours and smells of the Quissakhwani Bazaar– a real Oriental city, like one had always dreamed it. There, at the university, I met many colleagues at the Historical Congress, who were later on to play a role in my life. At that time, the vice chancellor was Raziuddin Siddiqui, who had been a student of Heisenberg. He came from the Deccan after partition, more or less of his own free will, to Pakistan, where he played for many decades, an important role in the cultural policy of his country. He always emphasized his attachment to Germany, till in 1996, he died at an old age.

Soon after I returned to Ankara from my first visit to Pakistan in spring 1958, my mother arrived from Marburg. Right on her first evening we were invited by a lady in Istanbul, whom I hardly knew. We had coffee, and I, almost automatically, turned my cup upside down, so she may read the future from the coffee-ground. Her smooth,

pretty face changed in such a strange way that she resembled a very old shaman woman, while predicting me a journey around the world. I was more interested in her change of face than in such an impossible prediction. But a few days later, Jouco Bleeker and his wife visited us in Ankara. The almost first question that the then secretary of the International Union for the History of Religion put to me, was: “Would you care to go with us to Japan?” Thus, in summer I flew via Marburg, the North-Pole and Canada to Tokyo. I acted as a secretary for the congress and had a chance to see some of the most important places in Japan, because our honorary president, prince Mikasa and his staff had organized everything perfectly. On the way back we stopped at Manila, where Pir Ali Mohammad Rashdi was ambassador of Pakistan just then. The journey continued via Hongkong to Delhi, where my former host during the spring days, S.A. Vahid, received me. Thanks to him I visited for the first and only time, Ajmer, the central sacred place of the great mystic teacher Mo’iuddin Chishti. His significance becomes evident by the fact that for this one sacred festival in a year, the normally closed border with Pakistan is being opened, and crowds of pilgrims from the neighbouring country pour in. And then, finally, I saw the Taj Mahal in Agra, a dream in marble so perfect, that pictures of it can never render its true greatness. Its effect is so delicate, like a white cloud. Which queen in the world has a more beautiful grave than Shah Jehan’s wife Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631 at the birth of her fourteenth child within sixteen years?

In Karachi I learnt that my friend, Pir Hussamuddin, had suffered a heart attack. Therefore I stayed there for a long time in the old house, among the books and the many many people, and practiced my Sindhi. From there I went to Lahore and was guest in the governor’s house. I had no idea that under the roof of this very building, the putsch

was just being planned by which, a few days later, Ayub Khan usurped the power.

In 1961 I had started my job in Bonn. Before that, I went to Pakistan. For the first time I was invited to Swat. I loved this mountain world. Later, particularly in the eighties, I was to see much more of it than at this time, like the Karakorum Highway, past rock formations like fairy palaces right up to the Chinese border; Chitral, where, under the guidance of the Chitral Scouts, we went on the 'Hell Path' to the land of the Kafirs; and not to forget Skardu, which we reached in a small Fokker "Friendship", that passes by the Nanga Parbat so closely, that you think you can touch the snow. After glimpsing the world of the white shimmering seven-and eight thousand meters high mountains, the plane suddenly turns into the deep gorge through which the young Indus flows. Karin Mittmann, whom I had met first time in Peshawar in 1961, was a wonderful travel companion to me, whose friendship made my stays in Islamabad most delightful (and will hopefully do so in the future as well).

A visit during the semester holidays in 1962 was limited to East Pakistan (which at that time, was not yet independent), because in Karachi, some differences had developed with my former hosts: I should study Iqbal, and not Sindhi! But the number of lectures on Iqbal never decreased. My masterpiece I delivered in Lyallpur (now Faisalabad) where, in the Agriculture University, I heard the announcement: "And now Dr. Schimmel is going to speak on Iqbal and Agriculture." (One should speak this in the broadest form of Punjabi-English) And I did it!

The tea gardens in Sylhet-district, the ocean at Cox Bazaar, the colourful silks of Chittagong– all were fascinating! In the following year I combined a trip to East Pakistan with visits to Lahore and to my beloved Multan, where I enjoyed the hospitality of Makhdoom Sahib, the

great sufi-leader (later, he was governor of Punjab for a short while). When I arrived at Karachi and waited for the Lufthansa flight, the Sindhi friends were at the airport and played music for me till the moment of my departure. Maulana Maudoodi, the leader of the orthodox Jamaat-e-Islami, who had arrived on the same flight with me, must have disapproved strongly.

In 1966 I combined a congress in Tehran and lectures in Kabul with a first visit to Islamabad, which was then nothing more than a big building site. On that visit Professor Dani, archaeologist and untiring organizer, showed me the shrine of Bari Imam in Nurpur, which was surrounded by the building activities, before later, it was 'modernized'! Soon after that, the German embassy was built, not far from this somewhat ill-famed shrine. I quickly fled to Lahore, into the home of the Iqbal family. From there I went to Delhi, where I had to purchase books for Harvard. In Delhi I found many important lithographs of classical works, which the publishers, Naval Kishor (founded by a Hindu literature fan) had published during the second half of the nineteenth century. Thus I succeeded to get within my limited budget, a large and good collection of second hand works for Harvard.

The greatest event however, was my first visit to the president of the state, Zakir Husain, whom I had come to know through friends in Karachi. Just like Raziuddin Siddiqui, this Siddiqui, Saleemuzzaman, too, to whom I owed this introduction, had been educated in Germany. He was a chemist and had discovered the pharmaceutical properties of Rauwolfias, for which he was given an honorary doctorate of his alma mater in Frankfurt. Both the Siddiquis (who were not closely related; the clan derived its origin from the first caliph of Islam, Abu Bakr as-Siddiq) belong to the party of nationalist Muslims in India who, after the first world war, rejected the growing influence of

British rule and therefore, went to Germany to study there. Dr. Zakir Husain too, had studied in Berlin. He was an educationist, a man with a vision who, however, could not reconcile to the idea of the partition of India. He and his brother, Yusuf Husain Khan, who got his Ph.D. for an important work on Sufism from Paris, thought alike. The youngest brother however, Mahmood Husain, opted for Pakistan where, for a while, he was education minister, before he became vice chancellor of the University of Karachi. His daughter Saqiba plays a role in the literary field; she, above all else, wrote children books in clean, classical Urdu. Later, I met her frequently in Islamabad. She always appealed to me as an example of a noble, Muslim lady.

The meeting with the president was wonderful, because both of us did not only love the literature of India, but also precious stones! After my visit in the presidential palace, from sheer joy, I could not resist the temptation to buy myself a charming bracelet of pearls.

In the evening I, for the first time, translated an Urdu poem of Ghalib. I considered it a kind of duty, as the future holder of the chair– the chair, whose founder Ozai Durrani, had been a friend of Zakir Husain. My first translation though, was into German, which did not quite catch my mood at that time. Yet, the next morning I sent it to the president. He congratulated me and acknowledged the project in these lines:

I'd like to go, where my name is not known,
Nobody speaks my language, without a name I roam.
I want a house with no wall, no door,
No neighbour around, and no guard before,
And when I get sick, no one about that cared,
And where at my death, no lament can be heard.

Through Zakir Husain I got contact to the Jamia Millia, a school and university which, soon after world war

I, was founded by nationalist Indian Muslims as opposed to the British-inspired Aligarh Oriental College (since 1918, university). The Jamia started off with enormous problems and its teachers sacrificed a lot in order to realize their ideal of an integrated education system, which was open to both, Hindus and Muslims. After partition the Jamia continued in Delhi and even grew. And on my subsequent visits I was quite often a guest speaker there. There, I met the small, delicate professor Mohammad Mujeeb, and Syed Abid Husain– both historians, who registered in their works the development of the Indian Muslims, and were worried about the future. S. Ausaf Ali, the director, became a loyal friend. He and his wife often took me through Delhi's historical sites. However, finally, the university was taken over by the government, which brought about many changes. Gopi Chand Narang, the Urdu professor (a Hindu from Balochistan) always fascinated me by his wonderful, clean pronunciation of Urdu– what a difference when compared to the Punjabi-tainted Hindustani of our former lecturer in Berlin!

Also related to the Jamia Millia, but separated from it by the partition of the Subcontinent, were the Hakeem-brothers. The older Hakeem, Abdul Hameed, lived in Delhi, the younger one in Karachi. Both were masters of traditional medicine, and both had set up large installations, where they produced and marketed them. Hamdard, the name of the undertaking, means "sharing, reducing pain". Both brothers were great philanthropists. The elder brother founded a university in Delhi, and Hamdardnagar soon became a centre for science and culture with an exquisite library.

Hakeem Mohammad Said did a similar thing in Pakistan. His "Dar al-Hikma", House of Wisdom, specialized in the teaching of Islamic science and medicine. At every visit in the Western suburb of Karachi, he proudly

showed us how his academy was growing. He was among the closest friends of Pir Hussamuddin Rashdi and Mumtaz Hassan. Not only medical science profited from his knowledge and sponsorships, but also the Historical Society. The grounds of his university complex grew constantly. Shaikh Zaki Yamani donated there a village for Muslim refugee children from various regions. Everything was designed for a happy future. Over time, a large number of scientific institutions joined it. Frequently, one could meet the tall, and apparently never ageing Hakeen Sahib, who was always clad in purest white, also in Europe. His name stood for noble humanity, for a sincere social engagement, as Islam demands it. It was a terrible shock for all of us in Pakistan, India and Europe, when this man, in autumn 1998, was murdered, while on his way from early morning prayers to his clinic, where on every Saturday he treated poor patients free of cost. The reason, so it was said, was to be seen behind his sharp criticism of the drug-mafia. His brother in Delhi did not live much longer either.

Encounters with members of the Muslim high society in Delhi were always very interesting; for centuries, they had been the representatives of aristocratic culture of the Indian Subcontinent. They were so closely inter-related, that an outsider could never sort them out. One typical representative of this group, Sharif ul-Hassan, once remarked: “Everyone, whose family tree dates back to 1590, is related to us.” Sharif-ul Hassan was for a long time, Pakistani diplomat in Turkey. He exuded a gentle melancholy, as was noticeable with several of the leading intellectuals of Delhi, who had, in 1947, left their country and migrated to Pakistan. In their new country, they missed the sophistication in music, poetry, calligraphy, and even the finest building in Pakistan could not compensate them for the loss of their great Moghul architecture in Delhi or Agra.

In the end of January, 1969, I went on a short trip to Pakistan and India, when on both parts of the Subcontinent the one hundredth death anniversary of Mirza Ghalib was commemorated. The scholarly result of the congress was not really remarkable, but we could meet many colleagues from all over the world. However, those persons, who saw in the aristocratic poet of the dying days of Delhi, a proclaimer for social justice, even a precursor of communism, were not taken seriously; their deliberations were typical for a political trend which, at that time, prevailed among Indian intellectuals. After the Ghalib-celebrations I stayed away from the Subcontinent for several years. There were other trips– like Iran– which became more important, and during the painful process of the separation of East Pakistan from the western part of the country, I did not think it appropriate to go there.

The breaking up of Pakistan, whose two parts were fifteen hundred kilometers apart, and the founding of a new state, Bangladesh, was something that several intellectuals of the eastern part had wished for. It was even quite logical. In Iqbal's speech in 1930, he had only mentioned the Muslim majority areas in the western part of the Subcontinent. Bengal, with its predominantly Muslim population, was added later. The integration of the eastern part, in which a totally different language was spoken (Bengali) than in the West (mostly Urdu) and even more problematic, a totally different writing system was used, was a major hurdle. As a result of the 1970 elections, the prime minister should have come from the smaller part which, however, had a larger population. However, Bhutto refused to accept this situation, which then led to the split. The resultant senseless, military conflict, in which India also intervened, had many victims. Among them was the Hindu professor Dev, who taught philosophy at the University of Dhaka and was close to the Ramakrishna

Mission. He was a benevolent man with a fine sense of humour, who always thought it necessary to translate my lectures into basic English for his students: “This was fery fery rich cake, a fery rich cake indeed, much too rich for you stupid people. I am going to translate it for you into fery simple English!” Then he shook his iron-grey hair of shoulder length, and ‘translated’ what I had said. This peace-loving person became a victim, like so many others, of the senseless fighting. Bangladesh remembered him later through a postal stamp.

It was 1973 before I saw Pakistan again– the growing city of Islamabad, which became greener and greener, and all my old friends. The embassy in Islamabad was a kind of home for me.

In those years I also went to India several times. I was lucky enough to stay at the place of Alfred Würfel. Sri Würfel, as he was generally called, was at that time the cultural attaché of our embassy. Everybody who knew India knew him. He, born in 1911 in Dresden, was an India-fan right from his childhood on, and came to Benares in 1936 in order to study Sanskrit there. India never let him go again. During the war he was interned together with other Germans and Austrians, among them Heinrich Harrer. But when the internees were released, he had no place in Germany, because his mother and sisters lived in Dresden. So he went, not quite legally, on a freighter to Bombay. One should listen to him when he tells about his adventurous trip to the home of his soul! In Bombay he had friends– there was no place in India where he did not have friends. After a few years, diplomatic relations were established between Germany and India, and he was called to Delhi to the embassy where, by virtue of his knowledge of the language and his vast circle of people that he knew, he became indispensable. He showed the country to prominent guests like Theodor Heuss and C.G. Jung, and

when he talked, the Swiss painter Alice Boner and the dancer Udai Shankar (brother of Ravi Shankar) appeared. Various Rajput princes were his friends. A few times we travelled together. Once we went to the steep Rajput fort Kuchaman where he had a pied-à-terre; it was a different India from my Moghul-or Deccan world. Our last journey took us to Burhanpur on the Tapti, which, for a long time, had been the headquarter of the Moghul rulers who, around 1600, tried to subject also the South-Indian Muslim royal empires. Beautiful mosques decorate the town; one of them carries a sanscrit inscription. At the outskirts of the town stands a villa, in which Queen Mumtaz Mahal died and where she was buried, before her husband acquired the grounds for her future mausoleum, the Taj Mahal. On the way back we visited the charming Mandu, which was the favourite of the emperor Jehangir and whose buildings are varied and beautiful. (We found our way back to reality by the fact that the aircraft from Indore to Delhi did not come, because the airline had gone bankrupt).

Of course Sri knew every corner of Delhi. He showed me the Crafts Market at the foot of the Purana Qilla, the Old Fort of the fourteenth century, where the emperor Humayun fell down the steps when he was hurrying to evening prayers; several times we saw the Red Fort. I looked into the various universities and– last not least– many, many traders who, alas, sold the most beautiful pieces of cloths or jewelry. At times, they became quite a danger for me. The many servants in the house, all of them Muslims, were all Sri’s family. The seven children of the old cook were all born in the house. The well-fed driver had the melodious name Shamsul-arifin, ‘Sun of the Gnostics’, although he could neither read nor write, he nevertheless shone like the rising sun. In short, Sri’s house was a paradise for everyone who loved India. His residence in the centre of Delhi, which he found after an unpleasant

interlude, had enough room for the many guests from all over the world.

In those years I strolled through Delhi also with Ebba Koch, the Austrian specialist for Islamic architecture; at times, Christian Troll also accompanied us, a German friend of the Jesuits, who is one of the best experts on Indian Islam and intensively strives for dialogue for understanding among the religions. We had many happy get-togethers, climbing over ruins, or finding the darkest corner of Delhi. And sometimes we met at the hospitable home of the Kochs, where the giant Bernhardiner dog Babur seemed to listen to our conversation with great interest.

Through Christian Troll I got an invitation to Patna, because there an Australian brother of his order, Paul Jackson, was working. As a precaution, Paul had accommodated me in the guest room of the women's hospital which was run by Swiss nuns. According to him, it was the only place, where rats could be found only outside. During me lecture in the Khudabaksh Library, a world famous place with treasures of Oriental manuscripts, several million mosquitoes were part of my audience. The Ganges rolled slowly and heavily past the city. In the morning we, together with a kindly, age-bent scholar, visited the nearby, architecturally interesting graves and mausoleums of friends of God, dating back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There, I suddenly understood why Indian ascetics– Hindus and Muslims alike - have developed and perfected the art of habs-i-dam, the long holding of the breath, because what attacked our noses here was not the fragrance of holiness.

In the seventies I also saw Aligarh, the Indo-Muslim college, which had been founded by the reformer Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in 1877, as a place of modernization of Indian Islam. At that time M.A. Khusro was the vice-

chancellor who later, became Indian ambassador to Bonn. He was a descendent of a well known sufi master of Bijapur and had a delightful gift of humour. On that trip I availed the opportunity of staying in the house of India's best known historian of Indian Islam, K.A. Nizami, who had put the house for one year at the disposal of our American colleague Bruce Lawrence. It was very inspiring company, and together with an Indian colleague we went on several excursions. The huge fort of Gwalior was most impressive. It needed a five hour train journey in the company of a Hindu football club to get there. For centuries this fort had been a prison, in which a considerable number of scholars and mystics, officers and courtiers had been held. Looking at the magnificent architecture we forgot about its history for a while. The mausoleum of the great friend of God, Mohammad Ghauth Gwaliori, seemed to transform, through its complex decorations, the enigmatic and magical teachings of the master who was buried there, into visible art. Next to it was the simple mausoleum of Tansen, the most famous singer of India, who had been the favourite of the emperor Akbar. And then Fatehpur Sikri! That fascinating dead city, which Akbar got built and after hardly fifteen years, abandoned. There he had held his religious dialogues with Zoroastrians, Jesuits and Hindus….

We also visited sufi shrines East of Lucknow, the beautiful, quiet Dev Sharif, where we were lying on the stone floor and the singing of two derveshes lulled us into sleep. There was Rudauli, which is gradually crumbling, where from all the walls the word "haqq", Divine Truth, shone down, and finally Kichchauchha, where mentally sick patients are taken for driving out evil spirits. The shrine was surrounded by stagnant water, which was green like corpses. One of such jins which jumped out of a woman, apparently entered my camera, which since that

moment, refused to function and could not be repaired, neither in India nor Germany. The sight of the women who, with their open hair streaking down, banged their heads into the walls, shocked us terribly, and in the pouring rain, we dared walk back through the jungle which, so we were told, was full of robbers.

We reached Faizabad, where we needed a strong peg of Bourbon whiskey (a present from Sri) with unboilt water and large quantities of iodine tablets so as to be able to sleep in the not really so clean, small hotel. When we returned to Aligarh, I received the message that Indira Gandhi wanted to see me.

Each year in the Subcontinent brought new adventures, widened the horizon. After I had stayed away for two years after Bhutto's execution, I enjoyed the next trip to the Deccan tremendously. I went via Bombay, which always makes me melancholic, to Poona with its active Goethe Institute and on to Madras, where I enjoyed the wonderful sandstone relief in Mamhabalipuram, "The Origin of the Ganga", on which all animals were carved true to life– and a little tomcat stands there in the pose of a penitent with raised paws under a mighty elephant. I also found a few interesting manuscripts in Madras, not only magnificent Qurans, but also a manuscript of a Turkish grammar. It had been written by a Moghul prince who had fled from Delhi soon after 1800 as a textbook, because Turkish continued to the spoken in the house of the Moghuls.

And then the Deccan! In Gulbarga I saw not only the shrine of the Gesudaraz (whose descendent I knew when he was a student in Montreal), but I also admired one of the most impressive mosques I had ever seen, a distant echo of the Sidi Oqba in Kairouan; with its broad, keel-shaped arches it stood before me like a big ship, which majestically moves on its way. I visited Bidar, the first seat of the Bahmandis who, in 1327, had separated from the Delhi

empire; and finally Bijapur, which, in the seventeenth century, was the seat of numerous friends of God, and counts among the most beautiful cities of India. It owes its charming buildings to one of the most cheerful rulers of Islamic history: Ibrahim Adil Shah (1580-1627), bard, poet and architect. His mausoleum always seemed to me to be a garden of stone tulips. One can recognize its old colouring only in rare moments before sunset. In contrast, there is the Gol Gumbad, the enormous mausoleum of his son, which was to be surpassed by an even bigger one for his grandson which, however, never got completed. My charming companion, Zia Shakeb knew poems, anecdotes and historical details of all places and turned this first Deccan-trip of mine into sheer pleasure. From my small guest-pavilion in the garden of Peter Sewitz, the director of the Goethe Institute, I heard, with every sunrise, the call to prayer from five or six different mosques, like the sound of an orchestra.

Hyderabad, the centre of the Nizam, whose rule was firmly established since the early eighteenth century, had kept some of its old charm, although the dis-Islamisation made rapid progress; tens of thousands of migrants from the Deccan, now living in the USA, are witness to it. I was grateful, when one of the leading art-dealers in India, the Hindu Jagdish Mittal, whom off and on I helped a bit with the deciphering of some Arabic or Persian inscription, told me at the end of my lecture tour (I held some fourteen different lectures on that trip):"After a long time, it was wonderful to hear something of the good old times of Islamic rule and Islamic culture!"There was the Osmania university, which, since world war I, promoted Urdu literature and Indo-Muslim history; there were poets of all colours with whom we sat together, and there was Mujeeb Yar Jung, one of the nephews of the Nizam, a wonderful, deeply melancholic person, who could not really reconcile

to the materialism of the new time and to the loss of his past. He was happy when he was able to show me mementos of the glamorous history of his family, the Paygah; the palace of Falaknuma on a hill that overlooked Hyderabad, or his wonderful collection of rings. For us, he opened the Purana Haveli, one of the town-palaces of the Nizam, where he entertained us to delicious Hyderabadi dishes, while Deccan poets sang their tunes and the sky was lit up with the fireworks of the Divali festival. But I also saw the empty palace, where his old father was lying all alone in a huge room, furnished only with one bed, a table, a chair and a TV set.

The harsh landscape of the Deccan appealed to me more than the luke-warm, drab landscape East of Delhi. I made it a point to visit Vijayanagar, South-West of Hyderabad, on one of my trips. The town lies at the junction of Hindu and Muslim rule; a –partly– dreamlike, bewitched place with temples, whose pillars, so it is said, are tuned by music. Their architecture was a fascinating symbiosis of the two cultures. The guestroom though, where I found accommodation for the night, looked as if, since the battle of Talikota (1556), had not been cleared of cobwebs– but so what! The beauty of the architecture, which delighted me so much during the day, turned it into a trivial matter.

Once we also went to Warangal, North-East of Hyderabad; as ruin-site, whose black pillars seemed to be covered with a fine layer of lace. Here I understood, why in ancient and medieval times, the stone carvers of the Hindus were rightly considered unsurpassable. Strange animal heads and capitels, which had tumbled down to the floor, reminded me of fearsome ghost-stories. But on the way there was a weaving centre, where most beautiful saris of colourful silks were produced, which brightened up the

somber, yet impressive images of the black stones of Warangal.

Again and again we visited the kings' graves of Golconda, where we celebrated a wonderful farewell party. I enjoyed coming back the the Deccan, to expand my knowledge and my friendships. On a further trip there in the company of the incomparable Zia Shakeb, also brought Edith and Cary Welch there. We saw Aurangabad and the seemingly endless graveyard of Khuldabad, where, since centuries, the great of the Deccan lie buried. At the grave of Burhanuddin Gharib, the patron saint of Burhanpur, we listened to Sufi music.

Through my colleague Alam Khundmiri who hails from Hyderabad (years earlier I had passed his doctorial thesis) I was invited for lectures to Srinagar. I really looked forward to seeing Kashmir and dreamed of drifting over the romantic lake in a houseboat. But what faced me was a wet, cold Srinagar (it was the end of October), which was not really a model of cleanliness, and instead of a houseboat there was a hotel with a cold draft coming through all windows and doors. I needed endless cups of hot tea to get a little warm. Strangely, my lectures were all scheduled for one o'clock in the afternoon, the only time when the lecture hall was a little bit warmer; but this was also the only time when one could have strolled through Srinagar in a little more pleasant atmosphere. I just saw a few things; I took part in the folk-festival in memory of the great friend of God, Sayyid Ali Hamdani, who, in the fourteenth century, in this remote area wrote religious works, and also a "Mirror of Princes" in Persian language. We made one excursion into the mountains, again to a shrine, that of Baba Rishi, which is visited by both, Muslims and Hindus. It is situated amidst the fragrance of pine forests with a view into the valley, from where the Jhelum takes its way through the foothills of Pakistan and into the plains of the

Punjab. To me, it seemed like tears, which the saint shed over the division of Kashmir from its actual destination, Pakistan. Not only geographically, but also on the basis of its religious affinity this place, at the time of partition, should have been made part of Pakistan, because eighty percent of its population were Muslims. Only the family of the rulers were Hindus, on the basis of a strange ‘deal’, made with the British in the middle of the nineteenth century.

I was rather depressed when I left Srinagar and dreamed of the time, when the Moghul princes went from Lahore, via the present Islamabad, to the mountains, of whose fragrance their poet’s sang. They built their most beautiful palaces there under huge planetrees. Now, we can only witness it from the miniature paintings of the great painters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Which one was the best of all my travels through the Subcontinent? Was it the incredible flight to Skardu past the Nanga Parbat? (I was allowed to sit in the cockpit) Or was it that evening in the Thar desert which wore a faint coat of green - after the first rain had fallen after a break of many years? Or, an evening with Allan Fakir, when he sang his Sindhi tunes? Was it the melancholic-lovely Uchh Sharif with the crumbling ruins of the mausoleum of a pious woman, Bibi Jawinda, whose strong, blue tiles contrasted so drastically with the grey rubble of the crumbled parts? Or, was it an evening with friends in Karachi, Lahore, Multan, or a sunset in Bijapur? All of it had left its mark on me. Or was it the farewell night in Golconda, in the largest of the Kings’ graves when for a brief moment the whole, traditional, Oriental magnificence arose before our eyes while the first rain poured down, bringing blessings to the land? Or an evening at the grave of the Pathan poet Rehman Baba near Peshawar, where the derveshes sat around the flickering fire and sang their

tunes, while one of them slipped a turquoise ring on my finger? But may be, the peak of all was the flight in a small helicopter, an Alouette, across the barren mountains of Balochistan, where one drifted in absolute solitude, like on the wind-borne throne of Solomon. The highlight of this unusual trip for the six us was a camel ride through the mountains, till we found the old shrine of Hinglaj. We did not jump into the holy pond, but, there in the middle of nowhere, we were being refreshed with delicious tea from precious porcelain– a miracle of hospitality.

Indonesia

I hardly ever travelled to South-East Asia, although there lies the largest, connected Muslim area. Once– it must have been in 1993– Sayyed Naguib al-Attas invited me, who had founded a new Institute for Islamic Sciences in Kuala Lumpur. A large number of Orientalists attended its inauguration. It was built in a kind of Andalusian style and keeps developing well– and can be proud of its expanding library. Guest professors from all over the world teach there, and many congresses take place. May be, one day I'll be lucky enough to get there for some time longer than just two days, to see a bit of the land and learn more about the type of Arabic calligraphy which they use there, which is distinctly different from the classical form.

Instead, I opened my door to an unexpected visitor from Indonesia. In early January 2000 an Indonesian girl student called, who was there to visit her sister in Germany. She knew me by name, because some of my books have been translated into Indonesian. Well, I invited her in, and in my door stood a creature wrapped in thick wool and with huge mountaineering boots and with a friendly face round like the moon. She, and her mother, who was similarly protected against the winter cold, decorated my sofa like exotic plants. While I was making tea in the kitchen, Pinkie, as she called herself, had taken her mobile out of

her pocket and had rung up her friend in Jakarta– and I too, had to say a few words to him. Of course she took photos of the event, and I, for her friends, had to put my name under twenty picture postcards of Bonn. It was sweet, and we parted with many hugs and embraces.– I do not remember how it happened that in late summer 2000, I was invited to Jakarta by the Goethe Institute. But it did happen, and I went there via Singapore; there, an old Pakistani friend represented his country and he at once arranged several lectures during my stay of one and a half days. I liked this clean, flowery city– but Jakarta called. Right after landing, the director of the Goethe Institute told me that the same evening. We were invited by the president of the state. I quickly changed and off we went, together with our ambassador, whom I knew since long, from his time in Bonn. It was a rather peculiar dinner, during which the sicklish, almost blind Abdul Waheed, called Gusdur by the people, was assisted by his charming and sophisticated daughter. The conversation switched from music ("I have twenty–nine recordings of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony"), to politics, to mystical trends in Islam to football, In short, one had to be prepared for constantly changing topics while eating a beef-roast which obviously, dated back to the Dutch colonial time. At the end of this tiring, but informative dinner we three Germans, regaled ourselves on the roof-garden of a hotel with a glass of beer, while the mild breeze caressed us gently.

The programme was very rich (there were even pins with my portrait on them with which my young fans decorated themselves). I lectured in English because I am not proficient in Indonesian. A reading of mystical poems in various languages was most successful. There were seminars on women issues and many other items. Pinkie was always around, brought flowers and food. Her friend took us through museums and book-stores, and our

ambassador showed me the old Jakarta –Batavia– where, according to our family saga, many decades or centuries ago, one of our relatives played an important role. The city itself was quite confusing. Between the main roads were large stretches of rural character. Traffic was unbelievable! The first word one should learn when getting there, is "traffic-jam." I would have loved to go deeper into the countryside, see traditional villages and experience more of the extremely rich and varied aspects of Indonesian culture. But the flight was booked, and so I went home. Pinkie and Eko married in spring; the latest news from them came from Mecca, where they had performed the small pilgrimage and prayed for divine blessings for their much wanted baby.

PART 1

RETURN TO EUROPE
(1952-19202)

Source and ending of all thinking:
From your wine we have been drinking
And were filled with love so deep
Our souls' tendrils it does sweep,
Which, now firmly rooted, sheds,
The swaying of its restlessness.
And in our hearts is blinking
Like a mirror, blemishless–
Your image, which is sinking
Deeply into us in wonder.
Thus your loving holds us, tender
Without a barrier, limitless–
In gratitude we offer you this song
Our 'thank you' rings out loud and long
Deeply into us in wonder.
Thus your loving holds us, tender
Without a bar and endless
In gratitude we offer you this song
Our 'thank you' rings out loud and long
Annemarie Schimmel

Rome, Paris, London

After reading so many pages the kindly reader must be wondering whether I have nothing to say about the capitals of European culture– Rome, Paris, London. I shall try to give an explanation, at least regarding Rome and Paris.

Between 1955 and 1990, I saw Rome only at congresses, and only once or twice did I experience the

eternal city in the way one should probably experience it. The first congress was of course, extremely important for the young lecturer who in those days, was working in Ankara as lecturer. But its end was sad: a kindly, old Dutch priest, who had invited me to the only decent dinner in those days, died in his hotel-bed the day we were leaving– heart failure. More congresses and moots followed: and the one visit, that was expected to be perfect, did not quite meet the expectations.

The reason was, that I had come there from the Yemen, and was still under the spell of the beauty of that mighty landscape, so that the three days in which Cecilia (whose husband was at that time, our ambassador) showed me St. Peters and other attractions, became an anti-climax for me against the pictureless Yemen. At times the question occurred to me, whether the aversion of many modern people against the concept of a personal God might not have its reason in the uncountable pictures, which show the bearded creator who –all too human– certainly can't have created this vast universe. It was at the end of a IAHR congress (1990) that a caring, Dutch friend took me by the hand and strolled with me through the old lanes and I felt the magic of the city, enjoyed the Piazza Navona, where a fortune teller (who was not known to me) told me, that I should remind Saddam Hussein what Islam really was. Enzo was a wonderful person, who very dramatically narrated his career from a Sicilian bank employee via monk to I don't remember what all. At this moment I was transported back into the world of the Renaissance.

Apart from the eternal Rome the other city that I really experienced a bit was Venice, thanks to two symposiums that were held in the Fondazione Giorgio Cini. There, I held two lectures on "Aspetti spirituali dell Islam". My mother accompanied me and we together enjoyed the islands and I allowed myself a relaxed stroll through this

city, which looks so Oriental to me. Two years later the Fondazione arranged a congress on “Prayer and Meditation”. In that year, I really enjoyed this charming city and its surroundings with all me heart. A large number of scholars from East and West had come together there, with whom we went on some lovely outings to Grado and Aquileia. I remember the Italian colleague Francesco Gabrieli and my colleague Maria Nallino; we three explored the area around St.Marcus Square. But more exciting was the presence of Lama Govinda and his wife (we called her the Lamessa). He was considered as one of the best interpreters of Central Asian Buddhism, and was highly respected by scholars, experts and Tibetan and Nepalese believers alike. It was only when he, attired in his yellow-red gown, opened his mouth, that one could not help but hear that his home was not in the Himalayas, but in Dresden.

My most interesting encounter was with Mohammad Hamidullah. Among Orientalists, he was known as one of the most learned Muslims. He had– partly– studied in Germany. The delicate scholar– he must have been around fifty at that time– had large, dark and shining eyes. By his looks one coluld see that he came from a Nawait family. The Nawait are descendents of Arab migrants to South India, who had married Indian women and, since the fourteenth century, played an important role as highly educated scholars and authors in the Deccan kingdoms of Bidar, Bijapur and Golconda. This was the background of Hamidullah, who was known in his home-town Hyderabad as one of the leading scholars. However, he left his home-town on the very last flight in 1948, when the Indian government incorporated the state of the Nizam into the Republic of India. Hamidu– as we called him– arrived in Europe as a young, penniless refugee, where he settled down in a tiny flat in Paris, where he lived for his research.

It was during our meeting in Venice that a friendship over many years developed between us. The scholar and his 'little sister', as he called me, corresponded in Arabic, week by week, till age silenced him. Some of my women friends off and on, translated his books on Islam or smoothened out his often grotesque German formulations.

Thus, Venice was pleasant on several counts. At times I dream of going back to San Giorgio or Veneto. But Venice will remain in the land of dreams.

And Paris? Oh, the memories of my first trip there! In the early fifties my colleague, Luise Berthold, the valiant women's rights activist, invited me, out of the blue, to accompany her to Paris. A friend of hers had cancelled her booked trip there and did not want to let her travel-money go waste. I obeyed. We had a double-room in a pretty, small hotel. She opened the wardrobe, found it empty and proclaimed:"There should be roses in here!"and closed it again. Well, we were all set to see the city. We educated ourselves as group-travellers do but when I dared stop at the show-window of a boutique, she abruptly pulled me away. For her, it was even worse, when a policeman, whom I had asked for a direction, took me by the shoulder and turned me to the side where we had to go. She tore at me so furiously as if the poor man was about to rape me. Back in Marburg she proudly told everybody about her deeds. Well, three days of this passed quickly, and Notre Dame and Sainte Chapelle were not less magnificent. But the image of the valiant Luise Berthold should not be seen too harshly: on the one side, she strictly advised a Ph.D. candidate to see Hölderlin's swans not only as 'drunk by kisses' but, exactly for this reason, needing to dip 'their heads in the holy-sober water'– the same woman once confessed, rather shyly, that Mozart's Clarinet Concerto moved her to tears.

A few weeks later Friedrich Heiler asked me whether I would accompany him to Paris; there was a meeting of the

board of the Union of Historians of Religion, who needed someone to write the protocol for them. Thus, I again got ready to go, this time with a boss who was suffering from a stomach ailment. We had reached there two days before the start of the meeting and I dreamed of happier days there than before– but no, this time I was dragged to the Greek-Orthodox centre, then to the church so-and-so, later to the cathedral so-and so- and from there to chapel so-and-so. And when I timidly, asked that we should eat something nice, the boss complained about stomach-ache. On the second day I tried to protest: “I want to see Montmartre!” A moment of silence. Then, with sparkling eyes: “Oh yes, there is a church which I haven’t seen yet. Come on.”And we climbed up. But I defiantly, stayed outside and looked at the panorama in a drizzle, till the master, after considerable time, came out and said: “You see, there, at a certain stage, mass was conducted differently from the normal ritual.”– “Okey, and now we’ll go to eat something.”– “Oh no, my stomach is aching, I need to lie down.”Day three: the meeting was attended by the crème de la crème of the European Historians of religion. Henry Puech was there, and, most impressive, Père de Menasce in his Dominican habit (many years later I saw this spiritual man, how, at a meeting, he was led into the room on a chain, half collapsed and miserable– a severe illness had broken this man), also C.J. Bleeker and H. Clavier; all of them spoke in more or less elegant French, while I poor creature had to write the protocol, the whole day long, with just one short break for snacks. And later, while these important gentlemen– so it was said- sat together at a solid dinner, I had to sit in my hotel where I laboured hard at getting my protocol into shape. Off and on I looked up Heiler in his room, who required a hot water bottle– how glad I was when we returned to our peaceful, cozy Marburg!

There were later visits to Paris, some of them quite nice. I had friends there, but overall, I have never been able to get over the trauma, or whatever one may call it, of the first and second visits, even when I was there at a UNESCO moot, or visited 'brother' Hamidullah. But I would love to revisit Chartres, or the Mont Saint Michel, or the Provence!

London is a very different story. Although during my school days, much more emphasis was placed on the linguistic accomplishments of French than English, London, even the whole of Great-Britain, felt much more like a home to me than the romance countries. Of course the camel Tartarin de Tarascons sort of followed me on all my trips, and French poetry enchants me to this day. But perhaps it was the relationship of England with the world of the Middle East and above all, India, which makes the country so attractive to me. This I felt even on my first visit there. In the early fifties I was a delegate deputed by Heiler to represent him, and attended an inter-religious meeting (may be of the World Congress of Faith or whatever). In London, I was received by D.S. Rice, the one who had visited us in Marburg in 1947 (see page 66). In his house I saw for the first time coloured slides; marvelous shots of Harian, the old centre of the Sabians, from the border area of Turkey and Iraq. These slides showed that the photographer was not only a scholar, but also an artist. In the morning we went to Oxford, which appeared to me rather ominous with its narrow lanes and dark buildings. The meeting was conducted by Lady Ravensdale, who looked exactly like an English Lady should look. Even more fascinating was the fact that she had a preamble to every speech– and there were many of them– which ran: "When my father, Lord Curzon, was Viceroy of India…". There was hardly anything that could impress me more than the fact, that the daughter of the famous viceroy of

India, Lord Curzon, sat here amongst us and talked at leisure with the young Orientalist (whose English was then in no way perfect). Suddenly the British empire stood before me, the images of history came to life; because the influence of Lord Curzon on the history of India in the early twentieth century was quite extraordinary; his name was legendary. Above all, because of the splitting of Bengal in 1906 on communal basis, which, in a way, could be seen as a pre-curser to the later partition of the Subcontinent on the basis of religious affinities.

I do not remember when I next came to England; but for quite a long while I did not see the country again. In 1969, Alberto Theile suggested to me and my mother a bus-trip through the country. Thus we went there, northwards– the cathedral of Durham charmed us– and on to Scotland. In a beautiful sunshine we enjoyed the bus-ride, roses were blooming in abundance everywhere, and when we sat in our hotel-room in Edinburgh, we, on T.V. witnessed the first landing on the moon. We liked Edinburgh. My colleague William Montgomery Watt, the well known Islam scholar, looked after us and also in later years, he was a charming host to us. His intelligent wife had done German Studies in Marburg, and in no time, a kind of family relationship developed. On later trips I also looked around the countryside near Edinburgh; the wide slopes with blooming broom were as unforgettable as the urban features, where wallflowers and red tulips stood in gorgeous bloom; they made the dark, grey walls of Edinburgh look less threatening. I gave numerous lectures in Edinburgh and held several Ph.D. tests, mostly to Pakistani and Indian students; among them was the daughter of G.M. Syed, the Sindhi nationalist. And above all, in summer 1992, I was invited to hold the Gifford Lectures there. In 1969, I would never have dreamed that one day, I would be honoured with holding this prestigious

lecture series on the history of human spiritual development. From the past one hundred years and more, only the most outstanding scholars were selected for this series of ten lectures. Among them were very few women, and only one Islam scholar, my colleague S.H.Nasr. Thus, I was quite a rarity.

Edinburgh: it meant also endless discussions with Hellenbrands, the German art historian Robert (I was a co-examiner many years ago at his doctorate test in Oxford, which I conducted together with Ralph Pinder-Wilson) and his wife Carol, who has written an excellent work on "The Crusades from the Islamic Point of View". At times, a storm would sweep over the town, ghost stories seemed to come alive, ancient ballads seemed to echo. When in 1969 we had been to Scotland, our way, as is proper, passed Loch Ness via Glasgow and the Lake District, back to London– it was quite a carefree week which also pleased my mother.

In the seventies it so happened that I got to London more frequently, seeing the wonderful museums and meeting friends, particularly those connected with Islamic culture. Oxford too, was repeatedly on the agenda, and every time I got more used to this asylum of erudition, although I liked the environs of Cambridge better. Of all the encounters in Oxford, one is prominent in my memory. During a congress on art history I visited Robert C. Zaehner, an authority on old Iranian history of religion, and famous for his book on drugs and ecstasy. I knew this scholar from Appenzell since the days of the Marburg congress. He was considered an eccentric and was rather fond of whiskey. I was fascinated by his comparisons between Hinduism and Sufism, although they do not always seem logical to me. Therefore, one evening at nine I rang at the all Souls College and asked the shocked receptionist for Professor Zaehner. And then followed such

a fascinating conversation as I have never had before. It started with a light orientalist talk and went to the depth of religious experience (one should mention that he reached more depth with the help of whiskey. So what!). Zaehner took me deep into his religious experiences and with it, this most difficult, often even repulsive man got transformed in a miraculous way. I barely managed to get back to the gate of my college before midnight. After this evening, I understood a bit what spiritual experiences were behind the works of this– often criticized– scholar.

In recent years the Institute of Islamic Studies was set up in Oxford, which slowly expanded its international work. I was repeatedly a guest there. If the quality of their food would be brought at par with that of the scientific work it would be quite appreciable.

Numerous invitations gave me an insight into the richness of the Oriental tradition in Great Britain. There are most interesting Arab manuscripts, for example, in the John Rylands Library in Manchester and in the Selly Oaks College. Intensive work is being done for a better understanding between Christianity and Islam.

The real connection with England came about through my lectures at Harvard. A number of my students were Ismailis and through them, new aspects entered my work. I came to know, that the Aga Khan not only supported students in Harvard and Montreal through scholarships, but he also concentrated certain special activities on London. In the end of the seventies, through his sponsorship, the Institute of Ismaili Studies, and the Ismaili Centre were set up opposite the Victoria and Albert Museum– in a building, which is very prosaic from outside but inside, harbours remarkable pieces of art. The most impressive one is certainly the large, heptagonal water basin, which had been designed by Karl Schlamminger (Munich), who enriched the architecture of the Aga Khan through his remarkable

pieces of art (Schlammingers later became my close friends, at a time when we met at a reception of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan on the occasion of an exhibition).

The heptagonal basin– why such a form which is so difficult to create? The Ismailis are called sevener Shi'ites, to differentiate them from the twelver Shi'ites, who established themselves in 1501 in Iran. (they go back to the twelfth imam and thus, to the eleventh direct descendent of Prophet Mohammad). The seveners split from the rest at the time of the seventh imam in 765 and became an important inner-Muslim Islamic movement which much more than the Sunnis, emphasize the esoteric interpretation of the Quran (Sunnis are 'the people of tradition and community,' meaning, the majority of the Muslims). The history of this movement is fascinating. Sultan Mohammad III Aga Khan integrated it into our modern times. The media can never get enough stories about the Aga Khan and the Begum, but they have hardly ever mentioned his role in the modernization of the community (with emphasis on women development). His work was continued by his grandson Karim, the present Aga Khan. The new Institute of Ismaili Studies was to be a spiritual centre of Ismailis who are spread all over the world. Through my students I knew some of the leading Ismailis in Britain (and since long, the most important leaders in Pakistan). Therefore, I was invited to hold the inaugural address for the institute (1981). With that, a most inspiring cooperation started. The seminars, which I partly held alone and partly with my *betajee*Ali Ansari, gave us particular satisfaction: on the image of God in classical poetry, on Maulana Rumi (whose works are also of central importance for the Ismailis) and many other themes. I experienced the development of the institute which has an excellent library. It has religious texts in Khojki script, which are most difficult to decipher

and recently, have been made available to non-Ismailis as well.

Through the connection with the institute I came to know the Aga Khan personally, and later, met him again in London or Harvard. Our first meeting, however, took place in 1986 in Islamabad, when he received the highest political order, while I received the highest civil order. It was a bright spring dasy and full of joy.

The institute in all its manifestations always remained a great attraction for me in London. And it also became a source of other contacts. During one of my early lectures there, my friend Zia Shakeb, who, a few years earlier, had so wonderfully taken me through his homeland, the Deccan (see page 289), introduced me to one of his aquaintances, the charming Philippa Vaughan. She worked as expert with Christie's and later, became director of the Royal Asiatic Society. We soon became good friends, and after she renovated her house in the West of London, it became my London home. After I had patted the two black metal lions which guard her entrance, I felt at home there. Philippa is a genius of hospitality; she seems to know all interesting people of London– at least everyone who is connected to India and Islamic art. At lunch, one might meet there princess Durreshahwar, daughter of the last of the Ottoman sultans and mother of the last Nizam of Hyderabad, who now lives in Australia. Her sharp profile showed a strong resemblance with her ancestor, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, as we know it from portraits of the sixteenth century. Sultan Ghalib a-Quaiti, the former sultan of Hadramaut, was an old friend. The clever Mai Yamani (daughter of Zaki Yamani) I first met through Philippa, and of course I met, also at her place, the colleagues who are working at the museums. She never tired -or tires– to invite new interesting friends from whichever corner of the world. Through her friendship I came to know London– and even

more than that: whenever my short time permitted, she took me to new places in the country, mostly to the magnificent gothic cathedrals of southern England, Salisbury, Welles, Chichester. We explored the mighty cathedral of York, visited the charming Bath and spent a weekend in the green environs of Wales with its old villages. The wonderful hue in the drawings of Tintern Abbey by Turner with their clear outlines, so different from his later paintings, will always remind me of the old cloister-ruin at the border with Wales.

Zia Shakeb is as active in London as he was earlier in Hyderabad. For him and his family, it is a pleasure to invite, at all my visits, the halqa (the 'circle'), where the friends come together at a delicious Indian meal and talk about literature and music. It is always a miracle of Oriental hospitality, how many people find place in the small apartment. Indian artists and British art-experts, English and Indo-Pakistani men of literature meet there. What an experience, to meet there the famous Urdu woman novelist Qurratulain Hyder, along with England's woman-expert on William Blaker's work, or the deeply mystical poetess Kathleen Raine who, when I met her recently, was ninety three years old. She always reminded me of the mystic Fatima from Cordoba, whose pupil, the great theosophical thinker Ibn 'Arabi, in the twelfth century wrote, that when she was ninety, she looked like a young girl. This same effect Kathleen has on me with her bright, rosy face and her great wisdom.

Off and on I visited the Nimatullahi-Centre, where Nurbaksh, the director of the Persian Nimatullahi order, lived. I knew him from New York and always admired his energy, which inspired him to open more and more Sufi-centres all over the world. He, in 1979, after the revolution in Iran, had left his home, where he was a widely known professor of psychiatry in Tehran. He had a brilliant intellect and was highly educated, but he always was a bit

uncanny to me, because I cold never really understand his anecdotes, which he narrated in fastest Persian, often interrupted by the laughter of his admiring audiences.

"Khanum-i Schimél, you should start a Khanqah (Sufi-centre) in Bonn!"he often teased me. (The centre was founded in the South of Cologne, but not by me). Nurbaksh also published an appealing magazine in which I sometimes published poems in English, which, owing to him, also appeared as a nicely made up book (*Nightingale under the Snow).*

At times Philippa also took me to the East of London, where, near Greenwich, Ahmad Mustafa lived, who is one of the great Arabic calligraphers of the present time. He uses the computer to create very charming calligraphic 'paintings' out of Arabic sentences, verses from the Quran and poems, according to the fashion of modern times. He has made huge paintings which are a model for French gobelins, and are extremely beautiful, some even breathtaking. The same goes for his quite magical dice-constructions from meaningful Arab sentences or religious formulations. But he is also familiar with the classical forms of calligraphy, on which he was working then, based on the mathematical background of the script, which had been founded by the Arab Wezir Ibn Muqla in the early tenth century and are still being observed.

In addition to all the friends named here, came, during the last decade, my relationship to the al-Furqan Foundation in Wimbledon. The founder is Sheikh Zaki Yamani. His mission is to preserve Islamic heritage and catalogue Arab manuscripts, particularly from areas normally neglected. The meetings with the colleagues, the lectures and seminar which take place several times a year in Eagle House in Wimbledon, are always peaks of the year for me, all the more, because a very fine friendship with the Yamanis developed from it. Their place became my second

home in London or rather, in Surrey, where the house of the family is situated. Its park always inspires me to write a poem about it in the Oriental style.

In any case, London is for me a city, which always surprises the visitor with happy encounters. You may walk through Hyde Park on a spring day, or later, admire the rose beds in Regents Park; or, one may get absorbed in the treasures of the British Library or the Royal Asiatic Society (which in 1999, made me their honorary member). This city has so many colours (no, dear reader, even in London I don't go to the theatre, just as I do not in Bonn). At times I feel, I need to go to London to meet half of my Indian and Pakistani friends, whether they are poets like Faiz Ahmad Faiz who died in 1984, or Ahmad Faraz, or the artist Guljee, Pakistan's master of calligraphy and painter. His precious portraits of the Aga Khan and of other leading personalities are assembled from thousands of tiny splinters of Lapis Lazuli which, from a distance, look like perfect photographs. But my stays there are always too short, while a lot is yet to be discovered.

The so-called Retirement Age.

After exactly twenty five years, my teaching career in Harvard came to an end in the winter semester 1992. We celebrated my seventieth birthday with all colleagues. Ten days later I flew to Edinburgh, to deliver the Gifford Lectures there. I enjoyed the Edinburgh spring and tried to shape up my lecture on "Deciphering the signs of God", after the model of Friedrich Heiler's work *Wesen und Erscheinugsformen der Religion (1965)*, that is, to show, that religion can be interpreted according to a certain scheme, because the *deus absconditus* which, even at the centre of religious 'experiences', yet is un-experienceable, un-explainable. But it can still be fathomed in slowly rising rings, at least in its manifestations. Thus, the outermost ring which surrounds holiness, consists of holy aspects of things

in nature and culture, of time and holy action (rites, prayers, celebrations etc); after that comes the role of the word (the word OF God = revelation, the word OF man = prayer). From that, one can derive the role of the individual and society, and finally, there is the question of creation and eschatology: these phenomena can all help the believer to throw some light on the religious world in which he lives. Heiler had applied the phenomenological view to the religions; but my opinion is, that one can find an approach to Islam exactly on these lines. The Quran allots a special position to the 'Signs' of God: "We shall show them Our signs in the furthest horizons and within themselves", are the words of sura 41, 53. History and nature point to divine unity in the same way as the spiritual and material stirrings of man.

On ninth May I returned from Edinburgh to Bonn and a few days later I received a distinction in Tübingen, which was almost as precious to me as the honour of giving the demanding lectures in Scotland. It was the Leopold-Lucas Prize of the Evangelical-Theological Faculty of the university. F.D. Lucas was the son of a rabbi who, in 1943, perished in Theresienstadt. He instituted this prize in 1972 in honour of his father, so as to promote the understanding among religions. This placed me –once again as the first woman– in the company of the Dalai Lama, Karl Rahner, Hans Jonas and other dignitaries, who had received this honour earlier. My topic related to one of my Gifford Lectures; it was called: 'God's Rrobes', and discussed the ways in which men have tried to recognize God's nature behind his various manifestations, to lift "God's living attire" a little bit, to touch the "Seam of His Mercy". I stayed in contact with the generous founder of the award till his death, and was grateful for his noble humanity.

But then– three days after my return to Bonn– I had again to fly to the USA, to Boston, New York and

Washington, where I had to give lectures and say farewell to friends. On fifth June I finally left my 'Western Exile.' The 'non-moveable' items of my establishment were gifted to someone as well as most of the books– because in Bonn, I had no place to keep them. If my Turkish publisher in Cologne had not stored in his office my –I believe- twenty six huge boxes of books which I had brought along, it would have been even more problematic.

And then began 'the new life'. I met many of the old friends and acquaintances in Bonn, among them many diplomats in retirement or otherwise. Only two friends I want to mention here. One of them is Walter Schmid, who died on first February 2002 aged nearly ninety. His book *Russian Years* depicts his three stays in the Soviet Union, twice as diplomat and once as a prisoner of war in the Ural mountains for ten years, from where he returned in 1955. In spite of all the terrible experiences he continued to love Russia all his life and was, by way of his example, the model of a brave, deeply religious man, who saved many younger ones from breaking down. A long lasting friendship connected me to him and his family, which continued even after the death of his wife. Many an evening I spent with her in discussions of poetry or recital competitions. After the death of my mother it had become a tradition that I share their Christmas goose with them.

Of a very different nature was my relationship to Shams and Hortense Anwari. Shams is one of the leading calligraphers of Iran, although he has been living in Germany for decades. He is a profound scholar of Persian literature and documents many folk -traditions which nowadays, are under threat of getting lost. Thus, he is the embodiment of the best cultural traditions of Persia. His Dutch wife is deeply absorbed in the Christian mystical traditions. The evenings with them are always a delightful mixture of high spirituality and earthly enjoyments,

because the dishes which Shams prepares are poetic pleasures in themselves.

In 1992, one of my first trips within Germany took me and Hortense to the monastery of Niederaltaich, the beautiful Benedictine abbey, where the abbot represented the kind of spirituality which I knew from Friedrich Heiler. Three months later I found a similarly pleasant atmosphere in St. Gabriel in Mödling near Vienna. There, under the guidance of Dr. Andreas Bsteh, a far reaching programme of dialogue was being developed in which the dialogue with Islam was centre stage. It was not the kind of 'meeting' which is normally propagated, but here, knowledgeable, thorough talks by theologians and scholars of both sides are conducted. This dialogue was held constantly and in 2001, climaxed in a get together of the highest ranking representatives of the Iranian Shias and the Catholic Church of Austria. Cardinal Schönborn and Cardinal König (almost 96 years old) in Vienna celebrated the closing act of the collaboration with Ayatullah Khomenei and Ayatullah Tashkiri (see page 246).

In between these two happy experiences– Nideraltaich and Mödling– I enjoyed a short stay in lovely Wales, whose landscape was an invitation to dream. Of course, I also had to really settle down again in Bonn. My residence in Lenné Street had, after the death of my mother, been home to me, and my life with so many acquaintances, above all with ambassadors and the colleagues had been pleasant. I could not have wished for a better partner in the university than Stefan Wild, the director of the Oriental Seminar, who proved himself as a true friend. Since long I have had a friendship with his mother-in-law, Gabriele Wülker, once a secretary of state in the cabinet of Adenauer. The international associations– the German-Turkish, the German-Iranian, the German-Uzbeki Associations often called me for talks, and I was

particularly engaged with the German-Pakistan Forum (for a while I was its president but it was not very pleasant). These activities had now all moved to Berlin, which made Bonn for us Orientalists somewhat less interesting. The get togethers in the beautiful Syrian embassy, whose reception rooms were all done in the classical Arabian style, had always been a peak in the calendar of festivities. And the days that I opened the cake-cutting ceremony in the Saudi embassy, whose huge cake had the form of a book, are probably over.

Of course, lectures and travels continued. In March 1993 I again went to Turkey for lectures in Istanbul. In those days I enhanced my relationship to the IRCICA (Organization of the Islamic conference, Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture). This institution had given me a gold medal in 1990 to mark the tenth anniversary of their founding. Together with Gudrun Schubert I strolled through my beloved Istanbul; it was the beginning of a friendship for which I am grateful every day of my life. She also accompanied me to the house of my respected friend Samiha Ayverdi (see page 95) who, very aged, left us three days after my visit to her, for a bright eternal abode.

I had hardly returned from Istanbul when I flew to the USA where the ASCIS (American Council of Learned Societies) had requested me for an autobiographical talk. Well known personalities are invited to these talks (a Life of Learning), whose life seems to be of interest. I felt a bit shaky after reading through the talks of earlier speakers, as I had done nothing for American politics, nor any impressive social work, made no ground breaking scientific discovery. Well, I simply talked about my life- and it was a great success. Early in May I was home again.

The publication of my Gifford Lectures, first in the English original and later, in the German version, took all

of my time. I recall with great displeasure the lecturer at the Edinburgh University Press, who had neither imagination nor a sense of beauty. From that time on, the word ‘index’ keeps recurring ever more frequently in my annual reports; because the important work of establishing registers increased every year with the increasing number of books. I recalled this period with a rhyme:

The lizard is a real fine creature
The index is a paper-eating feature
The lizard lives happily down South
The index slurs tired through his house
The lizard on warm rocks does rest
The index makes me cry at best.
The lizard on mosquitoes feeds
The index to a backache leads.
The lizard in the sun takes bath
The index makes me sigh– alas!
The lizard knows of dance and song,
The index has a tail that’s long.
The lizard lifts his paws to heights
The index with the footnotes fights.
The lizard lays an egg in speed,
The index only registers must heed.
The lizard wears shimmering coats,
The index digs through endless notes.
The lizard says: ”I’m thirsty”
The index says: “See page thirty”.
The lizard dreams in sleep so sweet
The index tosses in his sleep.
The lizard is nicely taken to his bed,
The index through the night has read.
The question bothers him all night:
Is page 170 really right?

At that time my cooperation with the C.H. Beck publishers began. They firstly, published the memoirs of

my travels in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent (Mountains, Deserts, Shrines), followed by the Gifford Lectures (The Signs of God). Every year another book followed, either translations in the New Oriental Library, books on dreams in Islamic culture (the Dream of the Caliph) or the introduction to Moghul culture (In the Realm of the Great Moghuls). All of them put together are the result of my Harvard studies. I want to mention here that always, the relationships with all my publishers were pleasant and at times, turned into friendship. In the eighties, when I wrote a lot for the Eugen Diederichs Publishers, I became quite a family member. The small booklet, which I dedicated to my beloved cats (unfortunately, only from a distance) first appeared with them. In the seventies, Inge Diederichs once came to the Lennéstrasse for tea and soon after, the publications started, above all those in the field of Sufism. Some of the titles like the ones which I dedicated to the veneration of the Prophet in Islam (And Mohammad is His Prophet) I published sometime later, in a greatly enlarged edition in English at the North Carolina Press. Vice versa, my work *Mystical Dimensions in Islam* appeared first in 1975 from this very publisher and later, Diederichs published it in German. I always prefer to write the translated versions myself, books originally in English I translate into German, and German originals into English. At least, I carefully check translations into other languages that I know. Any translation which is not correct, particularly in the field of religious terminology or in poetry, may have very bad consequences for the understanding of the readers. The book *The Mystery of Numbers*, published by Franz Carl Endres, became a bestseller in a dozen translations, and the book *Islamic Names*, first published in Edinburgh, appeared by the same German publisher under the title *From Ali to Zehra*. Names are one of my favourite fields of interest. From first names

and– as in Turkey since 1931- family names, one can understand a lot about the cultural and political situation of a country, about ideals and wishes; this is the reason why I dedicated one small book to Turkish names, which was published under the name *Mr. Demirci is simply Mr. Smith*, where I tried to explain the meaning and main components of many Turkish names to my country fellows, so that they may better understand our Turkish co-citizens.

On every visit of Ulf Diederichs we discussed a new project. Even now, my 'favourite child' is the poetic anthology "*Take a Rose and call it Songs"(1987)* which, well presented, contains a selection of poems from various Oriental languages. I am missing Ulf's frequent visits, because he left for southern Germany. This publisher, whom I knew since my childhood, could not withstand the increasing mergers among publishing houses and was taken over by Hugendubel. But the relationship with the Diederichs family remained intact.

And now, since 1993, a similar friendship developed with the house of C.H. Beck, at least with its lecturers. It was great fun to work together with Matthias Politycki and later, with Marla Stukenberg - with whom I share the love for the Indian Subcontinent– up to the present lecturers. The friendship with Wolfgang Beck and his wife, the Persian goldsmith Mahrukh, really makes me happy. Also, since 1975, there exists a fine relationship with Herrmann Herder and his team of the Herder publishing house. Through a get–together with the foundation Oratio Domini 1975, I got into contact with this house and was pleased with the arrangement of Islamic Prayers in the sequence of the Lord's Prayer (Yours is the Realm) and later in expanded form with the Spohr publishers, (Your Will be done). Among the texts for reflection I offered material about Hallaj, the "Martyr of the Love of God", as well as the translation of the Egyptian mystic Ibn Ata'allah, which

I am extremely fond of. His sayings and aphorisms seem to me to be some of the most beautiful meditation texts ever. In connection with the peace prize a sketch, *how universal is Mysticism?* appeared, which was the beginning of a series of small books in the Herder-spectrum. The last of it, a little book on gardens and flowers in Islam, is particularly dear to me.

One could wish for nothing better than such positive experiences with publishers. In my case, this started very early on during my work with the Carl Hauser publishers and its wonderful lecturer Herbert G. Göpfert. Here, I want to put in a small word of self-praise: so far, I have always stuck to all schedules.

But now back to the year 1993, when I, on a short visit to England, also saw Yorkminster and the romantic ruins of Riveaux. A congress on comparative mysticism took place during summer in Avila. In late September I received an award in Rome, where Attilio Petruccioli, director of 'Environmental Design', and a thorough expert on Islamic history of architecture and gardens, had arranged a charming party for me (undeservedly, I feel). I was hardly back home when I prepared for my annual 'pilgrimage' to Pakistan, which for the first time, also included a visit to Azad Kashmir– that small part of Kashmir, which belongs to Pakistasn and which Pakistanis therefore, call Azad, 'free', unlike the other, larger part of the country, which is under Indian rule. I was much impressed by the romantic mountain scenery and the friendship of the people. Why can't they settle this conflict peacefully, which is topical since 1947 (see page 291), so that after all, real peace be achieved in the Subcontinent.

I was occupied with totally different thoughts at the first Eranos conference, where I was invited as a speaker. The area of Ascona is as beautiful as ever and I spoke, where the great scholars of religion have been speaking

since the thirties. The theme of the congress was: "The Power of the Word". The *amici di Eranos* had a short time earlier, split, but both the presidents at that time, the political scientist Tilo Schabert and the Egyptologist Erik Hornung, tried their best to continue the tradition. But in the late nineties, new frictions appeared and further splits took place. In spite of that, I, even now, enjoy participating in these inspiring congresses and to represent the side of Islamic Studies as once, the incredibly learned Henry Corbin had done.

Another event, though not as international as Eranos, became a part of my annual programme. In Marl near Münster, devoted theologians organize get togethers and lectures, which are designed to promote better understanding among the religions, above all, of Islam. In 2001, by way of an example, a festival of Abraham was celebrated, which focused on the meaning and effect of the father of the three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) on the members of these very religions. It deserves mention that in recent years, various communities in Northrhein-Westfalia have undertaken real efforts to establish better relations between Christians and the numerous Muslim communities, which are particularly strong in the Ruhr-area. So, I frequently find myself travelling to lectures and seminars in Recklinghausen, Bottrop and similar places.

Life continued this way, with lectures and 'no end to making books'. In May 1994, I received the gold medal of the Humboldt Society and took part in a number of symposiums in Vienna, Berlin and London. The latter was dedicated to the Indus and the ecological, historical, and social significance of this mighty river, which is also reflected in poetry, above all, in Sindhi. The mighty river, that brings blessings and destruction, and can flood everything, is a suitable symbol of God.

The Indus brings high flood
Drowns its canals,
The love of the beloved thus
Is too large for my poor heart.

cries Qadi Qadan in the sixteenth century. The small heart of humans cannot bear the onrush of the divine, merciful presence. Then the lover blurts out, uncontrollably, the inspiration that he has received in the state of ecstasy. In autumn I was again invited to the land of the Indus. The Aga Khan Hospital in Karachi celebrated its tenth jubilee, where I had to give a speech. I enjoyed seeing the Aga Khan again as well as his charming daughter, whom I knew since her days as undergraduate at Harvard.

Apart from this, there was another peak during 1994, which was even more important to me: for the first time after the war and reunification of Germany, I visited my hometown Erfurt again. I had experienced the reunification while I was in Pakistan, and nobody can imagine the jubilations of the Pakistani people about this event. When I saw on TV the opening of the Brandenburg Gate, I could not help the tears that were streaming down my face. The Erfurt Academy of Applied Sciences had made me their member in 1990; yet, I needed a special push before I dared go back. This happened during a symposium on medieval mysticism at which I saw again Kurth Ruh, the great master in this field and prominent expert on Master Eckhart. Master Eckhart had been active in Erfurt for a while, where people still show his seat on the bench of Erfurt's Prediger-Church. I reached there two hours late and stood alone on the railway platform - and suddenly, I found myself back in my childhood. I crossed the station-square, and like in a trance, went along Bahnhofstrasse, saw the cinema where once, I got an autograph from Sven Hedin; I got information in the Anger-Museum and found myself in the Barfüsser-Church, which had been destroyed during the

war and was now an imposing ruin. There I met the participants of the symposium and was ‘back home’. In winter 1995 I returned to Erfurt. Later, I was nominated as a board member of the newly established university. Although I could not, and cannot, contribute much to the technical aspects of the university, I still feel it my duty to assist at least a bit for the development of the university in my hometown. I am particularly happy that this university has a chair for Islamic studies. This is the reason why I, in the winter semester 2000/01, took part in the seminar on Sufism, which my young colleague Jemal Malik (a Pakistani, i.e. nearly a compatriot of mine) conducted there for the first time. It is painful for me that in Erfurt, the antipathy towards foreigners is more evident than with us in the West; also, the strange, unbelievable misunderstandings which exist about Islam, which always surprise and upset me. But I hope, that the integration will gradually progress.

In spring 1995, to my great surprise, I was invited to accompany the Federal President Roman Herzog and his wife on their state visit to Pakistan. I was very happy to be able to see Pakistan now from a new angle and even more so, to meet the pleasant and humourous president from close quarters. At a state reception in Lahore, the Fort looked like a fairy castle, where we celebrated amidst water fountains and lights. Since the president’s birthday is on the fifth of April and mine on the seventh, these days were like a continuous celebration. The embassy in Islamabad had gone out of their way to create a magical garden. I was able to introduce to the important guest some of my old friends, among them my highly voluminous Sindhi ‘nephews’ who by now, had become senators in the parliament. I still see before my eyes Zarina Guljee, the wife of the outstanding painter-calligrapher, who was wearing a smart set of jewelry (designed and made by her son). Mrs. Herzog

admired it, and in no time Zarina had removed it and presented it to Mrs. Herzog. Another of my calligraphy friends, Rasheed Butt, had created an extremely fine calligraphy for the president, which I had the honour to present to him. Thus, this trip was like a chain of beautiful experiences, also on an outing to the mighty Tarbela Dam and to Taxila, where we admired Buddhist relics. We visited the Goethe Institute in Karachi as well as social institutions. Even a German-Pakistan hockey match was arranged, which luckily ended in a draw.

Soon after that I went to Iran after an interval of about twenty years. I had really missed the country, which made a friendly impression. My official companion did his best to show me interesting sites. I was permitted to see Meshhed and revisit Shiraz (see page 244 f).

On first May 1995 an unexpected guest with a large bunch of roses stood in my door. He was Gerhard Kurtze, the director at the stock exchange for the German book-trade. He informed me that it had been decided to award the peace prize of the German book-trade to me. I was of course as much pleased as I was surprised. Right after that I had to go to Utrecht to take part in a congress on 'Sufism and its Opponents'. The ARD wanted to interview me and I travelled to Hilversum for the studio recordings. While the moderator, Sabine Christiansen, questioned me, I could not see her, but looked into a black hole. In those years, the press and public were dominated by the debate on Salman Rushdie and, of course, I was also asked about him. I clearly distanced myself from the Fatwa of Khomeni (moreover: the meaning of 'fatwa' is simply 'legal opinion', and not, 'death sentence'. The pious Muslim will obtain a Fatwa when he is faced with a major operation, or in questions of ritual cleanliness. If a Fatwa should recommend a death sentence, there would first have to be a trial in a normal court of law). But I could not help to pass

the remark that Rushdie with his satire (which a European can hardly comprehend in its severity from the translation and not knowing the Muslim expressions) has offended the feelings of millions of Muslims. Then I continued by pointing out the history of 'Prophet-blasphemy' in the Islamic world, but I did not realize that the transmission was over, as I could not see the moderator. And then began a witch hunt, which I never thought possible. Which of my remarks had enraged the listeners– or some of them– I never came to know. An article of my student Gernot Rotter in the "Zeit"worsened the situation. He remarked– and rightly so– that I had not shown any political engagement, which was a condition for the peace prize (according to his interpretation). Luckily at this time, I can no longer reconstruct the many accusations leveled against me. There were many manipulations, and unfortunately, none of my loud-mouthed critics had ever met me, never heard a lecture of mine or read any of my books. At best, they picked up some lines and quoted them out of context. If I maintained– which is historically correct– that in the middle ages, the singing slaves were the most expensive ones, it was interpreted as approval of slavery; my first and only trip to Iran in 1979, during the spring after the revolution, was construed as a constant serial of contacts with the Ayatullahs.

I realized, that certain developments in German politics and its spiritual life had escaped me, because I had been away in Harvard for twenty five years, and during the autumns, travelled to Oriental countries. I certainly was much more familiar with politics in Pakistan and their mental world than in Germany of the nineties. And the '68 generation was also somewhat strange to me. In Harvard, the 1968 revolts were marginalized, the hard-working philologists had hardly noticed them; it was a matter for politologists and sociologists, above all else. Only once did

an idealistically minded student come to me, who wanted to learn Pushto, because he wanted to join the peace-movement in the North-West of Pakistan. He pointed to his black arm-band: “Dr. Schimmel, today I am on strike. But can’t we call the Pushto-course ‘discussion’? Because then I need not miss my class. But I would not be able to attend an ‘exercise’ because of the strike.”There was nothing easier than fulfill the request of this striker.

The stock-exchange was not really helpful in my defence; many of my colleagues were– understandably - unsure, being confronted with a difficult decision. When October came near and with it, the ceremony of the award, one of my well wishers advised me to tender an apology to my torturers (in line with the saying: Not the murderer, the murdered one is guilty) I energetically protested, and he asked my pardon with a large bouquet of dark-violet flowers. I pardoned him, because violet is the colour of atonement. The reactions of some colleagues were more subtle and not quite collegial. My nerves were raw, and I was not sure whether I would be able to withstand this witch-hunt. Psalm 43 and the Quranic suras of protection were my spiritual nourishment in those weeks.

But there were also positive and encouraging letters from totally unknown senders. In September, I even managed to give a series of lectures, but with great difficulty. In spite of the furore and the fact, that quite a number of personalities energetically advised the president against it, he stuck to his promise to hold the laudatio.

Then the fifteenth of October was there! At breakfast the gentlemen from the stock exchange gave me good advice, how to react when the foul eggs and stinking tomatoes would come flying, and I entered the Pauls-Church as if I were going to my own execution, which, at that moment, seemed quite preferable to me. But strange: the further the ceremony progressed, the more the dull fog,

which had filled the big hall, began to dissolve; the large space became airy and shining, and when I began my speech, everything looked very bright. To me it appeared as if the hall was filled with angels, which surrounded me. It was truly a mystical experience.

In my speech I emphasized that the methods of science and arts are different from those of politics and journalism, but that both grant priority to the word, to the free and creative word, because the power of the word is immense, it can separate and bring together. I also quoted my favourite motto which I had taken over from Rückert: ‘World poetry is world conciliation’. When I - thank God!– had finished my speech, no tomatoes came flying, but a standing ovation. I saw, as in a dream, the audience rise in my honour. From the background came music from reed-pipes, and I left the hall at the side of the Federal President, who said to me with a smile: “Isn’t it wonderful that the two of us didn’t lose our nerve!”And he was right with that. Now I could really enjoy the grand meal which was attended by a large number of guests. The Yamanis sat with us at the table and everywhere, I saw nothing but friends. Even countess Dönhoff, who, the evening before, had given me a half-hearted blessing, laughed openly, when I told her that it appeared to me that a half blessing of hers had the same effect as a full blessing from other people.

New relationships developed. I only learnt later that Erwin Wickert resigned from the PEN Club in protest against their attitude. A new and growing relationship developed with Karin Hempel-Soos, who was called ‘Bonn’s comprehensive art-piece’. She was the director of the House of Language and Literature, which was very close to my domicile. I owe it to her that I, in recent years, met a lot of people from the art and literature scene, who opened up new perspectives for me. And her tomcat Peppino at times, was a decorative figure on my balcony.

Many books appeared, Travelling never got less and with time, I felt like the writer of forewords for people, who had written something positive on Islamic issues. I must not forget the many interviews and short tea-calls of Oriental friends or of those, who wanted to meet me and who often, in a strange way, multiplied: a gentleman requests an audience, and half an hour later he has tripled, because he had invited friends to attend. At such moments, I envy the great ones of times gone by, who had a large kitchen and lots of servants. I have only one, but very loving helper, who comes once a week to do jobs which I, since my days of national service, refuse to do.

One of the great features of the year 1996 was one meeting near London, which had been called by Prince Charles. Over a meal we had a nice, long talk on religion and poetry– he is very interested in poetry and mysticism. I sent him some of my English publications and was surprised to get from him a personal, handwritten letter of thanks.

The radius of my travels kept expanding. My parody of 1969 on a ghazal by Ghalib was still valid:

With unrest filled again the heart
For packing boxes now will start.
Again we wash just once the dresses
And iron out to make frocks smart.
Again, reproachfully, look from the desk
Letters, whose answers should reach fast.
Again, handwritten pages stare
Sadly, like some wounds that smart.
Again we search through all the pockets
Till we find passport and health chart.
We read the conference's draft
While the stylist cuts the hair real smart.
Later, in the crowded airport hall,

We wait for hours, till we finally depart.
Fatigued in soul and body
To a comfy seat we dart
Where tortured soul and body find relief
With a glass of sherry after start.

Because of the affair surrounding the peace prize, I had become widely known in Oriental countries. As a result, during 1996/97, there were visits to Kuwait, Egypt, Syria, Jordan and some other countries. At a conference in Istanbul under the auspices of the Swedish Institute the relationship between Sufism, music and modern religious trends, were discussed. Among the many pleasures of this moot was the meeting with Razia Sultanova from Uzbekistan, who reported about her fieldwork on music and religious traditions among Uzbek women and, in a gentle voice, sang their songs– we nominated her as our Uzbeki nightingale.

In Pakistan in 1998, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of my first visit to this country, whose political system kept changing all the time and seemed to become more and more chaotic every time. For the first time after many years, we were allowed to travel in Sindh, which had been closed to us because of constant unrest there.(tension between the parties, drug smuggling etc.) In Karachi, attacks, arson and similar things happened too frequently and even German institutions were under increased threat. Now, it seemed calm. I enjoyed seeing again the lovely shrine of Shah Abdul Latif in Bhit Shah and, among other things, go to the musha'ira, a poetry reading session of poets in Hyderabad (Sindh). Not less than forty Sindhi ladies sat on the stage and read their poems. These, not only told about the heart burn of the lover who is separated from his beloved, which is the classical theme of Sindhi poetry; they also revolted against the subjugation of women, about their need for more freedom, in– partly–

rather strong terms. (One of them had also recited her verses in the House of Cultures in Berlin, which I had translated earlier). It was an impressive protest. Similar expressions about the craving for freedom I had also heard from Yemeni and Sudanese poetesses.

After 1993, I again went to the USA in 1996, where a Muslim TV company in Los Angeles honoured me with their Outreach Award; after that, I gave a talk in Utah. In between, I enjoyed the heart-warming hospitality of Katharina Mommsen and her husband. Goethe and the Orient were of course, centre stage in our discussions, but we also enjoyed the beauty of the garden and the Pacific coast.

The radius of my travels within Germany too, seemed to expand. Lectures were to be given in the Ludwig Pesch House, the Jesuit Centre in Ludwigshafen. I liked giving talks there, all the more as the padres had some remarkable cats. One of them even listened to my wise words on mysticism and poetry in the large lecture hall.

Repeatedly, Hamburg was my destination. There, among other activities which we held in a church with a German sufi-group, a reading of my translation of Attar's "Talk of Birds,"*Mantiq ut-tair,* (which had just appeared in the Oriental Library) was arranged. Through my lectures, I came to see Regensburg, Passau and the charming Eichstätt; and after all I had a chance to visit Dresden. I had dreamt of its Green Dome since my childhood days. The master piece of the art of gold-smithery, the scene designed by Dinglinger for August the Strong, called "Birthday of Aurangzeb,"is a most interesting work in which the dreams of the Europeans about the Indian Moghul empire become manifest– the empire of the Great Moghuls after all, appeared to be the realm of jewels as such. A stint as a guest professor took me, in 1997, to the university of Ulm. In a jarring cold I saw, for the first time, the beautiful Ulm

Münster and the Blautopf, which was known to me since my childhood from Morike's narrative of the beautiful Lau.

In summer 1997, time had come to have a laser-operation on my eyes– a tremendous thing, which I got over with in no time at all and with great success. Not only was the cataract treated, but my extreme short-sightedness was corrected to such a degree that I could do many things totally without any glasses. What a great experience, to be able to see with bare eyes, the stars, and the colours of birds in the garden!

A very pleasant experience was the Islamic week in Bremen. There, I undertook to explain in the hall of the Rathaus, the centuries old relationships between Orient and Occident, and to emphasize the positive role of Islam in world history. This city and its administration, open to the world, were very receptive for such talks. Of course, in Bremen, Laila was not missing, the beautiful fashion designer from Afghanistan, who creates exquisite dresses. Together we have put up fashion shows for the benefit of the Afghan women-organization and shall continue to do so. And, for a few hours, I was so lucky to see again my childhood paradise, Carolinensiel.

In 1997, for the first time, we commemorated at the German-American Institute in Heidelberg, Rumi's death anniversary and remembered this greatest representative of mystical poetry in Islam. A small group of Turkish musicians accompanied us, who sang the tunes of the derveshes– and since then, we meet every year on this date.

Then, a new connection to Jena opened up. The Collegium Europaeum Jenense, under Professor Zwiener had, since some time, developed a demanding programme, multi-disciplinary and people-uniting. When I gave a talk there in January 2001, I met not only Alfred Grosser and Hans Koschnik, but also Rainer Kunze, the poet of the gentle tone. My first lecture in Jena, a few years earlier,

was not only a homage to the Diederichs publishing house which had been founded in Jena, but it also led to another lecture in the field of natural science, because it concerned– you won't believe it– bees in Islamic culture! The director of the Apiculture Institute, Professor Hentschel, was happy to hear, that I showed in my talk the importance of bees in the Islamic tradition. The bee is emphatically mentioned in sura 16 as a creature that is inspired by God. The poetic folk tradition knows, that honey (which was the favourite food of the Prophet Mohammad) becomes sweet only through the humming of the bee, because it is the constant repetition of blessing for the Prophet (for the amusement of the reader: In Bonn, I once gave a talk on "Bats in Islam!") After the Jena talk a moving scene occurred. A young man came to me and said: "I want to ask your pardon– I was among the protesters against you outside the Paul's Church. Only now I understand that I was wrong!"

I wish to mention that some time in 1998; I spent one weekend in Barlach's town, Güstrow. There, on behalf of the Evangelical Church I acted as solo-entertainer for forty eight hours in matters of Islam during their conference. It was a big stress for me, and the journey there never seemed to end; yet, I was glad to have seen this town and met its people, who were thirsting for information on Islam.

Compared to this, a meeting on Islamic calligraphy by IRCICA in Istanbul was a leisure time for me. There the highly talented architect Umran Tezcan-Schelling exhibited her unusual constructions of Arabic religious formulations. Among the modern calligraphers she seems to be the only one, who has developed a strictly architectural style, which is full of surprises. This time I was lucky to find accommodation with Hikmet Baruchugil, the great master of ebru, the art of mottling, and enjoyed with all my heart the time there, which was unfortunately too short. There is simply nothing that could destroy the silhouette of Istanbul!

I met old friends, among them my teacher of calligraphy, Alparslan from Ankara, now emeritus, once a professor of Islamic history. I watched, while he was working on a large project and explained the techniques and the history of the art of mottling, which in recent years has become popular in the West.

Subsequent years resembled mottled pages full of trips to Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Bahrain and Iran; and again, Istanbul enchanted us for three days during a IRCICA conference. I was very happy when I was asked to present a prize to a young woman, whose one side of the body was paralyzed, and who wrote perfect calligraphy with her left hand. In the USA too, I again held lectures, visited the friends Jürgen and Magda Chrobog in Washington, and experienced the fascinating De Mesnil Museum in Houston. In Harvard, I taught the theologians a bit about the world beyond. There were also many lecture- tours within Germany, conferences in England and not to forget, the beautiful celebration in the Evangelical Academy of Tutzing, where former Federal President Herzog was honoured with the Tolerance Award, and Prince Hassan of Jordan delivered a wonderful speech. The landscape sparkled in the May sunshine just like we participants did– or was it the other way around? It was like a gift for me to meet Jenghiz Aytmatov, whose reading and lecture the evening before the celebration, gave me an in-depth impression of the magic-mystical world of his Kyrgyz homeland.

In 1999, for the first time, a colleague was invited to Bonn, who was to speak within the series of lectures sponsored by me. After the award of the peace prize and the Leopold Ludwig Prize, I had given the Prize money to the university of Bonn with the purpose, to arrange lectures on Islamic culture, mainly by Muslims, so as to give students an idea about the various aspects of Islam. The

university accumulated the amount, so that now we are in a position to invite somebody every second year. In 1999, my Harvard colleague, the historian Mottahdeh, came, and in 2001 the Moroccan woman activist Fatima Mernessi.

Among the personal experiences in 2001, one attained absolute prominence. On a visit to Sarajevo I got insight into the attempts of the Bosnian intelligentsia, to give this tortured country a peaceful future. A visit to the old dervesh –cloister Blagaj near the destroyed Mostar, was particularly interesting. The old building snuggles into a steep cliff from which a light-green, strong waterfall emerges. Here, Sari Saltuyk is said to have worked, the first messenger of Islam there, even before the conquest of the Balkans by the Ottomans. It appeared as if the waters were the tears of the old Sufi who is crying over the fate of his country. One small group sat in the assembly hall of the cloister and Nezih Bey, a well known Mevelvi musician, chanted the old, Turkish dervesh tunes:

My love for you took me from myself,

I need you, and you alone…….

Words, which slowly turned into the dhikr, the thinking of the derveshes of God.

It was one of the surprises of the year 2001, that the town of Pforzheim awarded me the Reuchlin –Prize. I chose some lines of the great humanist as theme for my talk:

> Never have I done something with such inner involvement and such a greed for knowledge as the multi-coloured study of foreign languages, which left no doubt in me that I did follow the dictates of the burning genius inside me. Thus, I never, at any age or part of my life, did I miss an opportunity to develop some project, which may lead to learning some wise, foreign, teaching and then, to pass on the language of those people to my contemporaries. In all that, I did not strive for the highest. But restricted myself to the ordinary.

I tried to visualize this humanist, born in 1455, within the context of his time, when the greatest changes took place in the Occidental as well as in the Islamic history: on the one side, there was the discovery of America, the Spanish reconquista, then the reformation; all these changed the world-view in its very foundations. On the other side, there happened simultaneously the defeat of the Moorish rule in Andalusia, while the Mameluks in Egypt, after a rule lasting for two hundred and fifty years, suffered defeat at the hands of the Ottomans in 1516, which turned Turkey into a superpower in the eastern Mediterranean area. In Iran in 1501, power went into the hands of the young Ismail the Safawid in 1501, and the Shi'ite form of Islam became the official religion of the state. This, to date, sets Iran apart from the other Islamic states, which rests like a wedge between the majority Sunni states. This is the reason why Iran, in the early fifteenth century, was considered by the Occident as an ally against the Turks. At the same time, the remaining Timurid empire in Samarkand and Herat came to an end, while another descendent of Taimur, Babar, after adventurous campaigns, founded in 1526, the Moghul empire in India, which lasted till 1857. The original towns of the Timurids however, Samarkand and Bukhara, fell into the hands of Shaibanides, the predecessors of today's Uzbeks. Thus, Reuchlin was to be seen as a scholar who stood at a watershed of history.

A short time after that, the theological Faculty of the university of Marburg celebrated the golden jubilee of my doctorate. I was probably the only one, who remembered the troubles over my doctorate exam. Now, all was forgotten. I was grateful for the beautiful laudatio and in my jubilee-speech, I tried to present my views on the changes of the history of religion. In November, I was surprised, when I was made honorary member of the Society for the Friends of Islamic Art and Culture in

Munich. Among the happenings of the year 2001 I cannot forget the fascinating exhibition "Ornament and Abstraction"in the Beyelar Museum in Riehen, for which I had contributed a catalogue. There, one could clearly perceive the internal connectedness between Orient and Occident, which surprised and delighted the visitors. There were many obligations to be fulfilled during the later part of the year, among them a trip to Riyadh (see page 237 f); but one of the peaks was a podium discussion in Cologne, with the Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk. His multi-layered novel "Red is my Name"contains a brilliant analysis of Islamic art. It was such a pleasure to moderate this Turkish-German discussion!

But, in between all this, was the 11th September. After a beautiful and active spring season and also a mysterious blood poisoning which paralyzed my right arm, came the destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York. For those concerned it was all the more incomprehensible, since the USA had never ever experienced an aerial attack in their own country. I had to give innumerable lectures and talks to try to convince people, or at least, to make them aware, that Islam has nothing to do with terrorism and that not everyone, who emphasizes the positive aspects of Islamic culture, sympathizes with the terrorists. One should not forget that the USA initially, in order to protect the planned oil pipeline, and as a defence against the Russians, had supported the Taliban. And also, that the Taliban followed an unusual, narrow-minded interpretation of Islam, which is rejected by most of the Muslims. This interpretation was further strengthened mostly by Pashtoon tribal traditions. It opened up latent frictions in western culture and the dialogue, which was started with so much hope and in-depth, seemed to be endangered more than ever. These weeks were very painful for me, and I was

agonized when I heard the news of the bombing of the poor, beloved Afghanistan.

But perhaps even here, the old wisdom might prevail, that something positive will grow out of something negative. Maulana Rumi had preached again and again, that new strength will come out of suffering. Isn't it that the earth must be split by the plough, the seed must be crushed by the earth, the grain must be ground and the dough must be baked, so that bread may nourish man? Such thoughts might help us to find a meaning somewhere in all the fury of destruction. One should live through Goethe's "die and become", which is found in the Islamic mystic simile of the flame and the butterfly in its very depth, so as to be able to master life.

This also applies to the private sphere. I need to be thankful, endlessly thankful, that I have reached this point in my life, that I– without a secretary, without an assistant, without a computer, without a car, without leave or sports activities, am able to work as much as I wish; that I have good friends, loving human relationships, successful students all over the world, and that so far, I have been spared from severe illnesses (except a few thromboses and blood poisoning). At the time of my birth the notions of cholesterol, allergy or even jetlag did not exist, therefore I do not suffer from such ailments. My homeopath doctor, Christian Kellersmann, for a long time has been looking after me and my continuing good health. He is supported by his photogenic tomcat Heinrich, who has been patted by Yehudi Menuhin and the Dalai Lama.

Of course, it has not been easy at all moments in my life to follow the path designed for me, and not to lose sight of the goal. But one doesn't speak about the tears, the disappointments, the human problems; they are of no concern to others. Since my childhood I have loved the

word from the Roman Letters: “We know that for those who love God, all things turn out to the best.”

To those, who keep reproaching me of seeing Islam too romantically, I want to reply with a word of St. Augustin: res tantum cognoscitur quantum diligitur– one can understand something only to the extent as one loves it. And since my childhood I have loved the world of the Orient, I have communicated with pious Muslims in their language; therefore, so I believe, I do understand them a little bit. Max Rychner in 1929, has expressed it pointedly in his letter to Carl Jacob Burckhardt: “One knows only those people well whom one loves, or is a friend to them. Emotion makes our view richer, vaster, more discerning; it shows the nature of the other in all its fullness, in its entire value.”

I very much enjoy translating poetry, because I agree with Herder, who wrote some two and a half centuries ago: “From poetry, we learn about eras and nations in much greater depth than through the deceitful, miserable ways of political-and war-histories.”

The same applies to the arts. And the history of religion teaches us, that one must compare an ideal with an ideal so as to understand a bit of the other culture, and all that is good in it one should appreciate, and not depreciate.

What will the future bring us? I don’t know the answer, but I do hope for peace, better understanding, and respect for the other. And I follow the old sailors’ adage, which I learnt from my mother: “To hope for the best, and be prepared for the worst.”She also taught me, to avoid unnecessary worry, as is told in the Oriental story which she loved so much: “Hundred die from the plague, but one thousand die from the fear of it.”This seems to me to be good advice for our society, which is daily confronted with new warning, new and confusing information.

And what is the hope for myself, as I am closing this brief glance at some of my experiences and realizations in this New Year Night of 2001/02? I answer in the language of my revered poet-Orientalist Friedrich Rückert:

If tomorrow I should die –
I have worked enough.
If hundred years or more I'd try –
There is work enough.

And then? I recall the motto of my childhood: "People sleep, and when they die, they awaken."And I believe in an awakening, which we cannot describe, not imagine:

…and by seeing love eternal
we float away, we disappear.

Vote of Thanks

Many people have played a role in the making of this autobiography; to all of them– may they be in Erfurt, in the USA, in Europe or Asia– I owe gratitude for their friendship, which has enriched my life and is still doing so. Dr. Shams Anvari-Alkoseini has, as often before, contributed the Arabic calligraphy of the motto. The Önel publishers in Cologne permitted the use of long excerpts of my book published in 1990 "*My Brother Ismail.*" The lecturers of the publishers have, from a manuscript written under difficult circumstances, developed a readable book– I thank Dr. Ulrich Nolte and the untiring Angelika Schneider for their help.

Bonn, Whitsuntide 2002 Annemarie Schimmel