



REMEMBERING THE SCHOLAR—HERMIT
PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL
COMMEMORATIVE
SEMINAR



Edited
Professor Saeed A. Durrani

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INTRODUCTION

Prof. Saeed A. Durrani

I am very grateful to the Iqbal Academy Pakistan for having agreed to publish the *Proceedings of the Commemorative Seminar* held to celebrate the life and work of the great Orientalist, Professor Annemarie Schimmel (7 April 1922–26 January 2003), held on Thursday 9th October 2003 by the Iqbal Academy (UK. The background and the genesis of the Seminar, which was held on the premises of and with the financial and administrative support of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in London, have been fully described in my opening address at the Seminar¹ so I need not repeat those details here. Suffice it to say that the Seminar proved to be an outstanding success, and was attended by a large number of very distinguished scholars, friends and devotees of Professor Schimmel in the UK, and representatives of diplomatic missions in London as well as other notable literary, religious and cultural figures in the country.

In addition to the Schimmel scholars who spoke at the Seminar, the function was made more lively and enjoyable by the musical contributions by Mrs Pakeezah Baig (who

¹ Please see *A Quest for the Sacred* in the following pages in this volume.

recited a *ghazal* from Iqbal); Mrs Durdana Ansari (whose impromptu rendition of one of Iqbal's poems powerfully stirred the audience); and Dr Razia Sultanova's presentation of Uzbek classical instrumental music (who is a professor of Uzbek music in the University of London as well as an author and a friend and protégé of Annemarie Schimmel). Furthermore, a representative exhibition of Professor Schimmel's large repertoire of publications was mounted in the German Information Centre's foyer by the leading and old-established purveyors of oriental and academic books in the UK, viz. Messrs Arthur Probsthain (through the efforts of the Academy's young Friend, Mr Burzine Waghmar). Another Friend of the Academy, Mr Aziz-ud-Din Ahmed, organized the production of two sketches of Annemarie Schimmel by the Indian artist, Mr Muhammad Ishaq. These sketches were displayed in the Seminar Hall; and after the event one of these two sketches was presented to the German Ambassador, HE Mr Thomas Matussak, by my wife, Ingeborg Durrani, during the very elegant Reception given by the Ambassador in his ornate Residence.

While I am mentioning the names of some of those Friends of Iqbal Academy (UK) who assisted in making the Seminar a success, I must not omit to acknowledge the great help given by three of the German Embassy's officers, namely Mr Tilman Hanckel (Head of Cultural Department) and Messrs Michael Haberl and Max Maldacker (Cultural/Political Counsellors). The elegant Invitation Card to the Seminar² was based, in part, on the beautiful design and motifs very kindly donated by the renowned Egyptian painter-calligraphist, Dr Ahmed Moustafa, Head of the Fenoon Foundation, London. The Academy's Management Committee Member, Mr

² A facsimile of which is reproduced in this volume.

Makhdoom Chishti, played a leading role in getting the invitation cards printed (and his SUFI organization provided free transport for a large contingent of the Academy's Members and Friends from the Midlands to London). Another Friend of the Academy, Mr Mustafa Ali Khan Shahab, made a video of the Seminar as a contribution from his organization, SOFI (Society of Friends International), London. I cannot omit to mention here the very valuable role played by the Academy's Hon. Secretary, Mr Dawer Tawfik, in taking care of many administrative aspects of the Seminar.

Finally, I am most grateful to Mr Muhammad Suheyl Umar, the distinguished Director of Iqbal Academy Pakistan, to have readily agreed to our request to publish the Proceedings of the Seminar as a Special publication of his Academy. He was also kind enough to ask me to serve as a Guest Editor for this Commemorative Volume. (Indeed, Iqbal Academy Pakistan has, in the past, also published the Proceedings of two of our Academy's earlier Seminars: *Iqbal and Mysticism* (1987), published in *Iqbal Review* Vol. 29 (Oct-Dec 1988); and *Sir Thomas Arnold Day* (1988), published in *Iqbal Review* Vol. 32 (April 1991).

One final note about some background mechanics of the publication. All the speakers at the Seminar had provided full texts of their contributions except one which I handed over to Mr Suheyl Umar during my visit to Lahore at the end of December 2003. The one exception was the lecture by Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, the Bishop of Rochester, who had spoken extempore, using rough notes, and was thus unable to provide a written text. Fortunately, we had kept a full tape-recording of all the speeches. The recording of the Bishop's lecture proved difficult for the Pakistan Academy to decipher. It therefore fell to myself and my wife to

prepare a transcript— a rather laborious task!— which was then corrected and finalized by the Bishop himself during the summer of 2004. A second lecture that required special attention was the contribution by Dr Leonard Lewisohn of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. Now, Dr Lewisohn is such a prolific writer and author of Sufi books that, while giving me the draft of his lecture in October 2003, he told me plainly that he would not be able to find the time to revise the text for the following 12 months! As such, I must accept the responsibility for any errors and omissions (or commissions) introduced by myself in editing and adding ‘finishing touches’ to his lecture as it appears in this volume. The final article requiring some explanation is the essay contributed by HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal—who had been unable to attend the Seminar as he was hosting the 2003 Club of Rome Conference in Amman at that time (but did send us a detailed and valuable message to the Seminar³). Then, during my stay in Pakistan in the winter of 2003 (where I was engaged in a UNO scientific mission), I received, out of the blue as it were, a full-length article about Professor Schimmel, written by HRH the Prince. His Executive Assistant at the Royal Palace in Jordan wrote to me to say that the Prince would appreciate it if we could include his article in our Proceedings of the Seminar. This we are very pleased to do. Before I end: please note that the concluding remarks by the Academy’s Vice-Chairman, The V. Rev. Dr Peter Berry, and the Vote of Thanks moved by Prince Mohsin Ali Khan, are not included in the published material below.

Dear readers, I do not wish to stand any longer between you and the papers presented at the Schimmel Memorial Seminar, and hope that these Proceedings will be able to throw informative light on some aspects of the life and

³ Which is also included in this volume.

Remembering the Scholar– Hermit

work of one of the greatest and most versatile Orientlists of all time— the late Professor Annemarie Schimmel.

Prof. Saeed A. Durrani
Chairman Iqbal Academy (UK)
University of Birmingham, England.
15 October 2004

A QUEST FOR THE SACRED

Welcome Address

by

Professor Saeed A Durrani

Chairman, Iqbal Academy (UK)

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates and Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you on behalf of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in London and the Iqbal Academy (UK) to this International Seminar to commemorate the life and work of the great German Orientalist, Professor Annemarie Schimmel, who died earlier this year. To start with, may I apologize for the rather tight squeeze of our venue— which seems to be bursting at the seams. The overwhelming response that we have received to our invitations is a vivid manifestation of the great popularity in this country— and indeed throughout Europe and the rest of the world— that the late Professor Schimmel's magnetic personality enjoyed, and continues to enjoy, amongst all those who care for the cultural heritage of Islam as well as its metaphysical dimensions. Please allow me next to say a few words about the background and the genesis of today's Memorial Seminar.

As most of you would know, Professor Annemarie Schimmel died at Bonn in Germany on 26th January 2003. I was at that time on a United Nations' scientific mission at Islamabad in Pakistan. Several commemorative meetings were held in Pakistan to

honour Professor Schimmel's memory at which I had the privilege to participate and speak; notably at the Pakistan Academy of Letters in Islamabad (on 6th February 2003) and the Iqbal Academy Pakistan's meeting at the Aiwan-i Iqbal, Lahore (10th February 2003). As is widely known, Annemarie Schimmel was a life-long friend of Pakistan as well as the Indo-Muslim culture. She once told me that she had visited Pakistan at least 50 times; and there is a well-founded belief that she wanted to be buried in Sindh in Pakistan— either near the tomb of the great Sindhi Sufi poet, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, or in the historic and sacred graveyard at Makli in Thatta. She was equally fond of the Poet-Philosopher of the East, Allamah Muhammad Iqbal, who is buried in Lahore. Indeed, the ancient city of Lahore has honoured two great German savants, namely Goethe and Schimmel, to glorify whom two parallel and graceful avenues—the Goethe Avenue and the Annemarie Schimmel Avenue— have been laid out on either side of a canal at the head of the Lahore Mall. That, indeed, was a signal honour for a scholar who was still alive.

Anyway, upon my return to England in early April 2003, I made enquiries with two great friends and devotees of Annemarie's, namely Philippa Vaughan (who is present here) and Dr Ziauddin Shakeb (who is currently in Delhi and has sent his apologies), as to whether any commemorative meetings in London were planned in the near future. They told me that the only such function in the offing was a Thanksgiving Service in London to celebrate her life and work. This Service did, indeed, take place at St James's Church in Piccadilly on 10th July 2003, which I attended as a representative of the Iqbal Academy (UK)— and a most elegant and moving occasion it was, where many distinguished friends and admirers of Professor Schimmel's were present.

In the meantime, it so happened that I went to the German Embassy on 23rd May 2003, to participate in a Reception given by HE Mr Thomas Mattusek, the German Ambassador, in his elegant Residence, to welcome the delegates to a Conference of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (of which I am a

Fellow). I mentioned to His Excellency that the Iqbal Academy (UK) was planning (actually, the idea had just occurred to me!) to hold a scholarly Memorial Meeting to honour Professor Schimmel; would his Embassy be willing to co-sponsor it? The Ambassador expressed immediate and enthusiastic support, but asked me to write to him and make a formal proposal. I did so in the wake of a meeting of the Management Committee of the Academy in the third week of June, which authorized me to go ahead. And the rest is history, as they say. I will not give you a 'blow by blow' account of all the detailed planning and organizing that went into the holding of today's Seminar. Suffice it to say that we received generous and willing support of a number of organizations and individuals whom I approached for financial or personal backing. Chief of these are: H.E. Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani; H.R.H. Prince El Hassan bin Talal; the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London; the British Association for Pakistan Studies; the SUFI Trust, Birmingham; SOFI (Society of Friends International), London; and the Fenoon Foundation of Dr Ahmed Moustafa in London— all of whom will be formally thanked by the Academy's Vice-Chairman, the Very Rev. Dr Peter Berry, at the end of the Seminar. And, of course, the crucial and fundamental support— both financial and administrative — in all these arrangements has been that extended to us so generously by the German Embassy, who have not only provided the venue for today's event free of cost but will also host tonight's reception in the Ambassador's Residence.

Enough, however, of the background of today's function: Let me turn now to the function's 'soul and spirit'— Annemarie Schimmel. I shall not say anything about her life's work and her remarkable achievements— for that will be done by our highly distinguished panel of speakers during the rest of the afternoon. May I, however, crave your indulgence to say a few things about my personal contacts with that remarkable lady?

Although I had read Professor Schimmel's profound study of the thought of the Poet-Philosopher of the East, Allamah Iqbal, entitled *Gabriel's Wing*, back in the 1960s, I had actually met her in person for the first time in December 1977, when we held

an international festival at the University of Birmingham to celebrate the centenary of Allamah Iqbal's birth under the auspices of the Anjuman-ḥ Taraqqī-ḥ Urdu (Society for the Advancement of Urdu), Birmingham, whose Chairman I was at that time. She was not only the keynote speaker at our Seminar, but also attended our international *Mushā'ira* (poetry symposium) held during the evening. She immensely enjoyed the *mushā'ira* (and indeed remarked that, in her view, it was better than the one she had attended in Delhi the previous week!). My wife and I were honoured to have her stay at our home that night— and I remember how she gave some valuable advice to my wife— who is German, and was at that time studying for a degree in Linguistics— on some finer points in that field, including a discussion of certain pre-Aryan languages of India. She mentioned Brahui— a language still spoken in Baluchistan, and constituting a kind of island in a surrounding sea of Indo-European languages— and went on to give my wife details of how she could obtain a dictionary of that language. I mention this as an example of her kindness in freely passing on parts of her vast knowledge to any who could benefit from it.

After this first encounter, I met her many more times— in London, Brussels, Cordoba, Ghent, Karachi, Islamabad and elsewhere— both at conferences, lectures and intimate gatherings (e.g. the one at the home of her friend and devotee, Dr Ziauddin Shakeb in London, where a documentary was being made of her life). Time does not allow me to give an account of all these meetings – but I cannot resist sharing with you my memories of three of them: the ones at Brussels, Cordoba and Ghent. The first of these was in January 1990 in Brussels— when that indefatigable and visionary-cum-entrepreneur Iqbalist and cultural activist, H.E. Mr Toheed Ahmed, who was then the cultural attachḥ at the Pakistan Embassy in Brussels, held the foundation meeting of the Iqbal Foundation Europe. Annemarie Schimmel was elected the first President of that Foundation (and I had the honour of being elected as one of her two Vice-Presidents). She, as was her wont, again gave an elegant and wide-ranging lecture with her eyes tightly shut and an ocean of

erudition flowing unbounded from her lips. She appeared to all of us as a true Sufi, which reminded us of Iqbal's couplet:

*zahir ki ānkh se na tamāshā kare koi
Ho dekhna to deeda-i dil vā kare koi*

(Do not look at things with the Outer Eye
If you want to perceive reality – you must open your
Inner Eye)

I remember asking her after the meeting how many books she had written. 'Oh, fifty, maybe fifty-five', she remarked casually. When I again asked her the same question at Ghent, at the end of 1997, the number had nearly doubled!

My second vivid memory is of Annemarie Schimmel sitting under the *mehrab* (altar, or prayer niche) of the Mosque of Cordoba— immortalized by Iqbal in his eponymous poem— during the international conference entitled 'Iqbal in Cordoba', organized by M. Lamand, the President of *Islam et Occident* – in which Iqbal Academy Pakistan and Iqbal Academy (UK) took a leading part in coordinating it. (M. Lamand told us that he had to obtain special permission of the Vatican to hold an Islamic function in the Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba— some seven hundred and fifty years after the expulsion of Muslims from that city.) An appalling event that occurred during that conference has left indelible memories in my mind. While returning from a walk before lunch with Dr Javid Iqbal and other conference delegates, Annemarie Schimmel was attacked by a 'mugger' just outside our hotel door; she fell to the ground and the attacker fled with her handbag. Annemarie was badly shaken by this violent attack and was trembling and distraught. Toheed and I took the poor lady to her room and tried to calm her down and made her lie down on her bed. She was lamenting that the mugger had made off with her keys, her money, and her passport— all of which were in her handbag. I contrived to open her suitcase, and Toheed promised to get a new passport issued to her. True to his word, Toheed missed a whole day of the conference; travelled post-haste to the German consulate in Seville the next morning; and managed — through his diplomatic

connections—to get a temporary passport issued by the consulate (where she was a known personality). This was a great relief to Annemarie, who was able to regain her composure and good humour.

My third memory relates to the Iqbal Foundation Europe's international seminar entitled (if I remember correctly) 'Iqbal's Relevance to the 21st Century', held at Ghent, Belgium, in November 1997. After the seminar, an elegant dinner for the delegates was given at his Residence by the Ambassador of Pakistan in Brussels, H.E. Mr Riaz Muhammad Khan. After the delicious dinner at a candle-lit table, and noticing the variety of nationalities represented by distinguished literary figures at the table, I made the proposal that we hold an impromptu multilingual *musha'ira* or poetry recitation—in which people could either recite their own compositions or those of any of their nation's favourite poets. The proposal was welcomed enthusiastically by all. H.E. the Ambassador presided over this *mehfil-i she'r*, and I performed the tasks of the *nazim* or compere—with the candle being placed in front of each poet in turn, as the age-old tradition lays it down. If I do not err in my memory, poems were read out in Urdu, Persian, Turkish, Russian, French and German. Annemarie read out one of her own poems with great verve and style—and I have a vague memory that a recording of this poetry session was made and still lurks somewhere amongst my vast collection of tape-recordings. (I have just remembered that we had held a similar multilingual *musha'ira* at the 'Iqbal in Cordoba' Conference in 1991, where one of Iqbal Academy Pakistan's erstwhile Directors, Professor Mirza Muhammad Munawar, as well as Annemarie Schimmel made original contributions. Poems in Arabic and Spanish recited on that occasion still reverberate in my memory.)

Once this train of memories has started moving, I cannot help recording one final 'remembrance of things past'. This concerns the visit by the President of Germany, H.E. Mr Roman Herzog, to Pakistan in April 1995. A resplendent ceremony in his honour was held at the ornate German Embassy in Islamabad. A fairy-

tale atmosphere in the Embassy's vast gardens, lit by multicoloured decorative lamps affixed to plants and bushes, enveloped the Evening Reception for the capital's *glitterati*. Now, it had occurred to me only a day or so before the function that it would be nice if, as a special gift to represent a cultural highlight of Pakistan—namely, a piece of calligraphy—could be presented to the President. I had, accordingly, requested my good friend and one of the foremost calligraphists of Pakistan, Mr Rasheed Butt, to scribe a Persian couplet of Allamah Iqbal's in his ornate hand, properly framed for the occasion. This Mr Butt had duly done. But the question now was: how do we present this piece of art to the President of Germany during a ceremony that, with typical German punctiliousness, had been pre-organized to the minute. Here my cousin, H.E. Gen. M. Asad Durrani—who at that time was Pakistan's Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, and had accompanied the German President on his visit to Pakistan—came to my rescue with an ingenious stratagem. He said the only person who could transcend ordinary protocol was Professor Annemarie Schimmel, who would be present at the Reception. He suggested that I propose to her that she, at an appropriate moment, take the initiative to present to President Herzog our special gift; she readily agreed. And sure enough, at an appropriate juncture, she leapt on to the stage and announced that a calligraphic piece depicting a couplet of the Poet-Philosopher of the East, Allamah Muhammad Iqbal—truly a bridge between Pakistan and Germany—had been prepared by the Iqbal Academy (UK) as a special gift, which she then proceeded to present to the President. The Federal President accepted the gift most graciously—and I, too, was invited to the dais to shake his hand and say a few words about Mr Rasheed Butt and the Iqbal Academy (UK)—as well as the Iqbal Foundation Europe. (It may not be inappropriate here to mention, in conclusion, that my wife translated the above-mentioned couplet of Iqbal into German a little later, and forwarded it to the President of Germany. In his letter of thanks, Professor Herzog assured my wife that the calligraphy, together with her translation, would be put on display in the Presidential Palace.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, I must apologize that I have been carried away in narrating my memories of Annemarie Schimmel. But, 'The story was delicious, so I drew it out a bit', as the Persian poet says. However, I now leave it to our main speakers to tell you more about Professor Schimmel's life and works. Mr Mohammad Aman Hobohm, who speaks last, will tell you more about this warm-hearted, vivacious person, who was not just a unique scholar but also full of life, fun-loving and a ceaseless world-traveller.

May I end by reading out a few lines from just a handful out of the many messages that I have received concerning today's Seminar from many of her friends and admirers?

1. The full message from H.R.H. Prince El Hassan bin Talal is reproduced below in this commemorative issue.
2. H.E. Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani (formerly the Minister for Petroleum, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia): "Thank you for inviting me to be one of the Chief Guests of Honour at the Iqbal Academy's forthcoming Seminar, which is being held in memory of our dear departed and sorely missed friend, Professor Annemarie Schimmel. Regretfully, I have a Board Meeting on the very same day, the date of which really cannot now be altered. This inevitably means that I will not be able to join you at the Seminar, but I do hope that the event proves to be both convivial and productive. Annemarie was such a unique person, with an unparalleled depth of knowledge. It is gratifying to learn that the Iqbal Academy (UK) is honouring her memory with this scholarly Seminar". May I add that the Sheikh very kindly enclosed a generous donation as a contribution towards the expenses of the Seminar, for which we are most grateful.
3. Dr Farhad Daftary (Director, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London). "The late Professor A. Schimmel was a dear friend and a most eminent scholar, whom all of us at the Institute greatly admired. While apologizing for my own absence through being abroad at that time, I am delighted

that our colleague Dr Leonard Lewisohn will be participating in the scholarly Seminar being held by your Academy in Professor Schimmel's honour. I send my sincere good wishes for the success of the Commemorative Seminar." - The Institute has also made a generous donation in support of our Seminar, for which we are very thankful.

4. Professor Francis Robinson (President of the Royal Asiatic Society, London). "While I am myself, unfortunately, prevented by long-standing commitments from attending your Seminar being held in honour of Professor Schimmel, I am spreading the news of your event to fellows of the Royal Asiatic Society, with which she had many close associations. Please accept my very best wishes for the success of your Seminar." — I am very pleased to notice in our audience today a fair number of very prominent Fellows of the Royal Asiatic Society— to all of whom I offer a very warm welcome.
5. H.E. Mr Ronen Sen (High Commissioner for India in the UK). "Thank you for inviting me to attend the seminar in memory of late Professor Annemarie Schimmel, who was an ardent admirer of both Mevalan Jalal al-Din Rumi and Allamah Iqbal. I highly appreciate your thoughtful gesture in sending me the invitation to join you at what promises to be a memorable event. As a former Ambassador to Germany, and in my current official capacity here, as well as my personal capacity, I would have very much liked to have been present on the special occasion. Unfortunately, my prior engagements outside London will not permit me to accept your kind invitation. May I, however, send you all good wishes for a successful seminar."
6. H.E. Dr Malecha Lodhi (High Commissioner for Pakistan in the UK) had every intention of attending today's Seminar— and we were greatly looking forward to her presence with us today— but the High Commission's Minister for Press, Mr Javed Akhtar, who

is present here, has just told me that the Prime Minister of Pakistan is passing through England today on his way to the USA, which has made it impossible for Her Excellency to attend this Seminar. She has, however, sent her 'profound apologies' and extended her warmest good wishes for the success of our Seminar'.

I now request H.E. the Ambassador of Germany to say a few words of welcome to the audience and also something by way of a tribute to the great German Orientalist and outstanding scholar, the late Professor Annemarie Schimmel. When the session proper starts thereafter, I shall say a few words of introduction concerning each speaker, in turn. Thank you very much.

(The above is an extended version of the Presidential Address made by the Chairman of Iqbal Academy (UK) at the Schimmel Commemorative Seminar in London.— *Ed.*)

MESSAGE OF WELCOME

From

H E Mr Thomas Matussek

Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the Court of St James's in London

Mr. Max J Maldacker (First Counsellor, Political Affairs, at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in London) spoke as follows.

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Speakers and Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

His Excellency the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany has asked me to extend, on his behalf, a very warm welcome to the august assembly gathered here today on the premises of the German Embassy to celebrate the life and work of the great German Orientalist and outstanding author, Professor Annemarie Schimmel, who left her earthly abode earlier this year. His Excellency, who is at this moment engaged in certain ineluctable duties, sends his profound apologies for not being able to join you right at the beginning of this meeting— but hopes to do so in the course of this afternoon. He also extends a very warm personal invitation to all of you to the Reception that His Excellency is hosting at his Residence for all the guests at the end of this Seminar.

His Excellency has asked me to tell you how very much he appreciates the fact that the Iqbal Academy (UK) are holding this Commemorative Seminar to honour Professor Schimmel, who was undoubtedly one of the greatest writers of all time on metaphysical themes— especially of Islamic mysticism. When your Chairman, Professor Durrani, proposed this Seminar a few months back, and asked whether the German Embassy in London would be able to co-sponsor it, it was with the greatest pleasure that I accepted that proposal, and I am very pleased that a number of my Embassy's officers and staff have been doing everything possible to help the Academy organize today's event.

With the list of such eminent scholars who are present here today to speak on different aspects of the life and work of Professor Schimmel, I am sure that all of us will learn a great deal, and in great depth, about some of the remarkable achievements of that uniquely gifted thinker and writer, Annemarie Schimmel. I bid you all a warm welcome to today's Commemorative Seminar once again, and look forward to meeting many of you personally during this evening's Reception, if not earlier.

Ladies and Gentlemen, after this message from His Excellency the Ambassador, I hand you back to the Chairman, Iqbal Academy, Professor Saeed Durrani.

MESSAGE

from

HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal

Royal Palace Amman, Jordan¹

It is with great regret that I write to say that, due to unavoidable scheduling conflicts, I am unable to attend in person the Annemarie Schimmel Memorial Seminar which will take place on the 9th October 2003. However, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the organisers of the seminar on an important event which will affirm much needed friendships and understanding across cultures, and which remembers an extraordinary scholar and human being whose being and achievements remain very dear to my heart.

Praise has been heaped and re-heaped upon Annemarie Schimmel's name; I believe that heap of praise must continue to grow, to take life, flourish and send out green tendrils of awareness, as more people come to know of her work to bring cultures together, her erudition, her glowing creativity and her vast and warm humanity. She has embodied the ideals of so many traditions and faiths that her memory, to those who have known her, is now itself a fertile area of common ground.

¹ The message, dated Amman 29 September, 2003, is addressed to the Chairman, Iqbal Academy (U.K.), and commences with the words: Dear Professor Durrani, dear brother. – *Ed.*

In my own work— in the Parliament of Cultures and Partners in Humanity, in asking for a new international humanitarian order and for teaching by analogy between our shared values— I have tried to promote conversation between citizens and between the adherents of our different human faiths. It is, as many of you here know only too well, hard work which often seems to fall on stony ground; but it is only too easy to see how much more necessary this work and its success becomes every year— indeed, every month— that passes. At the times when such work seems most barren or hopeless, we all reach for comfort and hope towards some icon of a better future— a picture of a grandchild, a memory of success. And at events such as this, we are reminded to turn our eyes to the fellow human beings who jumped the chasms, climbed the mountainsides, forded the rivers and crossed the oceans in their indefatigable search for knowledge that was fuelled by the energy of pure love.

I believe that the vocations of these human meteors call them to a task far greater than the satisfaction of only their personal thirst for knowledge. And with regard to this, it seems to me very apt that Annemarie Schimmel was a scholar of Sufism. She has worked for good knowledge at a time when it is very much needed. When I think of my newest granddaughter toddling across the lawn, and her future as a young woman, and my work for her generation to enjoy a sane and peaceful world, it gives me comfort and hope to know that, just around the corner, Annemarie Schimmel has been working for her too.

So I would like now to offer my thanks to our good friend for that work, and to say to her and to those here who love her, in the words of the poet Rumi whom she herself so loved:

*you mustn't be afraid of death
you're a deathless soul
you can't be kept in a dark grave
you're filled with God's glow
be happy with your beloved
you can't find any better
the world will shimmer
because of the diamond you hold*

Remembering the Scholar– Hermit

*when your heart is immersed
in this blissful love
you can easily endure
any bitter face around
in the absence of malice
there is nothing but
happiness and good times
don't dwell in sorrow, my friend.¹*

¹ Translated by Nader Khalili, *Rumi: Fountain of Fire* (Cal-Earth Press, 1994)

Rt Revd Dr Michael Nazir-Ali

Bishop of Rochester

It is my great pleasure to invite, next, the Rt Reverend Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, who comes originally from Pakistan and is fluent in Urdu and Persian. Let me give you a few words of his CV. Rt Revd Dr Michael J Nazir-Ali is the Lord Bishop of Rochester. He was born and brought up in Asia. He read Economics and Sociology at Karachi University and Theology at Cambridge. His postgraduate studies at Cambridge were in comparative literature and comparative philosophy and theology. He has taught at many universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. He has written a number of books and papers, notably on Islam. A frequent broadcaster and writer on social topics, Bishop Michael is a Visiting Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Greenwich University, and a Fellow of St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford. He is also a member of the Archbishops' Council and the Chair of the Ethics Committee of the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority. Bishop Michael is a distinguished Iqbalist in his own right and in fact has written a thesis on some aspects of Iqbal's sources of thought (of which Professor Schimmel was one of the examiners). Indeed, he is the Vice-President of the Friends of Iqbal Academy (UK) {about which all of you have application forms on your chairs— and you are earnestly requested to join that circle}— and whose President is the son of Allamah Iqbal and former Senator, Dr Javid Iqbal. I think without further ado what I will do is to ask Bishop Michael to speak. And his topic is: Annemarie Schimmel and her Mystical Approach to Islam.

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL:
A MYSTICAL APPROACH TO ISLAM

Rt Revd Dr Michael Nazir-Ali
Bishop of Rochester

Dr. Durrani never minces his words, and I am quite embarrassed about his long introduction. Many of you know me and of my interests. I am very grateful, however, to Dr Durrani for being invited today to speak in this Seminar. I also look forward to hearing the contributions of proper scholars of Professor Annemarie Schimmel's work. But to begin with, some memories— for all of us will, I am sure, have such memories. My last memory of Professor Schimmel is of her standing in the middle of a crowd of admirers on the occasion of the Prince of Wales's 50th birthday, to which she had been invited as an honoured guest— and I also hope that the Prince has been made aware of this Seminar, for I am sure he would be very interested in the kind of things we are doing. But whether among princes or among beggars, she was always the same. I remember her lecturing at the University of the Panjab, in the Old Campus, Lahore— where she held us spellbound on the subject of prophetic revelation, about which she has also written a book. Whether at large gatherings of the above type, or at small, intimate gatherings of her pupils in post-graduate seminars at

Harvard, for example, she always worked at listening carefully to what was being said. I think it is not stretching the point too far to say that she was rather like Rūmī— on whom she was an expert— of the *Javid Nāmeḥ*, who as you remember guided *Jahan Doost*— Friend of the World— through the heavens. She provided the answers to her pupils' questions such as: چیست عالم،

چیست آدم، چیست حق [Cheest 'alam, cheest Ādam, cheest Haqq?] (What is the universe, what is man, and what is God?)

There are of course many people who have tried to understand Sufism from the outside. They have been interested to know how it arose, who were its followers; and they have tried to find what its relationship might have been with other movements. But I think one of the distinctive features of Professor Schimmel's scholarship is that she sought to understand it from within. Mr Chairman, you referred to her in your introductory remarks as a Sufi. And that, I think, is right: for her approach was to understand Sufism not from the outside, but from within. She sought to understand what actually motivated these men and women. So it is perhaps right to say that she had a theological understanding of the Qur'anic origin of Sufism. For example, in the famous Light verse in the Qur'an:

الله نور السموات و الارض "Allah-u Nurus Samawati wa al-ard", Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth[Surah An-Nur, XXIV, v.35]; and repeated in many other verses of the Qur'an, which refer to God's love – to which I will come in a moment. Not only was her understanding based on this view of Sufism, that it had its origin rooted in the Qur'an, but also in the *Sunnah* [practice] of the Prophet of Islam. She quotes somewhere in one of her books that one of the Prophet's spouses is supposed to have said that even when he is asleep he is awake to spiritual reality. And that is, of course, what many Sufis also desire for themselves. So the Qur'anic origin of Sufism, and also its basis in the *Sunnah* of the Prophet himself and the practice of the *Ṣaḥāba* [Companions]. For example, there is the story about Umar, the second Caliph, where he said that he had given half of his wealth to the Prophet in the cause of Islam. Abu Bakr [the

first Caliph] said that he had made no provision for himself, and, relying on Allah, he had given everything away. So that is the asceticism of the *Ṣaḥāba*, renunciation of what they had, which she said was also an inspiration. I repeat that Professor Schimmel's fundamental point of departure was her endeavour to understand the theological origin of Sufism. But, of course, she also attempted to understand its social origins. And here her analysis is very close to that of Allamah Iqbal's, particularly as propounded in the *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. Both she and he attempted to identify the various conditions that led to the rise of Islamic mysticism. First of all the prosperity of the 'Abbasid Caliphs— the wide-spread prosperity at the beginning of a great civilisation in which, I have to say, the Christians, the Jews and also the Zoroastrians played a very significant part. So when people speak of the classical Islamic civilization, one has to remember the contributions of these people as well. But that is another story — an interesting story, however.

But it was the prosperity of the Caliphate that drove many people to seek a renewal of spirituality, sometimes literally in the desert, and sometimes spiritually. Now this is very similar to what happened in the Christian church after the so-called conversion of Constantine. When Christianity became a tolerated religion in the Roman Empire— though not yet in the Persian Empire— many people rejected what they saw as a compromise with the temporal power. So they went out into the deserts of Egypt and Syria; and that is the origin of Christian monasticism. One is, thus, very struck by how similar are the social origins of Sufism to those of Christian monasticism. So prosperity was one reason; and then there was the almost perpetual conflict that existed side by side with this emerging prosperity. Whether that was a threat from outside, or a disturbance from inside, that also made people go back to the sources of their faith. Iqbal, then— and also Schimmel— talks of the futility of the theological debate between the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites, for example, concerning the status of the anthropomorphic language used about God. The futility of theological debate, and the dry as dust legalism, as St Paul calls it, of the jurists: that people knew everything about laws, but not so much about spirit. Those were

some of the reasons for the social origins of Sufism. Iqbal actually goes on to say in his *Development of Metaphysics [in Persia]* that the living example of Christian monks, and also Christianity as an *ideal* of life— but not necessarily the Churches— were important influences on Sufism. The emphasis was now on personal knowledge and on devotion and commitment. Theological understanding is not total understanding. And then she was also interested in the psychological aspects of the development of Sufism: she distinguished between the voluntaristic and gnostic aspects of mysticism. This is very similar to the way in which Iqbal too draws a distinction between the prophetic and the mystic consciousness— i.e. between those Sufis who wanted the experience of God and then declared God's will to the people, and those who were satisfied with the *ma'rifā* (knowledge) of God itself— *m'arifa* being the exact translation of gnosis. Iqbal, interestingly, in the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, tells the story of Abdul Quddūs of Gangoh who said, "Muhammad of Arabia went to the heaven, and came back: by God, if I had gone to heaven, I would never have come back". That is the difference between the gnostic and the prophet. That is: the prophet has the experience of God, but comes back to the world to give it God's message. It is interesting that Annemarie Schimmel also makes a similar distinction.

Of course, as one studies Sufism, one is reminded inevitably of the internal debate within the movement: about the tendency towards pantheism, the tendency towards monism, but also a repeated return to theism. Both Schimmel and Iqbal have noticed this in their works. If you wanted an example of the pantheistic tendency, then it is found in the *Diwān-i Shams-i Tabriz*. Here are the verses:

یک گوهری چون بیضه جوشید و گشت دریا
کف کرد، و کف زمین شد، وز دود او سما شد
وانگه ز عالم جان، آمد سپاه انسان
عقلش وزیر گشت و دل رفت و پادشا شد

*Yek gohari chun baiza joshid o gasht darya
kaf kard o kaf zamin shud, waz dud-i oo sama shud.
Wangah zi 'ālam-i jān amad sipāh-i insāne
'aqlash wazir gasht o dil raft o padsha shud!*

That is: "One atom boiled like an egg, and became an ocean. It produced foam, and the foam became the earth, and the smoke of it became the sky. Thereupon from the realm of spirit came the army of man: The intellect became the *vizier* i.e. the minister— and the heart took the throne and became King". ...

So, that is an imaginative example of the influence of Neo-Platonism, which gave rise to this kind of pantheistic tendency. That is also like what is found in the Theo-monism of Ibn 'Arabi— as illustrated in the story of Bayazid of Bistam. His disciple once said to him: "Master, there must have been a time when there was only God and nothing else". Bayazid said, "Yes— and it is just the same now!" But of course there is the thread of theism running through Sufism, because that is involved in the theological origin of Sufism; and while the *Diwān-i Shams-i Tabriz* may be an instance of pantheism, in some respects, Rūmi's *Masnavi-i Ma'navi* is an example of theism— as is, of course the work of Shaikh Ahmad of Sarhind. This is beautifully summed up, as Dr Durrani would know, in a verse of an anonymous Sufi that was a favourite of Allamah Iqbal's, and shows a theistic tendency:

مردانِ خدا، خدا نه باشند
لیکن ز خدا جدا نه باشند

*Mardān-i khudā khudā na-bāshand
lekin zi khudā judā na-bāshand*

[Men of God do not become God;
but they are not separate from God, either.]

Both Schimmel and Iqbal analyse the stages of mystical experience; and in doing this, they stand in a long tradition within Sufism itself. Mr Chairman, you mentioned the city of Lahore, which honours Professor Schimmel [with an Avenue named after her]. In this city there is the mausoleum of Dāta Ganj Bakhsh, who wrote the earliest manual of the discipline of Sufis [*Kashf-al Mahjūb*]. It also analyses the different stages of Sufism. And in our own times, so does a contemporary of Schimmel's, Professor R C Zaehner, who was one of my teachers at Oxford. And in this analysis, which is important although controversial, he tries to distinguish between what he calls the experience of nature mysticism, where the mystic feels as one with the world;— if you want an example of this kind of nature mysticism, you may take the poetry of Walt Whitmann, where there are times when the mystic feels at one with the earth: and that might reflect the streak of pantheism that runs parallel in so much of Muslim and Christian mysticism. Then there is, according to Zaehner, the sense of annihilation [*fanā*], where the mystic feels drowned in the sea of Being, so that no distinction can be made between the being of the mystic and Being as such. And then there is the third stage according to Zaehner and some others. That is a sense of survival *after* annihilation: *baqa ba'd al fana*. Schimmel has done quite a lot of work on this, and she compared the experience of *baqā ba'd al fanā* with death, where she finds connectedness but difference for the mystic.

Professor Schimmel was very interested in the *maqamāt* and the *ahwāl* in Sufism— that is to say, the *stations*, which are a result of the discipline of the Sufi, and the *ahwāl* or *halaat* [states], which are a divine gift. Among the *maqamāt*, she noted particularly the need for *tawba*, i.e. the need for repentance at the beginning of the mystical life— for, without that, mystical life cannot be possible. And here I am reminded of the case of the famous saint, Rabi'a of Basra, a woman saint— indeed, the first saint, who happened to be a woman, as far as Sufism is concerned. She is reported to have said that asking for forgiveness itself requires an asking for forgiveness. And that puts it very close to the Christian way of thinking about the

centrality of repentance in the life of the believer. Then there is *zuhd*, the ascetical tendency in Sufism— which led to much fasting, much hardship endured, and sometimes to giving away of even what was necessary for life. For example, somebody asked a Sufi what he did about food. The Sufi replied: “If somebody gives me food, I eat it”. Another Sufi sitting next to him said: “If somebody gives *me* food, I give it away to the poor”. That is an example of the extent of asceticism in Sufi life. In the matter of *zuhd* in the Sufi tradition, Jesus is often the exemplar: one who gave up everything in the cause of God, according to Sufi belief. *Zuhd*, then, leads to *faqr* (poverty) itself. And here the Sufi follows the prophetic tradition of suffering. The Prophet [Muhammad] is reported to have said that *الفقر فخرى* (*al-faqrū fakhrī*): ‘my poverty is my pride’. There are numerous stories in Sufi literature of how the Prophet remained poor in the midst of power and leadership— and how Sufi masters followed his example. So, there is, first, *tauba*, then *zuhd* and *faqr*, and thirdly there is *tawakkul*— complete trust in God’s provision. In this, some Sufis went to the extreme. For instance, there was the Sufi who fell into the river Tigris and people were trying to rescue him. But he said, ‘No, leave it to the will of God’. I do not know what happened to him! But, of course, there were other prominent Sufis, like Maulāna Rūm, who believed that *tawakkul* and human endeavour could co-exist. He says in his *Masnavi*:

گر توکل می کنی، در کار کن
کشت کن، پس تکیه بر جبّار کن

Gar tawakkul mi kuni, dar kar kun;
kisht kun, pas takya bar jabbar kun:

“If you trust in God, trust in what you do;
first till the ground then resign yourself to the divine”.

So, first the deed and then trust in God. And then the *ahwāl*. Professor Schimmel was very interested in the phenomenon of *bast* and *qabḍ*. *Bast* is the experience of expansion of the mystic

in a cosmic consciousness— an ‘extension’ for that is what the word means. *Qabḍ* is when the mystic is alone— alone with God; and sometimes, just alone - it is a kind of radical loneliness. Professor R C Zaehner also compares this state of *baṣṭ* and *qabḍ*— which is not limited to Sufism alone— to that of a manic depressive psyche; for there are certainly such types of conditions. So, *baṣṭ* and *qabḍ* among the *ahwāl* are the *hudūr wa ghiyāb*, i.e. the presence and absence of God, respectively— or the *experience* of the presence and of the absence of God. In the Christian tradition, one talks of the ‘dark night of the soul’. The *sukr* and the *saḥw*, i.e. the experience of intoxication; and also the coming back to the reality of the world. Then there is, of course, *fanā wa baqā*. Schimmel explores many important Sufi themes, all of which I cannot cover here. Three of them are, however, worth mentioning. First is the centrality of love in Sufism. And we find that it was not only the term *maḥabba* which stands for love— although it has undergone a lot of development, even though it is a Qur’anic term. But later on the term ‘*ishq* [was used]. She sees this in the Surah *Al-Maedah*, in the Qur’an [V, v 54], where, speaking of God, it says: *يُحِبُّهُمْ* *yuhibbu-hum*: God loves people; and *يُحِبُّونَهُ* *yuhibbuna-hu*, i.e. they in turn love Him, so that there is a mutuality of love. However, as Rumi has said – and Schimmel agrees with him: God’s love is primary; human love is a response. And this is, of course, something that Muhammad Iqbal picked up very clearly, particularly in a Persian verse, but not only in that:

ز رسم و راه شریعت نکرده ام تحقیق
جز اینکه، منکر عشق است کافر و زندیق

*Zi-rasm-o rāh-i shari‘at na-karda am taḥqeeq
juz in-keh munkir-i ‘ishq ast kāfir-o zindeeq.
(Zabur-i ‘Ajam)*

I have not researched the customs and ways of the
Shari‘a,

Except to note that it is the denial of love which is true infidelity.

And in Urdu he says:

اگر ہو عشق، تو ہے کفر بھی مسلمانی
نہ ہو، تو مرد مسلمان بھی کافر و زندیق

Agar ho 'ishq to hai kufr bhi mussalmānī
Na ho to mard-i mussalmān bhi kāfir-o zindeeq.
(*Bāl-i Jibrīl*)

If there is love then even infidelity is Muslimhood
No love— and even the Muslim is an infidel and a heretic.

So love is one theme; sacrifice is another. And of course, from the Christian point of view that is very interesting. For Schimmel, as also for Iqbal, the story of Hallāj is very significant. Iqbal has interpreted Hallāj in a pantheistic light in his [Iqbal's] very early years. But after his exposure to personal idealism, as taught by his teachers, James Ward of Cambridge, and [J.M.E] McTaggart, also at Cambridge, he reinterpreted Hallāj's experience as personal continuity— *baqā ba'd al-fanā*—survival after an experience of mystical overwhelming. Schimmel in this instance quotes from Ghalib:

آن راز کہ در سینه نهان است، نہ وعظ است
بر دار توان گفت و بہ منبر نہ توان گفت

Aan rāz keh dar sīna nihān ast na wa'z ast
bar dār towān guft o ba- mimbar na-towān guft

This secret that is in our hearts is not a sermon.
It may be spoken from the gallows, or the cross— but
may not be spoken from the pulpit.

It is perhaps in this sense that the reference by Iqbal in his *Javid-Nāmeh* to the cross of Jesus is to be understood. He says:

زهرِبا در بادۀ گلفام اوست
ارّه و کرم و صلیب انعام اوست

Zahrha dar bāda-i-gulfaam-i oost
arra o kirm o saleeb in'aam-i oost.

Here he refers to Satan, who says (talking of God):
There are poisons in his lovely rosh wine;
and the saw of Zechariah, the worm of Job, and the
Cross of Jesus are His gifts.

Of course, this question of sacrifice is central amongst many
other Sufis. As Nazīri says:

کسی که کشته نه شد، از قبیله ما نیست

Kasi keh kushta na-shud, az qabila-i mā nceest.

[He who did not get killed, is not from our tribe]!

So these are the themes: union and separation (*wiṣāl* and *firāq*); separation in union (*firāq dar wiṣāl*); and love and sacrifice; they are central in Schimmel's view of Sufism. Her interest in the recovery of an activist Sufism, as in the work of Allama Iqbal, is worth noting, because it has a particular relationship to nascent nationalism in many parts of the Muslim world. She comments in one of her books also on the way in which, for example, the poetry of Yunus Emre in Turkey was interpreted as Turkish national poetry at a time when Sufism as such was being rejected. Schimmel also remained interested throughout in Sufism's relationship with people of other faiths—Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians. So also Iqbal was, for many years, interested as to how his vision of Islam could relate to other systems of belief. Thus he says in *Javīd-Nāmeḥ*:

کافر بیدار دل، پیش صنم
به ز دین داری که خفت اندر حرم

*Kāfir-i bidār dil pīsh-i šanam
beh zi dīndāri keh khoft andar ḥaram.*

That is: An idolater who is awake in front of an idol
is better than a believer who is asleep in the sanctuary.

Just one other point, Mr Chairman, if I may. That has to do with Professor Schimmel's interest in women and *taṣawwuf*. She refers to Rabi 'a of Basra; to the place of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Muslim Sufi devotion, particularly in Turkey – but not only that; and to the women saints in the South Asian subcontinent: all of these were matters of interest and of study for her, because they showed how women were the vehicles of spiritual tradition and of spiritual life in a way that men sometimes are not and cannot be.

Such are my somewhat disconnected thoughts about the work of Professor Schimmel. She was a great teacher and also one of my examiners. I am greatly indebted to her and I hope I have done at least *some* justice to her ideas and commitments.

Chairman's concluding remarks

Thank you very much, Dr Michael Nazir-Ali. I am sure if Professor Annemarie Schimmel had heard your lecture today, she would have passed you with flying colours! Bishop Michael is such an erudite speaker and student of Islam that I have often thought— and indeed I have been thinking now— that if he was not an Anglican Bishop, he might have been a Grand Mufti of Islam somewhere! His knowledge of Islam seems to be deeper and wider than many of us Muslims have. So may I congratulate you, Bishop, for such a deep study, and for such a comprehensive speech that brought it to life?

Dr Leonard Lewisohn

Our next speaker is Dr Leonard Lewisohn – a many-faceted scholar. He is a prodigious author, a translator, a lecturer in the area of Islamic studies, a specialist in Persian language – which he perfected during a stay of several years in Tehran – as well as in Sufi literature. At present, Dr Lewisohn is working as a Research Associate at the Centre of Near and Middle Eastern Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, as well as a Research Associate (Outreach Coordinator) and Lecturer in Persian at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. Dr Lewisohn's published works include *Beyond Faith and Fidelity: the Sufi Poetry and Teachings of Mahmud Shabistari* (London, 1993); a critical edition of *Divan-i Muhammad Shirin Maghribi* (Tehran, 1993); and several works of translation on Persian Sufism. He has also edited *The Heritage of Sufism* in three volumes (Oxford, 1999) and contributed articles to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, to *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, and to various academic journals. His present research project is on the esoteric traditions of Islam.

On a personal note : I first met Dr Lewisohn in October 1995, when he spoke in our Academy's international seminar-cum-festival entitled 'Iqbal and the Fine Arts : The Heritage of Islamic Creativity', held in the Barber Institute of Fine Art at the University of Birmingham in the presence of HRH Princess Sumayya bint El-Hassan. He spoke with great erudition on 'Mystical Music and Audition (*Sama*' and *Raqs*) in the Persian Sufi Tradition' (which was followed by a beautiful *danse mystique* - based on a theme of Maulana Rumi's - by Nahid Siddiqui and ensemble). Then, earlier this year, when I was translating Iqbal's *Gulshan-i RŌz-i Jadīd*— a kind of reply to Shaykh Mahmud Shabistari's *Gulshan-i RŌz* (AD 1317), Dr Lewisohn was kind enough to present to me as gifts not only a copy of his opus, *Beyond Faith and Fidelity*, but also a copy of the original *Gulshan-i RŌz* in Persian— which I had found it hard to locate in this country. I conclude by remarking that I have seldom come across a literary researcher who is as meticulous and thorough as Dr Leonard Lewisohn— who, incidentally, is busy putting together no fewer than four books on various Sufi themes simultaneously at present!

SCHOLAR'S SHIELD, POETESS' VEIL: ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL AND THE MYSTICAL DIMENSIONS OF ISLAM¹

Dr. Leonard Lewisohn
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Preface

Ladies and Gentlemen, esteemed guests and speakers, I would like to thank Professor Saeed Durrani, Chariman of the Iqbal Academy, U.K, for inviting me to speak this evening to you on the subject of the late Professor Annemarie Schimmel. I suppose it is enough thanks to him if I recall to you all an occasion some years ago when I was discussing the activities of the indefatigable Prof. Durrani with the late Prof. Schimmel. As I was praising his work, she replied, "We need more people like him."

The title of my talk this evening was actually poetically inspired by, and based upon, three of Prof. Schimmel's books:

- A. *Make a Shield from Wisdom: Selected Verses from Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Divān* (1993)
- B. *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam* (1982)
- C. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (1975)

¹ The above is the original version of the lecture given by Dr Lewisohn at the Seminar. He was too busy to prepare a revised version – so it is printed here with only some minimal editing retouches by the Editor – whom Dr Leonard Lewisohn may hold responsible for any (hopefully, minor) errors of omission or commission! – *Ed.*

The titles of these books, I think, actually reflect some of fundamental facets of Prof. Schimmel's character. Putting it simply:

- A. She shielded herself by the shield of Islamic learning and wisdom (*hikmat*)
- B. She was simultaneously veiled and adorned herself by the Veil of Sufi Poetry
- C. She delighted herself by Sufism or Islamic mysticism.

I will elaborate each of these facets of her personality— the veil, the shield, and the mystical dimension of her character— one by one below; but in brief, one can say that she fought all of life's battles using as her shield the wisdom gleaned from the various Muslim cultures of the world, and that the battle she fought was always in defence of the *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. At this juncture, perhaps it will not be too out of place to give a brief overview of Prof. Schimmel's contribution to the study of Persian and Persianate poetry, Islamic Studies, and Sufism.

I. ACADEMIC OVERVIEW

Harvard Professor Annemarie Schimmel, who died in Bonn, Germany, on January 26th 2003 at the age of 80, was one of the world's foremost experts on Islamic Studies, Persian poetry and Sufism. She composed literally hundreds of articles and books on Islamic history, art, theology, poetry, calligraphy, and mysticism— and has also translated Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu and Sindhi poetry into German and English verse.

Prof. Schimmel authored over 150 books and pamphlets (at least that is what they numbered in the bibliography), not to mention some 500 articles in edited collections and encyclopaedias. As an editor of the *Encyclopedia of Religion* she composed some fourteen articles on subjects ranging from "Calligraphy— Islamic Calligraphy" to "RamTn Lull;" she also contributed articles to the *Encyclopedia of Islam* on items such as "Mughals— Religious Life" and "Iqbal, Muhammad;" to the *Encyclopedia Iranica* she contributed some seven articles. During her retirement years alone (1992-2003), she produced no

fewer than forty works, including her autobiography (completed in 2002).

Let me just provide a brief list of Schimmel's three major types of publications. (I have limited myself to her works in English, since given the time constraints of my talk, to list those in German and other languages would be quite lengthy.)

SURVEY OF SCHIMMEL'S PUBLICATIONS ON SUFISM

A list of some of her books treating Sufi themes is as follows:

- A. *Pain and Grace: A Study of Two Mystical Writers of Eighteenth-Century Muslim India: Mir Dard and Shah Abdul Latif* (1976)
- B. Her Persian edition of Daylami's *Sirat-i Ibn Khafif*.
- C. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (1975)
- D. *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalaloddin Rumi* (1978)
- E. *I am Wind, You are Fire: Life and Works of Rumi* (1992)
- F. A German translation of Rumi's *Discourses*
- G. A German translation of Corbin's *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*
- H. A critical edition (1955) of the Persian translation by Rukn al-Dīn Yahyā bin Junayd al-Shīrāzī of the Abū al-Ḥasan al-Daylami's *Sirat al-Shāykh al-Kabīr Abū 'Abdullah Ibn Khafif al-Shirāzī* (d. 981)

There are of course other works, but the above are to my mind the main ones.

SURVEY OF SCHIMMEL'S PUBLICATIONS ON PERSIANATE AND PERSIAN POETRY

In addition to articles too numerous to list, some of her main books on Persian poetry and literature are:

- A. *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam* (1982)
- B. *A Two-Colored Brocade: the Imagery of Persian Poetry* (1992).
- C. *Make a Shield from Wisdom: Selected Verses from Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Dīvān*
- D. A translation of Iqbal's *Javīd-nāma* into German verse and

into Turkish prose.

- E. An anthology of translations of Attar (in German) (1999)

SURVEY OF SCHIMMEL'S PUBLICATIONS ON ISLAMIC STUDIES

A brief list of her books treating general Islamic studies and history are:

- A. *Gabriel's Wing: A Study of the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Brill 1963)
- B. *Islamic Calligraphy* (1970)
- C. *Pain and Grace: a Study of Two Mystical Writers of Eighteenth— century India: Mir Dard and Shah Abdul Latif* (Brill 1976)
- D. *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (1980)
- E. *Islam in India and Pakistan* (1982)
- F. *And Muhammad is His Messenger: the Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (1985)
- G. *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture* (NYU Press 1984)
- H. In 1992, she delivered the prestigious Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh, later published (1994) as *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*.
- I. *The Mystery of Numbers* (Oxford: OUP 1993)

This list of course doesn't include many of her German-language books, which have yet to be translated into English, such as those on Muslim names, Islamic theories of dreams, etc. To this list should also probably be added her own autobiography, which has been translated into English by Karin Mittmann; and two volumes of essays written as tributes to her teaching and work by fifty of her fellow colleagues and students were printed in 1994 in her honour in Germany and the States:

- 1. *Annemarie Schimmel Festschrift*, ed. M. E. Subtelny.
- 2. *God is Beautiful and He Loves Beauty: Festschrift in Honour of Annemarie Schimmel*, ed. A. Giese and J.-C. Bergel (1994).

II. A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE OF PROF. SCHIMMEL

In my obituary of her in the London *Times*, I wrote: "She was unique in her field, outpacing her illustrious contemporaries and orientalist forebears. In breadth of learning, knowledge of a

diversity of Western and Oriental languages, sheer volume of publications, erudition in the comparative history of religion and in the wide geographical and intellectual scope of her studies and interests she surpassed all her colleagues. If her friends stood in awe of her, those who had the folly to dare become her foes always came off looking as intellectual pigmies before her stature.”

Since these assertions may appear over-wrought or exaggerated to some of you not acquainted with her accomplishments, I would like to summarize her career in brief, to show how extraordinary her achievements actually were:

- A. She was appointed a lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Marburg when she was only 23 years old, teaching there between 1946-54.
- B. She received her 1st doctorate (Dr. Phil.) in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Islamic Art from University of Berlin in 1941 at age 19, and her 2nd doctorate (*Habilitation*) in the History of Religions from the University of Marburg in 1951 at age 29.
- C. She lectured in German, taught in Turkish at Ankara University for five years (in 1954 to become Professor (aged 32!) of History of Religion in the Faculty of Islamic Theology at Ankara University, where she remained, lecturing in Turkish, for five years until 1959). She also could lecture in a variety of European languages, including Swedish.
- D. Upon returning to Europe, she was appointed Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Bonn (1961-64) before accepting, in 1966, an invitation to teach at Harvard University.
- E. She served at Harvard first as Lecturer in Indo-Muslim Culture: 1966-70, and later as full Professor of Indo-Muslim Culture (1970-92) for nearly two and a half decades.
- F. She gave a number of important lecture series: the Kevorkian Lectures at New York University (1982); the Bampton Lectures at Columbia University (1992); and the Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh (1992). She also served as the first woman President of the International Association for the History of Religions (1980-1990)

- G. On the occasion of her retirement from Harvard in 1992, to celebrate her lifetime of teaching, two volumes of essays, written as tributes to her teaching and work by fifty of her fellow colleagues and students, were printed in 1994 in her honour in Germany and the United States.
- H. In addition to some 500 articles in edited collections and encyclopaedias, Schimmel authored over 150 books and pamphlets. During her retirement years alone (1992-2003), she produced no fewer than forty works, including her autobiography (completed only last year: 2002). She also wrote innumerable prefaces to books by students and colleagues and penned countless popular articles in newspapers and local journals.
- I. She composed and conversed with fluency in at least ten other languages. Having the folly once to vaunt the superiority of the computer over the typewriter before her, I was given the robust reply that “when you can read 25 languages and write letters to people in 17 of them, what does one need a computer for?”

Underlying these external achievements in the academic world was an extremely warm personality. She was a gift-giver (she sent me a copy of the *Mathnawi*); wrote beautiful postcards and letters, full of poems and erudite quotations.

She was the antithesis of your average cold-blooded and icy-hearted female German academic. She admitted in her autobiography that after experiencing the warmth and friendship of people in Turkey, “Germany appeared cold and unfriendly to me.” She complained at the hard-heartedness and insensitivity of her colleagues in the Academy who “did not like a young woman who, to add to this in itself negative aspect, had published a book of verse translations of Oriental poetry, not to mention a volume of German verse in Persian style and who was— even worse!— fascinated by the mystical dimensions of Islam instead of relying solely on the hard external facts, be it history or philology.”

She brought her friends into the warmth of her own heart, making them privy to her own loves and interests, making them feel loved and even honoured by her interest. In fact, her success

in the world of letters and scholarship was due as much to the large circle of Friends that she cultivated and charmed by her company and through her extensive correspondence, as much as by any of the books she published and the lectures that she delivered. She was as much loved for her warmth and friendly willingness to walk a few steps alongside ordinary students and colleagues, as she was respected and held in awe because of her fame as a scholar and the incredible erudition of her publications.

In this way, she wove us all into her ‘veil’, an aspect of her personality that will be discussed below.

While all of her letters to me were full of tales of lectures given and to be given, books written or being written, she was also very humble, and ready to admit errors in her works, if and when they did occur.

Had I the time, I could tell the story of her lecture in *The Heritage of Sufism* on “The Vernacular Tradition in Persianate Sufi Poetry in Mughal India,” and how I composed several drafts of it.

On July 23, 1998, she wrote to me: “you are a true Sufi to survive my constant wishes for changes and still write such nice letters to me! Thank you! The new version seems to me fine... I am struggling my way through life, through manuscripts and lectures, that is— I am longing for London and hope that the good Lord will find a chance for me to visit my friends there.” She was a devoted friend, always sending postcards and greetings, whenever she could.

III. SCHIMMEL–THE POETESS’ VEIL

The idea of the veil is very important in Sufism, and although Prof. Schimmel does not explain what she meant by the title of her book devoted to “mystical poetry in Islam” (*As Through a Veil*), however I think that this verse from Jami’s *Lawayih* expresses the idea very well:

با گلرخ خویش گفتم، ای غنچه دهان

هر لحظه می‌پوش چهره چون عشوه گران
زد خنده که من به عکس خوبان جهان
در پرده عیان باشم، و بی پرده نهان

I said to my rose-cheeked beauty: "O you whose mouth is like a rose-bud,

"Don't veil yourself every moment like flirting coquettes."

She laughed and said, "But I am completely the opposite of earthly beauties,

For I can be seen clearly through a veil; but without a veil, I am hidden,"

In the same way, I think we can say Prof. Schimmel's life is most accessible, most visible, through the veil of her writings, because these writing constitute her veritable 'lifting of the veil': a *Kashf al-mahjūb*, as Hujwiri calls it. God says in the Koran: "It belongs not to any mortal that God should speak to him, except by revelation, or from behind a veil, or, that He should send a messenger" (42: 51) Ibn 'Arabī comments in the *Futūḥāt* (III. 214: 25) that "There is nothing in existence but veils hung down. Acts of perception attach themselves only to veils, which leave traces in the owner of the eye that perceives them." (Chittick, SDG 110-11).

We know that in Sufism, the best way to lift the veil is through poetic imagery. Prof. Schimmel understood quite well that the reason most of the great Muslim poets were Sufis was because it is poetry that provides the best way to express the secrets of human love and metaphysical divine love, and also is the best way to awaken the faculty of intuition, so that by an imaginative leap, one can lift the veil of the imagination through the imagination. That is why she entitled her book on "mystical poetry in Islam": *As Through a Veil*, for the vocabulary of the Sufis is addressed to the imagination not to reason, and it is by the imagination and intuition that the veil is lifted, so that one

passes, as it were, "through the veil".²

So that is what I meant by Prof. Schimmel's "Poetess' Veil"

Speaking of Prof. Schimmel's activities as a poetess would demand a lecture in itself, but I think I am qualified somewhat to discuss her poetry written in English, since I had the opportunity and honour of working together with Prof. Schimmel on editing her book of poems: *Nightingales Under the Snow* for publication. Of the book's title, she wrote to me that it "seems to sum up the whole issue of symbol and truth, or silence and word" (letter of June 14, 1994). We worked together very well and had a lengthy correspondence in the course of my editing of her poetry and she accepted "almost all of [my] suggestions" in one letter (Aug. 7, 1994),

She chose the following image of the word "Love" (*ishq*) written by her friend Dr Shams Anvari, to go on the cover.³



Out of this we eventually produced this cover⁴ which she thought was "ingenious, and looks very lovable." Unfortunately, the publisher in later editions decided to discard this cover and republished the book without her permission with a different cover. It was in character for her not to ask for royalties for the book, nor even to ever demand a contract, and only to request that a number of copies be sent to a list of about 30 friends; and

² Cf. William Chittick, "The Paradox of the Veil in Sufism", in Elaine Wolfson (ed.), *Rending the Veil: Concealment and Secrecy in the History of Religions* (New York: Seven Bridges Press 1999), p. 62

³ Here the speaker showed an overhead projection of the word 'Love' written in Persian Calligraphy.

⁴ Here the speaker held up the book for the audience to see.

for herself she asked only to have a modest number of the books.

I bring this image up because it actually reflects the most important aspect of her creative, and yes, even her intellectual personality— OVE.

Of course, we know next to nothing *about her own love life*, little of which is divulged in her autobiographical writings; but she is certainly one of the most profound scholars in the field of Islamic Studies to write *about LOVE in Islam and in Sufism*. In the introduction to her marvellous article on “Eros— Heavenly and Not so Heavenly— in Sufi Literature and Life,” — which incidentally contains the best short account of the attitudes towards sexuality, asceticism vs. libertinism, and male-female relations in Sufism available in English— she notes that when she was 26 years old she had translated the famous Bektashi novel *Nur Baba*, written in Turkish in 1922, into German. The book blended religious fervour with earthly love, recounting the story of a Sufi Shaykh seducing a lady in Istanbul society. Although the language of the book itself was “chaste, beautiful and inoffensive,” she still incurred the wrath of one her female colleagues at the University of Marburg for being so “irreligious.” It is not insignificant that this article which begins with this personal anecdote, concludes by citing this verse by Ghalib:

*The secret which is in the breast is not a sermon
You can say it on the gallows, but not on the pulpit.*

In *Nightingales Under the Snow*, she collected several small books of poetry into her last major collection of verse. The chapters in this work were on themes such as “Variations on Rumi’s Thought,” “Letters to Nowhere,” “New England,” “Journeys,” “The Great Mughals,” “Sufi Shrines,” “Impressions from India,” and “Songs from Sind.” It is in the poems in “Letters to Nowhere,” and “New England.” that describe the LOVE that sustained her scholarship.

Although none of her poems in English (which was, after all, just a second language for her) are particularly good verse— and may, at the best, be compared with similar poems written by

other orientalist of comparable stature, such as A. J. Arberry, R.A. Nicholson, or Martin Lings—yet all the poems do reveal in intimate detail the emotions and feelings which sustained and filled her scholarly writings. There is one poem in particular that I think holds the key to her thought and life. And in this poem we enter the mystery depicted in the calligraphy shown above.⁵

IV. BENEATH THE POETESS' VEIL: INTO THE INTERIOR GARDEN OF THE SCHIMMELIAN VISION

In an essay which she wrote on "The Figure of Yusuf in Rumi's Poetry," Prof. Schimmel cites these lines from Book VI: 4023ff. of the Mathnawī, on lovesick Zulaykhā and how she concealed Yūsuf's name in everything:

چون بگفتی موم ز آتش نرم شد
این بدی کان یار با ما گرم شد
ور بگفتی مه بر آمد بنگرید
ور بگفتی سبز شد آن شاخ بید
ور بگفتی برگها خوش می طپند
ور بگفتی خوش همی سوزد سپند
ور بگفتی گل ببلبل راز گفت
ور بگفتی شه سر شهناز گفت
ور بگفتی چه همایونست بخت
ور بگفتی که بر افشانید رخت
ور بگفتی هست نانها بی نمک
ور بگفتی عکس می گردد فلک
ور بگفتی که بدرد آمد سرم
ور بگفتی درد سر شد خوشترم
گر ستودی اعتناق او بدی

⁵ The author then read the poem, "There is no Love" on p. 40, beginning:

*There is no love
But for the First Beloved*

ور نکوبیدی فراق او بدے
صد هزاران نام گر برہم زدے
قصد او و خواہ او یوسف بدی

*And when she said: The wax is melting softly!
That was to say: My friend was kind to me.
And when she said: Look, how the moon is rising
And when she said: The willow is now green!
And when she said: The leaves they are a-trembling
And when she said: How nicely burns the rue!
And when she said: The birds sang for the roses
And when she said: Beat firmly all my rugs!
And when she said: The bread is all unsalted!
And when she said: The spheres are going wrong...
She praised something – that meant “His sweet embracing;”
She blamed something – That meant: “He’s far away!”
And when she piled up names and names and names all–
Her sole intention was but Yūsuf’s name...*

About these verses, she remarks in that same essay that:

“Just as Zulaykhā meant Yūsuf with every word of hers, Rumi meant Shams with every tale, every word, every verse, and his name– the name of *Yūsuf-i khūshnām*– sustained him in times of spiritual dearth, in the long nights of suffering– Yusuf’s (that is Shams al-Dīn’s) name was for him like a cloak in which he wrapped himself completely, so much so as to sing many of his most powerful poems in his name. He had become his mirror, reflecting his radiance through which the Divine Beauty was revealed to him.”

This sentiment of course is exactly identical to the feelings voiced in Prof. Schimmel’s own poem ‘There is no Love’ read above, which is what I alluded to in my title in referring to “the poetess’ veil.”

There were two aspects to Prof. Schimmel’s personality: the lover and the warrior, and there were two things by which Prof. Schimmel protected herself against the incursions of the secular

world on her spirit: the first was the veil of poetry and the other was the shield of scholarship. Each of these was a mighty weapon; the former was woven and the latter wielded. In her poem entitled “Zulaykha’s Third Letter to Yusuf,” p. 21, she actually lets her veil drop, admitting this to be the case: I called the best painters...

So Prof. Schimmel’s own writings are intended to both mirror her soul and to veil her spirit. That she understood this quite well on the intellectual level as well, lest one think it was some kind of subconscious act performed for ulterior psychological purposes, is quite obvious. In fact, I believe that she consciously wished to turn herself into a “Mirror of an Eastern Moon”, which is in fact the title of her first book of poems. In *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*, she describes the moon as being “a symbol of the unattainable divine beauty which is reflected everywhere... to compare one’s beloved to the radiant moon is the highest praise that one can bestow on him or her.” (pp. 14-15) In *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*, she wrote:

The mirror’s secret is perhaps most beautifully alluded to in a story which Mawlānā Rumi repeated at least thrice in his work: someone wanted to bring a gift to Yusuf, the manifestation of Absolute Beauty, but the only present that he could think of was a mirror so that the beloved could admire his own beauty in it... The mirror... is a feminine object, the purest vessel of reception: thus, the story of Yusuf and the mirror is at the same time the story of his relationship with Zulaykhā, who wanted to come as close as possible to the Eternal Beauty. *The loving soul, in its mirror-like quality, assumes the receptive, feminine role just as the world, created as God’s mirror, appears as feminine. It was perhaps the subconscious understanding of the mystery of the mirror as a feminine receptacle that was needed to manifest the masculine creative power which made it so important in mystical thought* (p. 32). Italics are mine.

Prof. Schimmel’s phenomenological approach to Islam was actually her own very feminine way of becoming a moon and of mirroring that light of Eastern Moon, that Eternal Beauty: hence,

her constant reliance on citation of poems and tales to illustrate the beauty of Islam. Her citations of these poems, her weaving together of such tales and anecdotes was, as it were, her way of holding a mirror up to the Islamic tradition, thus letting its brilliance affect the reader as it has brightened and illuminated her own life. It is for this reason that she referred often to her students as being her "children," because she was, in fact, very much their intellectual mother—whether or not they were willing or able to consciously acknowledge this fact, owing to pride and conceit. In her autobiographical ACLS⁶ lecture, "A Life of Learning", delivered in 1983, she describes that it was only thanks to her students at Harvard that she survived the first years in Boston:

Students from India and Pakistan, from the Carolinas and from the West Coast, from Iran and from the Arab world, Jesuits and Muslims as well as Buddhists. They were my children, and they supported me when I went through phases of despair, and trying to help them solve some of their problems (not only scholarly ones but personal ones as well) helped me overcome some of my own problems. And as I had seen Istanbul through the eyes of poets so I learned something about "the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls" through E.E. Cumming's verse.⁷

Love of poetry was the fundamental driving force of Prof. Schimmel's personality and literary life. In her first chapter of *Mystical Dimension*, she admits that her study of Sufism "is tinged by a personal predilection for mystical poetry derived from the large area of Iranian cultural influence." (p. 12) Once, while having dinner with her in a restaurant in London after some speaker had delivered a lecture, the subject turned to poetry and I found myself vying with others around the table to cite verses appropriate to the subjects being debated. She exclaimed, "How fortunate we are to be able to sit here and recite poetry!" And in the Preface to *A Two-Colored Brocade: the Imagery of Persian Poetry* (1992), she observes how

⁶ American Council of Learned Societies.—Ed.

⁷ A Life of Learning (1993) p. 12.

important poetry was to her studies and to her soul:

I am lucky in that I have always found friends with whom I could discuss poetry. Thus I came to know the neighbourhoods of Istanbul through verses that classical and modern Turkish poets had composed about their beloved city, and my journeys through the deserts of Sind have been much enlivened by the recitation of poetry by my travel companions, as have been travels through the mountains of Afghanistan or long drives to the medieval Muslim cities in the Deccan. The same happened in the rose gardens of Shiraz and under the starry skies of Bangladesh. Poetry was in the air, was part and parcel of life, — and a well— placed verse could enchant everyone, be it a member of the Pakistani government or an illiterate old village woman in a Turkish village. Because I have experienced Persian and Persianate poetry as a living force, I have not attempted to construct literary theories but rather tried simply to show some of its peculiarities in the hope that the reader will learn to enjoy the variegated colours and forms of this art.” (p. ix)

V. THE SCHOLAR’S SHIELD OF KNOWLEDGE

When she cited this verse from Nasir-i Khusraw in *Make a Shield from Wisdom* (p. 35):

*Make a shield from knowledge, for there is
No stronger shield against calamities.
Whoever owns the shield of knowledge
Will not suffer the blows of Time.*

She added, “knowledge is the only means to protect oneself from the vicissitudes of Fate.” These lines were equally true of Prof. Schimmel, for whom the struggle for learning was fundamental in life, since knowledge was for her the food of life. In her autobiography she describes how she had written her doctoral dissertation on Mamluk history during the Second World War in Germany; and after the war was over in 1946, having just earned her doctorate (aged 23) on Mamluk history she tells us that she was invited to give her inaugural address at the University of Marburg. She writes that she enjoyed teaching there immensely, “and although we had barely anything to eat, *we ate and drank*

knowledge. Every class— be it Arabic, Persian, or Turkish, or first ventures into the history of Islamic literature and art— was an adventure.” (Italics mine.)

Reading her autobiographical ACLS lecture, one can feel the passion that the pursuit of knowledge inspired in her. She was never a person to pursue money; and to my understanding her ruling passion was the pursuit of knowledge. She herself described to me how “I am struggling my way through life, through manuscripts and lectures, that is” (in a letter written to me in 1998). Her struggle was always to acquire knowledge, which was as much a mystical and a spiritual knowledge as secular, academic learning. This she admitted at the end of her autobiographical ACLS lecture, where she describes how her mother always tried “to check my tendency to enter too deeply into dreams of mystical love, being supersensitive herself, she was afraid lest I lose my sobriety and my critical mind.”

This leads me to discuss the third dimension of her personality— the third aspect of my title— which is:

VI. SCHIMMEL AND THE MYSTICAL DIMENSIONS OF ISLAM

She fell in love with Turkey, and having made one visit there in 1952, returned again there in 1953 “without a grant,” as she said. In Turkey she became acquainted with Islamic mysticism in some experiential way, for she writes that:

During my second stay (1953) new friends helped me to gain access to another part of Turkish culture, to the best traditions of Turkish Sufism. There were successful businessmen who yet would spend night after night in silent meditation, and there was Samiha Ayverdi, the towering figure among mystics and writers, author of numerous books and articles in which she conjures up the traditional life. In her house I was introduced to the culture of Ottoman Turkey, and she and her family opened my eyes to the eternal beauty of Islamic fine arts.”⁸

The main focus of Schimmel’s studies was Sufism. After R.A. Nicholson, in the 20th century at least, she should be

⁸ A Life of Learning (1993) p. 7

counted as the Western world's leading expert on Rumi (d. 1273, "an unfailing source of inspiration and consolation" to her, as she said), and upon this supreme Persian Sufi poet she composed several major studies, including: *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Work of Jalaloddin Rumi* (1978); *I am Wind, You are Fire: Life and Works of Rumi* (1992); and a German translation of Rumi's *Discourses*. It was in Turkey that she entered deeply into the Sufi Muslim universe out of which Rumi's poetry was inspired.

Personally, she favoured the esoteric over the exoteric dimensions of Islamic Studies, noting with approval that Sufism is the "interiorization of Islam, a personal experience of the central mystery of Islam, that of *tauḥīd*, to declare that God is one." (MD⁹, p. 17). Prof. Schimmel's unique understanding of knowledge and her interiorization of her own scholarly studies of Sufism, reached the point that she even could 'taste' personally the learning that she had outwardly studied and acquired. In basing her knowledge on intuitive heart - savour (*dhawq*), Prof. Schimmel shared the trait of her beloved Persian Sufi poets. Her intellectual learning was steeped in an ocean of warm and intense feminine sensitivity and feeling. She had also learned the old Sufi trick of dictating passages from the secret book of the heart ("And I weave ever new silken garments of words / only to hide you..." as she says in one of her poems), so that audiences fell at her feet as she discoursed without notes in English, German and Turkish (with notes in Arabic, French, and Persian). She would close her eyes tightly when lecturing, clutching her handbag lightly, and reel off the chronicles of kings, the verses of poets and seers, the tales of lovers, and the accounts of mystical theology and doctrine of Islamic mystics and philosophers with eloquent fluency, sometimes for hours on end.

In her autobiographical ACLS lecture [1983], she distils some 50 years of the pursuit of learning and study into the following reflections:

Although it seems that the time of learning might now draw to a

⁹ *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. –Ed.

close, yet I understand that every moment – even the most unpleasant one – teaches me something and that every experience should be incorporated into my life to enrich it. For there is no end to learning as there is no end to life, and when Iqbal says in a daring formulation: “Heaven is no holiday” he expresses the view, dear to Goethe and other thinkers, that even eternal life will be a constant process of growing, and, that is, learning—earning in whatever mysterious way something about the unfathomable mysteries of the Divine, which manifests itself under various signs... Learning is, to me, transforming knowledge and experience into wisdom and love.¹⁰

She emphasizes that “Sufism reflects the different attitudes of Muslims towards the ‘world’; thus we find among the mystics, anti-worldly ascetics and active fighters for the glory of their faith, austere preachers of repentance and enthusiastic hymnodists praising God’s eternal loving-kindness, builders of highly sophisticated theosophical systems, and enraptured lovers of Eternal Beauty.” Despite the variety of these differing approaches, however, Prof. Schimmel asserted that “the aims of all the mystics are essentially the same.” (p. 24), backing this up by quoting with approval Henry Corbin’s dictum here: “the religious conscience of Islam is centered on a fact of meta-history.” (*ibid.*)

From the above reflections, we can see that she was far from being exclusivistic in her approach to the diversity of the expressions of Sufism and Islam, nor biased in preferring one mystical method over another. Obviously, however, given the importance of LOVE and poetry in her personality and scholarship, she favoured what she called the “eros-oriented type of religion” over the “nomos-oriented core of Islam.”

Having taught Sufism in an academic context myself for many years now, and having worked with original Arabic and Persian manuscripts and books concerning Sufism for the past 25-odd years, there are several key points about Prof. Schimmel’s *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* which make it into a

¹⁰ A Life of Learning (1993) p. 15.

book of a category of its own:

Not only does she use many of the important Arabic and Persian primary sources: such as

1. The *Risāla* (Treatise on Sufism) by Abū'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī of Nishapur (d. 465/1072)
2. The *Sad maydān* (One Hundred Fields) and *Manāzil al-sā'irīn* (Stages of the Wayfarers) of 'Abdu'llah Anṣārī of Herat (d. 481/1089)
3. The *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* (Revivification of the Science of Religion) of Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111) of Tūs
4. The *Tamhīdāt* of 'Ayn al-Qudāt Hamadānī (executed 526/1132)
5. The *Sharḥ-i shatḥiyyāt* (Commentary on the Paradoxes of the Sufis) by Rūzbihān Baqlī of Shiraz (d. 606/1210)

But Prof. Schimmel integrated all of these sources in a very creative and original manner. In the realm of scholarship it is a relatively easy thing to translate a Sufi text written, say, in the 13th century and to write an introduction to it and its author; but it is the rare scholar who can actually integrate the ideas and thoughts of that author with other mystical authors living in the 9th or 19th centuries, and within the same paragraph, in an almost offhand manner, show how they were intimately connected and inter-related. One might say that, after Henry Corbin, she was the first truly cosmopolitan scholar in the history of Western Orientalist study of Islam.

It is this cosmopolitan aspect of Prof. Schimmel's writing on Islam's mystical dimensions or Sufism that puts her work in a separate category of its own. She was at ease comparing John Donne to Hafiz, Sa'di to Rilke, Attar to Francis Thomson, Muhammad Iqbal to E.E. Cummings, etc., whereas many, if not most, other contemporary scholars still tend to treat world literatures (whether these be Urdu, Persian, English, or French literatures) as separate, isolated, insular, watertight compartments, whose images, metaphors and ideas are somehow unrelated to each other.

Not so Prof. Schimmel: her scholarship spanned, and often

integrated, the fields of Middle Eastern Studies, Religious Studies, Comparative Mysticism, and Literary Studies, not to mention Iranology, Turcology, and Arabic-language studies. Her mind, aided by her massive literary erudition in the original texts written in languages that most scholars hardly ever bother to read in translation, was simply too vast and broad to be limited by artificially constructed academic boundaries of “sub-disciplines” and “fields” of study. This universalistic approach is particularly apparent in her *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* [1994] “a landmark in bringing Islamic Studies into the mainstream of religious studies.” in the words of Prof. William Chittick.

* * * * *

Finally, I would like to underline the contemporary value of her *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* [1975], which still remains (for its size) the most comprehensive historical and doctrinal study on the subject. Many of its chapters, even after nearly three decades since it was written, and the incredible revolution that has taken place in scholarship on, and study of, Sufism (her book having been virtually the first major and comprehensive study of Sufism) since then, remain the definitive word on their respective topics. Because of her cosmopolitan breadth of study, which combined both the brilliance of the historian of Islam with the scholar of comparative mysticism, even after thirty years, the basic premises of her studies of the following topics remain unchallenged:

- Her historical outline of classical Sufism in its formative period (pp. 1-97) is still the best general account available in any European language of the subject, the premises of which remain basically unchallenged.
- Her chapter on ‘The Path’ (pp. 98-186) is the most insightful treatment of the topic that I have ever read, in any language. To my mind, this chapter deserves to be ranked alongside any of the great classics of the Sufi tradition.
- Although her study of Theosophical Sufism (chap. 6: pp. 259-86) has been more or less superseded by the great renaissance in the study of Ibn ‘Arabi (and publications not

available when she wrote) that has occurred in the past two decades, she was still the first scholar to clarify why *waḥdat al-wūjūd* should and cannot be translated as 'pantheism', integrating the views of Massignon, Corbin and Nasr on this subject in a very subtle and convincing manner. Annemarie Schimmel criticizes Western scholars of Islam who, looking without too much study at "enthusiastic expressions of unity, found in most of the Persian mystics in more or less outspoken form," hastily conclude that "Sufism is nothing but measureless pantheism."¹¹

Her discussion of the difference between the mystical and erotic approaches to Persian lyrical poetry in chap. 7 ("The Rose and the Nightingale: Persian and Turkish Mystical Poetry"), still remains to my mind the most balanced treatment ever written on this topic, and only a person whose goal in learning was the acquisition of wisdom could have written lines like this:

"There is scarcely a verse in the poetry of the greatest masters of Persian, Turkish, and Urdu poetry that does not reflect, in some way, the religious background— of Islamic culture; it is like the pools in the courtyards of the mosques, in which the grandeur of the huge building is mirrored, its beauty enhanced by the strange effects of tiny waves or of verdure springing forth from the shallow water.

It seems futile, therefore, to look for either a purely mystical or a purely profane interpretation of the poems of Ḥāfiẓ, Jāmī, or 'Irāqī— their ambiguity is intended, the oscillation between the two levels of being is consciously maintained (sometimes even a third level may be added), and the texture and flavor of the meaning of a word may change at any moment, much as the color of the tiles in a Persian mosque varies in depth according to the hour of the day. One cannot derive a mystical system out of Persian or Turkish poetry or see in it an expression of experiences to be taken at face value. The opalescence of Persian poetry has caused much misunderstanding in the West, for no translation can reflect the closely interwoven, glittering

¹¹ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 147.

symbolism that lies behind each word of a hemistich or a verse.

Persian lyrics would never have acquired their peculiar charm without the Sufi theories; these are the background upon which this poetry develops, and the tension between the worldly and the religious interpretation of life is resolved, in the poems of the outstanding masters of this art, in a perfect harmony of the spiritual, psychic, and sensual components. ... The phenomenon of mystical love that underlies this development is one of the most fascinating aspects of Sufism: a transcendent and absolute object is made the goal of every thought and feeling, so that love gains absolute primacy in the soul and mind of the lover. The spiritual life becomes so highly intensified, so delicately differentiated, that it almost develops into an art of its own. The expression of these subtle and basically ineffable feelings of mystical love forms the content of some of the finest books on love ever written in the Persian language. Sometimes such a refined and deepened love would find its object in a human being, in which the fullness of divine beauty and radiant glory seemed to be reflected, and out of this attitude the hybrid Persian mystical-erotic poetry developed." (MDI,¹² p. 288-89)

Lastly, another important contribution of this book [MDI*] can be found in the last chapter of the book on "Sufism in Indo-Pakistan," which was to span the three great world civilizations of the pre-modern world: Ottoman Turkish culture, Persian *courtesie* and language in Iran, and the descendants of the Timurid Turks who ruled over Mughal India. All of these Muslim powers, up until the 18th century, formed a "single far-flung diplomatic world." (Hodgson, *Venture*, III, 81). The ruling families of all three empires were Turks; but the language of all three, in the realm of diplomacy, was Persian. Prof. Schimmel's *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* remains to date the only work on Sufism to reunite the mystical literatures of these three world empires and cultures again in a single volume, and to consider their contribution to the development of Islamic mysticism, in the various respective languages of the three empires: 1. Turkish,

¹² *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. -Ed.

* *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. -Ed.

2. Persian and 3. Urdu, Sindhi, Panjabi and Pashto. There were, and as far as I know, are no scholars whose net of linguistic, literary and cultural interests was spread so wide as that of Prof. Schimmel's *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*.

Chairman's concluding remarks:

Thank you Dr Lewisohn for your most illuminating talk. It was a speech that shone luminously, as it were, through the 'veil' of your scholarship!

Incidentally, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will find, downstairs in the foyer, a large collection of Professor Schimmel's books, put on display for your benefit by Messrs Arthur Probsthain, a leading Agency for the distribution of oriental and academic books in Britain. Please do take time to avail yourselves of this easy opportunity of acquiring Professor Schimmel's books, all in one place.

Dr David Matthews

Dr David Matthews— who is a Trustee of Iqbal Academy (UK)— was born and educated in London. Having studied French, Greek and Latin at school, he entered University College London, where he took a First Class degree in Classics. Thereafter he spent two years at Cambridge, doing research that required his learning Assyrian, Babylonian, Hebrew and Arabic languages.

Having decided to make Urdu the main subject of his career, he joined the Department of South Asia at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, where he taught Urdu, and later Nepali, for over 30 years. He has addressed international conferences all over the world, and delivered lectures in many universities and institutions of South Asia. He is a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society, and has so far published 17 books. Indeed, at this very moment, David Matthews and I are engaged in preparing an Anthology of Iqbal's Persian and Urdu poetry, which David has been translating in verse form— and which we hope will be a thing of both beauty and great joy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, after Professor Annemarie Schimmel herself (whose soul is probably present here in this room at this time), David Matthews bids fair to be the person who knows more languages than anyone else sitting in this room. I have counted some 23 languages in his repertoire, of which he can speak six fluently— apart from his native English! Professor Schimmel— as Dr Lewisohn has just told us— knew 25 languages: in 17 of which she could write letters and converse in. This reminds me that I had first met David Matthews at the same time as Professor Schimmel— during our Iqbal Centenary Festival in 1977 at the University of Birmingham. His lecture today, appropriately enough, is entitled: Annemarie Schimmel and Iqbal.

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL AND IQBAL

David Matthews

I first met Annemarie Schimmel in 1969, when we both attended a conference that was held in Lahore to mark the centenary of the death of the Urdu and Persian poet, Mirza Ghalib. At that time I was just beginning my career in Urdu, and even though I knew little of her works and scholarship, I was already well acquainted with her name and reputation. For a number of reasons I had spent a certain amount of my study-leave in Sindh. Annemarie had preceded me there and had apparently delivered a number of important lectures in Karachi and Hyderabad on the poetry of Shah 'Abdul Latif and other medieval Sindhi mystics. Sindhis have a deep love for their language and its literature, and often feel that its importance has been unjustly overlooked by scholars from other parts of the subcontinent and the West. When Annemarie spoke not only with affection but also with erudition on the subject of Sindh's most renowned poet, she was naturally received with something approaching adulation by her audiences. During the time I spent in Sindh, I heard her name over and over again from everyone I met. Her study of Sindhi, yet another language which she had learned to read with ease, culminated in her work *Pain and Grace*, a comparison of the mystic poetry of Shah 'Abdul Latif with that of the Delhi Sufi, Khwaja Mir Dard, which was published some ten years later.

I have always had a great admiration for linguists— that is those who can operate efficiently in a number of languages— and I considered my first meeting with Annemarie in Lahore a rare privilege indeed. After that time, we met each other frequently and often lectured together from the same stage. One of the most memorable times was in Brussels, where we both addressed a symposium dedicated to the life of the Quaid-i 'Azam, Mohammad 'Ali Jinnah.¹ If I remember little of the details of the conference, I always recall with great pleasure our visit to an excellent restaurant. Belgian cuisine is reputed to be one of the finest in the world and Annemarie in her appreciation of fine cooking was certainly no ascetic. On this occasion our conversation was of a worldly rather than esoteric nature.

One of the facets of Iqbal which most attracted Annemarie to his work was the emphasis he placed upon the alternating stages of *khalwa* and *jalwa*, 'seclusion' and 'outward manifestation'. The ability to spend long periods of time in contemplation and deep thought and then to communicate one's feelings to the world at large is often symbolized in Iqbal's verse by Moses as one to whom God talked and who proclaimed God's commandments to the world. These were indeed qualities which Annemarie possessed herself. It is no wonder that she admired them in Iqbal.

Perhaps one of the most lasting memories will be her visit to London University, when at our invitation she was asked to deliver a series of lectures and to conduct seminars on any subject of her choosing. This took place in the [nineteen] seventies when it was still possible to invite distinguished foreign scholars to display their knowledge and talents and, most important, to be sure of attracting a large audience.

Anyone who has seen Annemarie lecturing usually with eyes half closed and often without notes to guide her can imagine the reaction as she ranged over her wide canvas of scholarship and experience. Even those members of the audience who had no professional connections with the world of Islam appeared spellbound.

¹ Probably in 1976-7, to commemorate Jinnah's birth centenary.—Ed.

Over the last twenty-five years or so Annemarie was a frequent visitor to London. As well as listening to her lectures we often had the pleasure of her company at informal *soirees* in the house of her great friend, Ziauddin Shakeb, who always contrived to entice her from her state of *khalwa* into the parallel sphere of *jalwa*. Such evenings will be very much missed by all those who knew her.

Annemarie's interests in the world of Islam encompassed truly phenomenal dimensions. Initially a scholar of Turkish and Arabic, she progressed through Persian to Urdu and many other relevant languages of the subcontinent, for which she had everlasting respect and affection. Iqbal was one of her many interests, and a figure with whom perhaps she felt she had much in common. He was first and foremost a great poet both in Persian and Urdu. Annemarie also had a great feeling for poetry, and composed some fine verse, especially in German, her own mother tongue. 'The language of Iqbal', she wrote, 'is certainly one of the most important aspects of his life, and one would like to have more in-depth studies of his imagery in the context of the Persian-Urdu poetical tradition.' In this respect I agree with her entirely. Over the last fifty years, so many books, articles and papers have been written on Iqbal— but the vast majority have 'dwelt again and again on the same main features of Iqbal's thought.'

Scholars and contributors to seminars seem to become so obsessed with the finer points of Iqbal's philosophy that they often completely ignore the greatness of his poetic art. We hear and read so much about Iqbal the thinker but so little about Iqbal the poet. This is a topic with which Annemarie dealt in several places and she admits herself that much more needs to be done. On the subject of his poetic imagery she writes: 'I still dream of a heavily annotated translation of the *Javidnama* (as I had done it into Turkish in 1958) to explain all the strands in his work and to make people in East and West aware of his unique way of weaving a grand tapestry of thought from eastern and western yarns.'

Her interest in Iqbal began when she was still very young almost at the start of her academic career. In the foreword to her monumental work *Gabriel's Wing*, which even forty years after its first appearance is still regarded as one of the most

authoritative accounts of Iqbal's life and work written in any language, she writes:

'I myself have to admit that my long lasting love for Iqbal (which began when I was a student in Berlin during the War) has led me to publish a number of works, which are more or less relevant for a study of his contribution to Muslim thought. Not only my German book on Pakistan (1965) and numerous translations of his works (published in 1977 on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of his birth) give witness to my continuing fascination with his work and with the country which he inspired, but I may also mention studies on Islamic Literature in India (1947), Classical Urdu Literature (1974). *Pain and Grace: a Study of Mir Dard and Shah 'Abdul Latif, Islam in the Subcontinent* (1980), furthermore my study on Maulana Rumi, called *Triumphal Sun* (1978), and not to forget *'And Muhammad is the Messenger* (1986), the last chapter of which deals exclusively with Iqbal's prophetology. In many articles I have tried to show Iqbal in the context of Islamic modernism or dealt with his imagery...'

Gabriel's Wing, subtitled '*A Study in the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal*,' first appeared in 1963. The work which, thanks to a recent reprint in Pakistan, is still in circulation was originally intended as an introduction to the life and works of Iqbal for western readers. It was a book which in Annemarie's own words aimed 'to put Iqbal into the framework of the general history of religions, which enables us to see him as one of the most fascinating figures, if not the most original, Muslim thinkers and poets of the twentieth century.'

The superlatives employed in the above quotation give ample evidence of Annemarie's profound admiration of Iqbal, about whom she frequently talked with enthusiasm and emotion.* Her public lectures on Iqbal also displayed the same feelings, and after hearing them one would be left with the impression that after Jalaluddin Rumi and Goethe, her two other great loves, no poet could be the equal of Iqbal.

She saw Iqbal as someone prophetic, a thinker who in his verse preferred the hawk to the bulbul, the tulip to the rose. The

* Professor Schimmel was the Founder-President of the Iqbal Foundation Europe from its inception in 1990 until her death. — Ed.

hawk can soar to unprecedented heights; the tulip, long associated with the blood of martyrs and the flame in the wilderness, is the beacon, which illuminates the way. When she wrote these words, perhaps she had verses like the following in mind:

*Kyon ziyānkār banūn sūd-fārāmosh rahūn
fīkr-e fārdā na karūn, mahv-e gam-e dosh rahūn
nāle bulbul ke sunūn aur hamatan gosh rahūn
hamnavā mainbhi koi gul hūn ki khāmosh rahūn*

Why should I plot my own loss, unmindful of all I might gain?

Better to think of tomorrow than to dwell on yesterday's pain.

Shall I hear the lament of the bulbul, submissively lending my ear?

Am I a rose to keep silence and suffer it year after year?

*Huā khaimazan kārvān-e bahār
īram ban gayā dāman-e kuhisār
gul o nargis o sosan o nastaran
shahid-e azal lāla-khūnīn kafan...
uṭhā sāqiyā parda īs rāz se
larā de mamole ko shahbāz se*

The caravan of Spring has pitched its tent,
The mountainside is strewn with new-blown flowers;
Red is the tulip in its martyr's shroud,
And eglantines and roses fill the bowers,
Lift up the curtain, give me power to talk,
And make this sparrow struggle with the hawk.

Gabriel's Wing is much more than a mere introduction to Iqbal. It is the product of many years of constant study and thought, the *jalwa* which emerged from hard and productive *khalwa*. It should also be mentioned that Annemarie chose to write *Gabriel's Wing* and many other of her works in English rather than in her native German. Given the fact that German is shamefully neglected in Britain and America and hardly known at all in the subcontinent, this was indeed a wise decision. English speakers usually express little surprise when foreigners speak and write their language so well, and most of the reviewers make no mention whatsoever of this extraordinary feat. But to write a book of such depth and complexity in a language which

is not one's own is in itself a great achievement, and it was a task that Annemarie typically accomplished with great success.

When Annemarie taught Iqbal at the University of Harvard, she was often obliged to find novel ways of introducing his ideas to students, who had been brought up in a modern western society and who probably had little knowledge or experience of the seemingly alien Islamic world. This led her to explore Iqbal's relevance for humanity in the actual world. Of this experience she writes: 'At this very moment, studying the *Javidnama* with my students in Harvard, we found great delight in expressions in his poetry, which twenty years ago would have been taken as utopic, and certainly not as relevant to humanity as they are now. I refer to the scene where Zindarud is led into the presence of the Sage in the Sphere of Mars, who tells him about the use of what is now called solar energy, speaks of the dangers of air pollution, while the false prophethood that was imported from Europe is a typical product of some ultra-feminist movement, and advocates a test-tube baby - all topics that are now in the news every day.'

This is surely an imaginative and refreshing way of conveying the thought of a poet, whom we commonly regard as 'universal', to a young audience, which tends to know less and less of the past. Iqbal, after all, regarded himself as the poet of the future, whose message might not be fully appreciated by his contemporaries:

nagma am, az zaxma beparvāstam
man navā-e shā'ir-e fardāstam

I am the poet of tomorrow's song:
A careless melody comes from my lyre.

Not surprisingly she found that her American students found the dynamism of Iqbal's poetry its most attractive feature - the dynamism 'which is quite opposed to the more static world view as presented by the more mystically inclined students of Islam.' The idea that life is a path of restless endeavour, which has no end and no resting place until the true Self has been revealed, is repeated time and time again by Iqbal and is the aspect of his thought that Annemarie rightly emphasizes in her own writings. This was something she shared completely with Iqbal, and something she practised herself throughout the whole of her life.

Another thing that Iqbal and Annemarie had in common was their love for Germany and their admiration for German literature. Although the extent of Iqbal's command of the language is unclear, it is known that as early as 1907 he was able to write German, and he may have continued to read its literature in later times. The poetry of Heine inspired him to write the following comment:

'No nation was so fortunate as the Germans. They gave birth to Heine when Goethe was singing in full-throated ease. Two uninterrupted springs!'

The happy days of Heidelberg with its charming lady teachers are reflected in one of Iqbal's most tender poems entitled *Ek Shām* 'One Evening on the Neckar', which was itself inspired by a German original. I should like to dedicate my English translation of Iqbal's poem to the memory of my friend, my colleague, and my mentor, Annemarie:

The moon is silent in its silver light:
The trees grow silent with the fall of night.

The valley birds who sell their songs by day
Are silent in the green hills far away.

All nature's voice has vanished without trace;
She slumbers calmly in the night's embrace.

The stately Neckar flounders in the deep,
And all is tranquil; all is lost in sleep.

The caravan of stars moves on the sky;
No bell is heard, so softly it goes by.

Mountains, deserts, streams in meditation,
As if all nature were in contemplation.

My heart, be silent; do not beat so fast
Take sadness to yourself, and sleep at last.

Burzine K. Waghmar

Our penultimate speaker today is a brilliant young scholar named Burzine Waghmar. He is a doctoral candidate in Iranian and Central Asian Philology, a Temporary Lecturer in Gujarati, and Editor of the *Circle of Inner Art* newsletter, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He is a co-compiler with M. Suheyl Umar and Ikram Chagatai of Annemarie Schimmel bibliography (1943–2003), which will be published by the Iqbal Academy Pakistan in Lahore in the very near future. He is also preparing the English edition of Annemarie Schimmel's *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art, Culture*, which is to be published by Reaktion Books, London.

On a personal note, may I add that I have found Burzine to be a man of almost encyclopaedic knowledge in a number of fields; and in his catholic approach to culture he seems to be an ardent follower in the footsteps of Professor Annemarie Schimmel. I am particularly proud to have found in him a speaker for today's Seminar, who is a Zoroastrian. For it is no problem at all in London to have a Christian or a Muslim speaker— but to produce a scholar in this esoteric field who is a *Zoroastrian* is, I claim, quite an achievement!

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL AND INDO-PAKISTAN STUDIES

Burzine K. Waghmar

In attempting to sketch an outline of the late Professor Annemarie Schimmel's scholarly writings on Indo-Pakistan studies, I must confess at the outset that it is impossible to do so within the compass of fifteen minutes allotted to me as a speaker. But, hopefully, I will attempt to provide at least an informed albeit incomplete conspectus of her researches on South Asian Islam.

Schimmel wrote in her recently published autobiography, *Morgenland und Abendland: Mein west-östliches Leben* (2002) that Urdu was not her specialization, and settling in the United States never occurred to her. The most extraordinary thing of all is that she inaugurated Harvard University's as well as the West's first Indo-Muslim Languages and Cultures programme in 1967, a post she held until her retirement in 1992. Five years later, in 1997, her hometown university of Bonn held celebrations to mark her 75th birthday and announced the establishment of the *Annemarie Schimmel Chair for Indo-Muslim Culture*. Harvard had, thanks to the persistence of Professors Richard Frye and Wilfred Cantwell Smith, come to inherit the Minute Rice bequest from Ataullah Ozai-Durrani (1897-1964), the Afghan inventor of Minute Rice and an Aligarh

University alumnus, who expressly left over half a million dollars from his estate for the translations and studies of the lives of his two favourite poets, Mir Taqi Mir (d. 1810) and Mirza Asadullah Ghalib (d. 1869). One of Mr Ozai-Durrani's Manhattan lawyers confessed that he was pretty sure the works were in Persian or 'whatever language they spoke in India in the 19th century.' (*The New York Times*, 19 June 1964, p. 33). A century later, English has become the *lingua franca* of what is now the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent; and Schimmel published *A Dance of Sparks: Imagery of Fire in Ghalib's Poetry* (1974), which grew out of a set of lectures delivered during the Ghalib Centenary in New Delhi and Karachi in 1969, a year which also witnessed the passing of Ozai-Durrani's friend, Dr Zakir Hussain, former Vice-chancellor of Aligarh university and himself a student at Berlin University, Schimmel's *alma mater*; and the third President of India (1967-69), to whose memory the book is dedicated. Earlier, she had also translated some select Persian and Urdu verses of the poet as *Mirza Asadullah Ghalib: Woge der Rose, Woge des Weins* (1971).

Dr Matthews of SOAS [School of Oriental and African Studies] has considerably lightened my task by his masterly examination of Schimmel's contribution to Iqbal studies, which need not detain us here. Indeed it is her German and Turkish editions of Sir Muhammad Iqbal's *Javidname* (1932) that first brought her to Pakistan in January 1958. Ever since her initial visit she immersed herself in studying Sindhi and its literary heritage, for which she acknowledged the debt of local scholars, especially Sayyid Pir Hussamuddin Rashdi. It is to him that she dedicated her *Pain and Grace: A Study of two Mystical Writers of 18th-century Muslim India* (1976), namely, Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit (1689-1752) and Khwaja Mir Dard of Delhi (1721-85). Schimmel later delivered the first Sayyid Hussamuddin Rashdi Memorial Lecture at Karachi's Goethe Institut in 1983 on a most appropriate study: *Makli Hill: A Centre of Islamic Culture in Sindh*. This learned essay on the necropolis near Thatta, based on a study of Mir Ali Shir Qani's late eighteenth century Maklināme—and edited by Sayyid Rashdi in 1967—was the first study of its kind in any Western language. Almost a century

earlier, the German missionary Ernst Trumpp (1828-85) had made pioneering strides in Sindhi grammar as well as a translation of Shah Abdul Latif's *Risālō*, a noteworthy specimen of Sindhi literature, in 1866—it fell to Schimmel, though, to reintroduce the *Risālō* to twentieth-century scholarship. In numerous studies she examined not only the literary and mystical import of this poem but also his *Sur Sarang*. Moreover, in a volume devoted to Sindhi studies, *Pearls from the Indus: Studies in Sindhi Culture* (1986), Schimmel examined Sindhi translations of the *Qur'ān*; dirges on the martyr-mystic Mansur b. Hallaj (d. 922); folk poetry of Shah Inayat Shahid of Jhok (d. 1718); and the prolific Mirza Qalich Beg's *avant-garde* novel, *Zinat* (1892), among other topics. It was Annemarie Schimmel who prevailed upon the provincial authorities to convene an international congress entitled *Sind through the Centuries* in Karachi, in March 1975. This pioneering initiative was, at any rate, a resounding success, for it brought together scholars from diverse disciplines to present researches on archaeology, anthropology, politics, history, literature, and folklore, and thus promote Sindhology as a distinct branch of Pakistan studies. Schimmel, through the auspices of the *German-Pakistan Forum*, also prepared a monograph on the aforementioned Ernst Trumpp in 1961, and edited a volume of German scholarship on Urdu, Punjabi, Baluchi, Brahui, Pashto and the Hindukush languages entitled, *German Contributions to the Study of Indo-Pakistani Linguistics* (1981).

Although Annemarie Schimmel's own mystical proclivities enthused her to appreciate and translate folk and classical Islamic poetry, she was considerably influenced when preparing her second doctoral thesis, *Studien zur Geschichte der mystischen Liebe im Islam* (1954), under the tutelage of Friedrich Heiler (1892-1967), the historian of religions at the University of Marburg, to whom she dedicated the published version of her 1992 Gifford Lectures, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* (1994). It was Heiler, a devout Catholic, fondly then known as the 'patron saint of women professors', whose own studies on feminine theology inspired Schimmel to explore not only the concept of the woman

as the representative of the soul in the perennial quest of the Eternal Beloved but also the phenomenological aspects of a living faith, defined by the German philosopher Rudolph Otto (1869-1937) as the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, which Muslims discern as their Creator's *jamāl* (mercy) and *jalāl* (majesty). For traditional Sufis, too, strengthened their deep religious experience of God's unicity through—a familiar chord for Catholics—His binary channels of grace:

Wa fi kulli shay'in lahu shāhidun
yadullu 'alā annahu wāhidun
In everything there is a witness to Him
that points to the fact that He is One

The compilations of mystics such as Qadi Qadan (d. 1551), Sultan Bahu (d. 1691), Rahman Baba (d. 1709), and Bullhe Shah (d. 1754), to name but a few, were steeped in pious humility. Composing on not only spiritual but also this-worldly themes in Urdu and Persian were stalwarts of Indo-Muslim *belles-lettres* like Amir Khusrau (d. 1325), Muhammad Urfi (d. 1591), Talib Amuli (d. 1627), Bedil (d. 1721), Wali Dakhani (d. 1744), Siraj Aurangabadi (d. 1763), Insha (d. 1817), Ghalib (d. 1869), Anis (d. 1874), Akbar Allahabadi (d. 1921), Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938), Josh Malihabadi (d. 1982) and Faiz Ahmed Faiz (d. 1984). Schimmel, unlike most of her colleagues, actually devoted a lifetime's study to this corpus of litterateurs frequently overlooked by those for whom serious enquiry into Islamic literature chiefly implied pre-occupation with the 'high' Arabo-Persian tradition. Anthologies of these poets are available in two impressive selections: *Liebe zu dem Einen: Texte aus der mystischen Tradition des indischen Islam* (1986) and *Die schönste Gedichte aus Pakistan und Indien: Islamische Lyrik aus tausend Jahren* (1996). Besides these translations one may profitably consult not only her various essays, especially on the poetical imagery of the *sabk-i hindī* genre, but also the evolution of Islamic literature in India, Urdu literature, and Sindhi literature, all three of which were commissioned as fascicules for the *History of Indian Literature* series in 1973, 1974, and 1975 respectively. In the *Handbuch der Orientalistik* series appeared

Islam in the Indian Subcontinent (1980), whose Urdu edition, *Barr-i saghīr mein Islam*, a standard one – volume text, was published in Lahore, in 2000, a city whose historical and architectural past has been described by her in the copiously illustrated tome, *Lahore: The City Within* (1988). *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* and *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (1975) must arguably be two of the more luminous jewels in her crown. Not only in the latter work but also in the volume *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam* (1982), constituting the 1980 ACLS [American Council of Learned Societies] lecture series is to be found the sole English examination to date of mystical poetry and Sufism in the vernacular mediums of the subcontinent.

Although Schimmel's spiritual passion was Maulana Rumi (d. 1273), the Mughals were her abiding attachment. For years she was a consultant to the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and collaborated with Harvard's connoisseur-curator Stuart Cary Welch in lavish editions such as *The Emperors' Album: Images of Mughal India* (1983) and *Anvari's Divān: A Pocket Book* (1983) copied by Auhaddin Anvari for Emperor Akbar in Lahore, 1588. Her competence here in deciphering and interpreting calligraphic inscriptions, pen names, chronograms, puns and riddles, and timeless couplets imbued with *jeux d'esprit* was admirable. Primarily trained in the textual tradition, Schimmel was privileged to have also studied in wartime Berlin with the renowned Islamic art historian Ernst Kähler. This experience stood her in good stead when she assisted in the mounting of the 1985 Festival of India exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Furthermore, her discussions about the poetry of Babur (1483-1530) and Dara Shikoh (1615-59) not to mention Akbar's polymath general, Abdur Rahim Khankhanan (1556-1627), afford rich insights into the literary talents of the Mughals. A study of the works of the latter's creative Persian and Hindustani dialects expressed through *dohās* or tetrametric apophthegms remains a *desideratum*. After all, who can forget the occasion when Kavi Gang sent a *dōha* to Khankhanan?

Sikhe kahān nawabjō, aisi denī dayn
Jyon jyon kar ūncho karō, tyon tyon nīchenayn
to which the Khankhanan politely replied:
denhār kou aur hai, bhejat so dīn rayn
log bharam jum par dharen, yāte nīche nāyn

Schimmel distilled a lifetime's account of travel and learning across South Asia in the appositely titled *Berge, Wuesten, Heiligtuemer: Meine Reisen in Indien und Pakistan* (1994). But while this is only available in German, her splendid study, *Im Reich der Grossmoguln: Geschichte, Kunst, Kultur* (2000) is to be published in London as *The Empire of the Mughals: History, Art, Culture*. Having had the good fortune to work on this English edition, I can assuredly claim that this will be an authoritative study. Far from being a dreary roll call of battles, court intrigues and disgruntled princes, it is an exhaustive treatment of every aspect of daily life, with chapters containing a wealth of detail on food and drink, literature, the role of women, non-Islamic faiths, and the fine arts in the empire.

Contemplating on such a work invested with learning and sensitivity, the ancient Iranian compilers of the Zoroastrian encyclopaedia *Denkard* would have aptly pronounced, *az frahang-ī nēwag, xrad-ī nēwag bawēd*: 'from good knowledge there is good wisdom'.

Mohammad Aman H. Hobohm

Our last speaker today is Al-Hajj Mohammad Aman Herbert Hobohm—undoubtedly one of the oldest friends and associates of the late Professor Annemarie Schimmel who has had the privilege of knowing her for over 50 years. He has travelled especially for our Seminar all the way from Bonn, together with his charming wife, who originally comes from Japan— and, like her husband, has embraced Islam. A hearty welcome to you, Madame, as well!

Here is an abbreviated CV of Mr Aman Hobohm : Born at Hoetensleben, near Magdeburg, in Germany on 22 October 1926, he accepted Islam at the tender age of 13 in 1939. After the Second World War, Mr Hobohm pursued Islamic studies in London, and during the period 1949-53 acted as Imam of the Berlin Mosque, and was the Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of the tri-lingual (Arabic-English-German) monthly, *Orient Post*. From 1954 to 1956, he continued Islamic studies in Pakistan, and for some time was co-editor of the journal, *Voice of Islam*. During the period mid-1950s to mid-1960s he was also the Hon. Secretary of the Pak-German Forum in Pakistan.

Mr Hobohm joined the Foreign Service of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1956 and served in various capacities at German embassies ranging from Karachi and Islamabad to Mogadishu, London and Riyadh— and as Director of the Goethe-Institut in Bandung, Indonesia. From 1995 to 2002 he was the General-Manager of the King Fahd Academy, Bonn.

Mr Aman Hobohm also has the distinction of being the Chairman of the Annemarie Schimmel Foundation for International and Interreligious Dialogue, Bonn. He is a Knight of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, and a holder of the Civil Honour, *Tamgha-i Pakistan*.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the personal honour and pleasure of knowing Mr Aman Hobohm since 1981, when I met him through my cousin, Gen. Asad Durrani, an erstwhile Ambassador of Pakistan in Germany, who had told me that Mr Hobohm possessed a quantity of handwritten letters of Allamah Iqbal to Miss Emma Wegenast, who had

been his tutor in the German language at Heidelberg (1907). Mr Hobohm was kind enough to let me have a copy of that correspondence, spanning some 26 years (1907-1933) — a priceless archival material that had been nearly lost to the world. I later published those letters in my book *Iqbal Europe mein (Iqbal in Europe: Lahore, 1985; in Urdu)*. I have, since then, met him and his good wife a number of times, and am most grateful to Mr Hobohm for his many kindnesses. Let us now extend a warm welcome to Mr Hobohm to our Schimmel Memorial Seminar today.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL

Mohammad Aman H. Hobohm

When, on the 26th of January of this year [2003], Annemarie Schimmel closed her eyes for ever, the World of Oriental Learning lost a great scholar; Islam and the Muslims lost a sincere friend and advocate; and I personally lost in her a person with whom I had been closely associated for more than 50 years: whom I respected and admired, and with whom I shared a deep interest in, and a high regard for, Islam and the history and culture of the Muslim nations and peoples. It was this common interest on which a strong and lasting friendship of a lifetime was built.

Perhaps I was to her— as she was to me— the oldest surviving friend, and as time went by our conversations turned more and more to the past, and the question: “Do you remember...?” began to figure ever more prominently in our talks. The answers were usually mellowed by time and distance— but so what? In retrospect we seem to have loved everyone who ever crossed our paths. In any case all those people— and there were so many— provided ample material for anecdotes and— gossip! Oh, yes we also did indulge in gossip, for instance, when we sat together over a Japanese meal and all that goes with it, which she relished so much.¹

¹ Mr Aman Hobohm's wife is a charming Japanese lady, who has embraced Islam – as noted in the chairman's introduction *Ed.*

Annemarie Schimmel was a great scholar— one of the greatest among contemporary Orientalists— and she was absolutely serious in her scholarship. But she was also a lovely and lovable person, amiable and sweet, very often with an impish twinkle in her eyes who could be as much amused by a good limerick as she was enraptured— yes, enraptured is the word!— by Arabic, Persian, Urdu or Turkish lyrics. She was a poetess in her own right as is well known; but that she also wrote limericks herself is perhaps only known to her closer friends.

She was extremely romantic, and this trait of her character explains many things: her interest in mysticism, her love of poetry and her poetic skills, her ability not only to translate poetry but to render it in verse to give the reader or listener as vivid an impression of the original as possible. But even the choice of subject of quite a few of her publications betrays her romantic nature: "The Oriental Cat", "Nightingales under the Snow", "The Three Promises of the Sparrow", "Little Paradises: Flowers and Gardens in Islam", and of course the numerous translations from mystical poetry which form the core of the long list of her publications. Apropos cats!— She loved cats, although she did not have one herself because she felt she could not keep one because of her frequent travels; and many of her letters, in particular those to my wife who is as crazy about cats as she was, are signed "Umm Hurairah!" "Mother of the Little Kitten", alluding to a well known companion of the Prophet Mohammad who because of his fondness of cats was called "Abu Hurairah" "Father of the Little Kitten". She would have been delighted to see the invitation to this Commemorative Seminar because it shows on the back cover a photograph of hers with a cat in her lap.

But her romantic trait was only one side of her personality. Annemarie Schimmel was no dreamer; she was very much down to earth when it came to work. She was addicted to work. She wrote more books than the average person reads in his whole life. She may have neglected her food, but she never neglected her work. At times she worked on two or three books at the same time; and hardly a year went by in which she did not publish two: usually however three or four books— sometimes even

more. Add to this literary output the numerous lectures she gave every year in Germany and abroad and her extensive travels, and you can imagine the work load she bore on her frail shoulders. Yes she was frail and as time went by she became more and more so. But she was tough, and until the end of her life she did not give in to frailty and to the various ailments that troubled her. Even a month before she died— i.e. in December 2002— she spent hours with a group of friends and Government representatives to prepare the foundation of an “Annemarie Schimmel Haus” as a “Forum for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and Understanding” to serve the cause of communal peace and harmony in Germany at a time when it seems to be threatened more than ever before. It was perhaps the last joyous moment in her life when the two personalities whose friendship she treasured most, namely His Royal Highness Prince Al-Hassan bin Talal, and His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, agreed to be associated with the Forum as “Founding Members”. I was with her when she received their letters, and I could see from her eyes how happy and proud she was.

Annemarie Schimmel had a highly retentive memory. She hardly ever used a written text to read from when she gave her lectures. She just stood there in front of her audience, closed her eyes and began to speak, without a flaw, without a stammer, until she had delivered her lecture. Her language was almost totally free from the type of academic jargon in which German scholars in particular seem to revel. It was a pleasure to listen to her as it was and always is a pleasure to read what she has written.

Because of her retentive memory she was blessed with another gift, namely that of learning, nay virtually devouring, foreign languages. Where a normal person takes years to become proficient in another language it took her just a couple of months to speak read and write it. There is probably no language spoken in the Muslim World which she did not master or know sufficiently well to work in.

But in my opinion the greatest gift that the Almighty had bestowed on her was an iron discipline. She could never have

written so many books and papers, read so many proofs and compiled so many indices as she has done – and all that on a vintage portable typewriter: (she refused to use a laptop computer which Turkish friends had given her as a present, as too technical and therefore impersonal)— had she not been possessed of the zeal and devotion to work which became her hallmark.

She was ambitious, and she never disguised it. Honorary doctor degrees, decorations (most of them of the highest class medals), the naming after her of a beautiful Avenue in Lahore, and the many other honours which were bestowed on her, gave her immense pleasure.

She was very hurt when, in connection with the award of the prestigious “Peace Prize of the German Booksellers’ Association”, a campaign of vilification erupted in the German media against her, because she had allegedly defended Imam Khomeini’s Fatwa against the author Salman Rushdi condemning him to death. What hurt her most was the involvement of her former student Professor Gernot Rotter in this rather sordid affair. It was he who had actually started the campaign. I have never seen Professor Schimmel in greater despair than in the weeks preceding the ceremony at which she was to receive the award.³ She was on the verge of refusing to accept it, but for the timely support from the Federal President, Roman Herzog, who offered personally to read the formal “laudatio” on her. In those days— as it still is— it was “politically incorrect” to criticize Salman Rushdi. But poor Professor Schimmel was after all a scholar and not a politician, as she herself apologetically remarked to her friends. Yes, she was certainly not a politician. Shall I say that she was too straight, too outspoken, perhaps too naive ever to have been one?

³ To attend that ceremony, Prof. Schimmel had had to withdraw her name as the keynote speaker at the Iqbal Academy (UK)’s International Conference on ‘Iqbal and the Fine Arts: The Heritage of Islamic Creativity’, held on 14-15 October 1995 at the University of Birmingham, England – *Ed.*

As I hinted at in the beginning of my address, it was our common interest in Islam that brought us together: Annemarie Schimmel and me. To be more precise, it was the murder trial of a Muslim soldier of the United States Army serving in Germany who had killed a fellow soldier because he had constantly blasphemed God. We were asked to appear before the court to be heard on relevant provisions of the Law of Islam— she in her capacity as Professor of Islamic Studies, I as Imam of the Berlin Mosque.

And just as Islam stood at the beginning of our relationship it continued to be a constant topic during the fifty and more years of our friendship. I profited greatly from her scholarship, and I may be permitted to say in all humility that on the other hand she on various occasions drew from my practical experience as a practising Muslim, as is reflected in some of her publications.

She was not only an ardent student of religion— of Islam and of Comparative Religion— she was also deeply religious herself, as I gleaned from the many conversations we have had over the years. She firmly believed in the efficacy of prayer, and it was her wish to write a book on prayer in Islam before she died. Alas! The Almighty decided otherwise!

Another wish of hers that remained unfulfilled was to visit the Holy Places of Islam: Mecca and Medina. This raises the question whether she had converted to Islam, as some Muslims claim she did. We never touched this topic in any of our conversations. I knew that she firmly believed in the one and only God and that she probably counted herself among His friends, as the Mystics do. Many of her letters to me and to other friends were signed: *Faquirah ila rahmati— rabbi*, expressing her craving for the mercy of the Lord. She asked me long ago— and I felt greatly honoured when she did so— to address her as Appa Annemarie, elder sister! Whether she had formally embraced Islam or not— my Muslim sisters and brothers may forgive me— did not matter to me. I had accepted her as a sister years ago. As for the rest: *Allahu a'lam!* God knows best!

PROFESSOR DR. ANNEMARIE
SCHIMMEL

HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal
President of the Arab Thought Forum¹

Despite her outstanding academic accomplishments and all other references, Anne Marie Schimmel will live on in my memory as a friend who valued people above all else. She was compassionate and kind, displaying a generosity of spirit that is all too rare in our complex and often inward-looking world. Always willing to give of herself and to share in the joys and sorrows of others, she never let an important event - whether a birthday, wedding anniversary or religious celebration— pass without acknowledgement, or failed to welcome a friend arriving in her native Germany. I received from her, uninterruptedly over the years, cards and notes to mark various occasions. Perhaps the ones that I greeted most eagerly were those informing me of her intellectual discoveries and achievements, for she was always keen to alert her friends to new publications on Islamic culture and civilization or even to send copies if she herself was the author. She was a strong advocate for the dissemination of knowledge, thanks to her conviction that it is an indispensable instrument for the construction of healthy, vibrant societies; and she never hesitated to urge others to acquire it.

¹ Received from the Royal Palace, Amman, Jordan. *Ed.*

Anne Marie's love of knowledge approached passion when it came to her own discipline. Always keen to learn still more about Muslims and their religion, she had exceptionally broad and wide-ranging interests and was, at the time of her death, the author of nearly 130 books and manuscripts, in addition to over 500 articles published in some of the world's most prestigious academic journals. As William Graham of Harvard University pointed out, "three new books published in a year was unremarkable for her, just as drafting an article in a few hours was commonplace." She was the first scholar to translate parts of Ibn Khaldun's masterpiece *Al-Muqaddima* into German, and had a thorough knowledge of Islamic history and literature, particularly the work and thought of the great Sufi poet al-Rumi. Her love for Islamic scholarship was matched by her love for Islamic music and art, especially calligraphy. I was constantly amazed by her encyclopedic approach to the study of Islamic civilization, and joined with her many colleagues in admiring her mastery over her field.

If Anne Marie had only one talent that particularly impressed those who knew her— and one that featured frequently in our exchanges— it was her unchallenged ability to assimilate the most difficult Eastern languages. She spoke fluent Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto and Punjabi. This was in addition to her great skill in English, French and German and her ability to comprehend and communicate in Swedish and Italian. I once read her understandably proud assertion that she "could lecture unprepared and without notes in German, English and Turkish; with notes in French, Arabic, and Persian; and from a manuscript in many other languages." Like many who read her poems, I was impressed by her ability to compose them in several languages apart from German.

Neither her cultural background nor her academic prominence ever coloured Dr Schimmel's views of the society and religion that she studied. Indeed, she possessed a singular affection for the Muslim community and showed great respect for its culture. Yet, her esteem for Islam and her personal involvement in the field of Islamic Studies did not deter her from

criticising, for example, Imam Khomeini's *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie, the author of *The Satanic Verses*, while offering a broader perspective on the controversy. As she herself stated at the time: "Naturally, I am not going to take sides in this issue. But it must not be forgotten that Rushdie has hurt the religious feelings of millions of Muslims. I also want to explain that attacking Prophets has always been considered a great sin throughout history."

From the time that she began studying Islamic civilisation at the age of 19, Dr Schimmel knew that her mission was to build bridges between 'East' and 'West', and she worked to achieve her objective at every academic forum in which she participated. She summed up her self-appointed task in this way: "My friends and I are trying to properly educate people about Islamic history, and I see it as my personal duty to inform and rid people's minds of wrong and misleading information..."

I first came to know Dr Schimmel as the leading non-Muslim scholar of Sufism, an Islamic science so sophisticated that few Muslims can claim mastery over it. Soon, however, I became even more interested in her dedication to fostering a better understanding of Islam and the Muslim world in the West. Her efforts to bring together people responsive to the notion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue meant that we maintained contact and met frequently. Indeed, it was in recognition of her outstanding contribution in these areas that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan conferred upon her, in April of 1998, the Al-Hussein Decoration for Distinguished Contribution of the first degree. She was also the first woman ever to receive the Leopold Lucas Prize from the Evangelisch— heologische Faculty of the University of Tübingen, which is awarded to those who strive to improve mutual understanding among adherents of the three Abrahamic faiths.

As Anne Marie Schimmel rightly pointed out in a recent essay ("Dreams of Jesus in the Islamic Tradition," published in Amman by the *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies*) "many Christians are unaware of the important role Jesus plays in Islam" and that "he is considered to be the last and

the most important prophet before Muhammad's appearance." "Certainly", she observed, "when reading Qur'anic accounts of Jesus and the numerous stories and poems composed around him, many of them will object to the fact that he is 'only' a prophet and not the Son of God; for on this point the Qur'an is absolutely clear". Yet, her essay reveals Jesus's importance to Muslims as a model of virtue, of modesty and of spiritual poverty—a true Sufi, able to see only the positive aspects of life.

Anne Marie Schimmel not only urged her Western readers to re-think the notion that Islam represents an alien, primitive and hostile worldview, but also cautioned them against assuming their own cultural superiority with respect to the developing world. For example, she argued in *The Mystery of Numbers* that "[w]e should not presume that all civilizations use the same way of counting or computing. Some African tribes can barely count according to our understanding of the term; yet they know immediately if only a single animal is missing in a large herd". The fact that such an accomplished scholar was willing to question the Western understanding of numeracy and literacy, concepts which provided the foundations for her own erudition and prestige, is indicative of Anne Marie Schimmel's profound commitment to the advancement of learning, no matter where it led.

Anne Marie Schimmel's academic journey may also be measured by her efforts to help others achieve eminence in the various disciplines related to Islamic Studies. I have heard about and met some of the many students who completed postgraduate work in Islamic history, art and civilisation under her watchful eye. She was truly both inspired and an inspiration and served, in particular, as a shining example for young women scholars.

Her hard work and dedication were also inspirational. Although it hardly seems possible, she was even more productive after her retirement from Harvard University in 1992 than she had been as a full-time academic. In 1992, she told friends worried by the prospect of her enforced idleness that she had plans for scholarly projects that would keep her busy for the

next 10 years. Between 1993 and January 2003, 40 works appeared in her name, including, of course, her autobiography.

Her long-time friend, Mohammad Aman Hobohm, has said that she won the hearts of Muslims, collectively and individually. I know that he is correct; for I am one of those Muslims. I could not agree with him more when he observed that “she, more than anyone else among her colleagues, has combined in her person and in her work what Muhammad Iqbal, the great Muslim thinker and poet of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, has called ‘the high pitch and the low of the same melody: *‘ilm-o-‘ishq*— science and love, united from the very day of creation’”.

Many Muslims and non-Muslims have raised the same point: why did Anne Marie Schimmel, who loved Islam so dearly, not become a Muslim herself? I have no answer to this question; but I do know that her love and respect for the Muslims and their religion will continue to be reciprocated so long as her memory and example remain with us, illuminating our way forward.

LYRICS FOR THE DIVINE SOUL

Annemarie Schimmel

Many people know the story of the blind men who wanted to know what an elephant looked like. As they grasped only one small part of the enormous beast's body—the trunk, tail, ear and so on—according to his personal experience as looking like a throne, a rope, a fan etc. But no one knew the shape of the entire animal.

This story, told in Persian first by Sana'i the great mystical poet of present-day Afghanistan (died AD1131), not only ridicules people's attempts at describing God in His fullness but can also be used to point to those who have tried to grasp completely the concept of mysticism in general and of Sufism, the mystical movement in Islam, in particular.

Sufism (derived from "*suf*," the woolen frock of the ascetics) began about a century after the Prophet Muhammad's death (AD 632) and took different shapes wherever Muslims lived between Indonesia and West Africa, but always centered around the absolute Unity of God.

Growing out of ascetic movements, the element of Divine Love was introduced into Sufism, interestingly, by a woman, Rabi'a of Basra (Iraq), who died in AD 801. God, so she said, should not be worshipped out of fear of Hell or hope for Paradise but only for the sake of His eternal beauty.

This idea of love was to permeate Sufism, a love directed exclusively to the Creator and Lord, who might manifest Himself through everything. The Qur'an attests that you can find His sign 'in the horizons and in your soul' (Sura 41:46). Everything gives witness to His greatness, wisdom, and creativity. This truth is expressed in most works of the Sufis.

The Sufis, besides strictly clinging to the prescribed religious duties such as ritual prayer and fasting repeated God's name and the chain of His "most beautiful names" just as the Christians in the Eastern Church did with the name of Jesus or as the Hindus with the name of Ram or other divine manifestations.

By such an exercise, they believe, the "mirror of the heart" is being cleaned and polished, and finally the eternal Beloved's face can be reflected in the lover's pure heart.

Manifold are the ways that lead to the Experience of the Divine. To follow the path under the guidance of an experienced master (whose spiritual pedigree goes back to the Prophet Muhammad) is the central duty for the spiritual traveler.

The path is steep and difficult; it will lead to the castle of spiritual union, provided the seeker patiently perseveres in all the suffering he will experience.

The way has been frequently seen as a journey to heaven (like that of Muhammad, who once experienced a heavenly journey into the immediate presence of God), or as a descent into the depths of one's innermost heart.

The great Persian poet Attar has described both ways in his great epics. He sings of the journey of the soul-birds through seven valleys into the presence of the King of Birds, with whom they finally realize their unity, while the story of the seeker tells of one who during the traditional 40 day's retreat finds the hoped-for goal in his own "ocean of the soul".

The mystics of Islam have experienced grand visions of Divine Love manifested in roses or in light of different colours, and many have transformed traditional folk romances into metaphors of heavenly love. The longed for union could be

found through death, which is called in later times *'urs* (wedding).

They might be blessed at the end of the road with the experience of *fana*, complete annihilation, returning at least for a moment to the time "when they are before they were" and reemerge from that Absolute Unity to give witness in the world of time and space of the grandeur of God in every moment.

Poetry was the ideal vehicle for the Sufis and those under their influence to pour out the longing of their hearts. In particular, the mystics in Iran and the areas under Persian cultural influence (Turkey, Central Asia, Muslim India) boast an apparently inexhaustible treasure of poetry which is an integral part of their cultural tradition.

The name of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi stands for the most important poet in the history of Sufism. His lyrical poetry (some 40,000 verses) and his didactic poem, the *Mathnawi* (around 26,000 verses), are part and parcel of the Sufi tradition as they manifest the burning love of the heart, Rumi indeed saw the traces of God's presence in everything, be it as small as a gnat, as dangerous as a worm hollowing out a tree. That is why his verse appeals to every reader today.

We should not forget that Sufism has also another aspect. Theosophical Sufism, as it developed first in the Western part of the Islamic world, is largely concerned with gnosis, not so much with the longing of the burning heart, the ecstatic experiment of enraptured union.

The mystic of that school, whose main master is the Andalusian thinker Ibn 'Arabi developed a system of explaining creation and its different strata. The world comes into existence by "the breath of the Merciful" and exists only as long as it turns its face towards Him.

The ramifications of Sufism into different spiritual orders (*tariqa* or path), the concept of a "hierarchy of friends of God", the central role of the Prophet of Islam as a leader towards God and as the Perfect Man, the social role of Sufism, its influence on

the development of language and many more aspects could have been mentioned, but we restrict ourselves to Rumi's beautiful definition: "Sufism means to find joy in the heart at the time of grief."

Or should we agree with a saying from the 10th century? "A Sufi is he who is not".

PHOTOGRAPHS



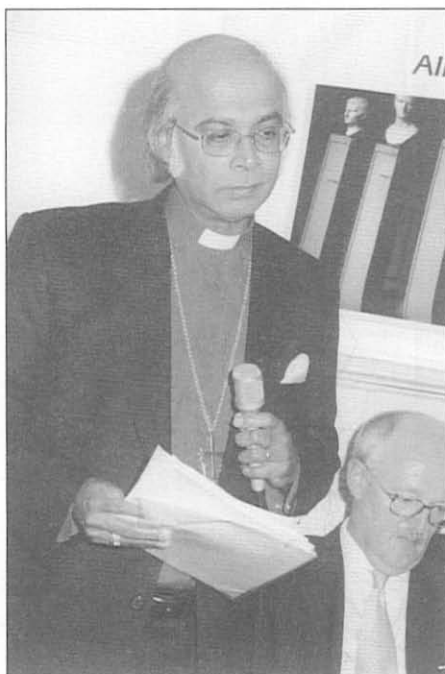
Left to right: Burzine K. Waghmar, Mohammad
 Aman H. Hobohm, Rt Revd Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, Mr.
 Max Maldacker (Cultural/Political Counsellor), Prof.
 Saeed A. Durrani, Leonard Lewisohn, Dr. David
 Matthews



Prof. Saeed A. Durrani

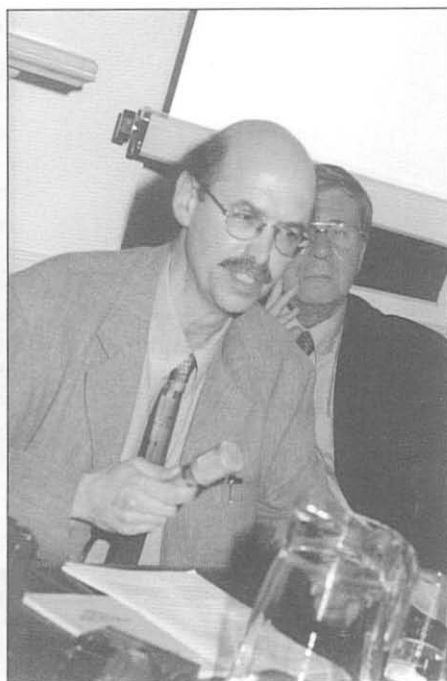


Mr. Max Maldacker
(Cultural/Political Counsellor)



Rt Revd Dr Michael Nazir-Ali

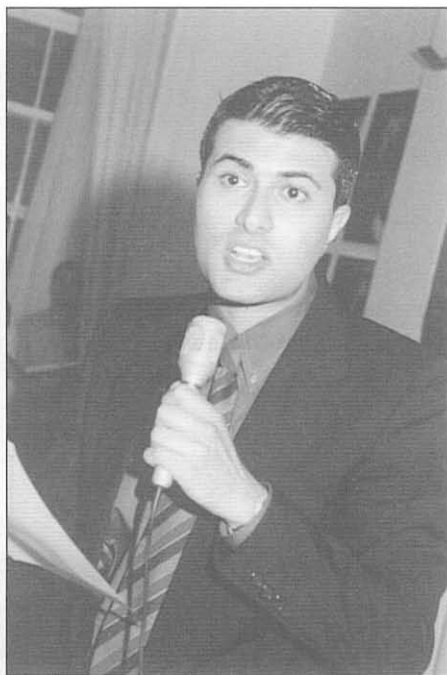
Leonard Lewisohn





Dr. David Matthews

Burzine K. Waghmar





Mohammad Aman H. Hobohm

Mrs. Pakeezah Baig





Sketch of Prof. Annemarrie Schimmel by the Indian artist Muhammad Ishaq



Dr. Durrani and Aziz ud Din Ahmed presenting the sketch to the German Ambassador H. E. Mr. Thomas Matussek



Audience



Mrs. Durdana Ansari



Dr. Razia Sultanova