biographical talākhīs of Moghal officers and of Persian poets, wrote in the middle of the eighteenth century, he drew on fourteenth-century compilations at Khuldabad or Dawlatābād which are inaccessible (see op. cit., pp. 8-9) and there is no reason to doubt the historicity of this account.

13. Mirzâ-i Sikandarī, ed. Mīrūn and Weinmann, Baroda, 1961, p. 18. All the Mss. of the Murād read Māndāq, in place of Māndāqārā, which is found in Tāhāfāt-ı Akbars and Fārishta. All three accounts must derive from an earlier chronicle of Gujarat (possibly the Malikshir-i Mahmūdshāhī, Storey no. 979). As Sir E.C. Bayley pointed out, Mandāqārā, a dependency of the Rāma of Cīwārī, is more likely to be correct, see The Local Muhammadan Dynasties of Gujarat, London, 1886, p. 77; S.C. Misra, The Rise of Muslim Power in Gujarat, p. 149.

Within the Urdu literary milieu the term mārsīya, unless preceded by some qualifying phrase, refers only to one thing: a poem describing some event related to the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson, Imām Husain, at Karbala, composed more often than not, in the six-line stanza form, musaddas. Further, it always implies a very specific context: it is to be declaimed in a somewhat dramatic fashion at a majlis-e 'azā, i.e., a gathering of devout people seeking to obtain religious virtue by listening to the story of Imām Husain and his companions and by shedding tears over their tragic fate. Thus, it should be kept in mind that a mārsīya in Urdu is primarily not meant for private perusal in moments of leisure, that it has a particular public-religious context, and that it also has a somewhat edifying goal beside the usual literary purposes that any good poetry has.

Mārsīyas in Urdu were first written in the 16th century in South India, in the kingdoms of Golkonda and Bijapur, which were Shī'ite in orientation and closer to the Iranian religious traditions than the Turk and Pathan kingdoms of North India. In the beginning, mārsīyas were written either in the two-line unit form, qaṣīda, or in the four-line unit form, murabbā'. No particular meter was preferred, both long and short meters being equally common. These mārsīyas, not overly long, were usually sung, often set to some suitably mournful raga. In the murabbā' form the fourth line was often a refrain, repeated by the accompanyists of the mārsīya-reciter and perhaps also by the audience. The recitations took place both
outdoors in a procession and indoors. For that reason, the early marṣiyas were shorter in length as well as simpler in structure, than is the case now, and emphasized more the grief-inducing (mubātin) elements of the narrative, such as the death of some hero and the consequent lament (bain) over his corpse. Marṣiyas in the qasida form were generally more atomistic, whereas the murabba' form seems to have allowed better thematic continuity. In either case, the story element was not overly emphasized. All this is also true for the early, i.e., the 18th century, marṣiya in North India, with the addition that the North Indian poets used a great many more forms for their poems, and that their poems tended to be a bit more fragmentary.¹

Slowly, over a century or so, the musaddas came to be regarded as the most suitable form for a marṣiya. That preference, it seems, was directly related to certain contextual developments. Firstly, the marṣiya moved indoors permanently. Secondly, the poets, instead of singing, took to declaiming it, using dramatic gestures and other devices of elocution. The singing style was given a new name, zūn-xvāt, and the earlier traditions were reserved for that purpose alone. The new marṣiya, however, developed its own traditions very soon, 19th century Lucknow, with its Shi'ite state, contributing the most to its development. Thus, by the middle of the 19th century, there were established what came to be regarded as the fundamental characteristics of a good marṣiya in Urdu. These were as follows:

1. A marṣiya was invariably in the form of a musaddas, the first four lines of each stanza (bain) having one rhyme-scheme (i.e., the qāfiya and the radif), and the remaining two lines, referred to as the ḥaf, having another. Usually the first four lines extended the story line, while the ḥaf, expected to be an exceptionally good couplet, provided a kind of pause in the discourse. This format, while avoiding the monotony of a single rhyme-scheme, allowed for moments of rest in the process of public presentation.²

2. Certain medium length meters were preferred, specially those that could enhance the dramatic effect sought by the declamatory style of presentation.

3. Each marṣiya was usually devoted to just one hero or incident, and showed conspicuous narrative continuity. Secondary themes were allowed, but only when they complemented the main theme.

4. Each marṣiya had all or some of the following constituent sub-sections in so far as they might be allowed by the chosen theme.²

I. celrā: a prologue which could have for its subject praise of God, the Prophet, or All, praise of the poet himself, description of some natural phenomenon, or some other matter that could be considered related to the main theme, such as the hardships of a journey or the emotional intensity of filial ties.

II. mājarā: some event or incident that would introduce the main hero. In this section the story element was much emphasized.

III. sarōpa: a detailed description of the physical and/or spiritual qualities of the hero.

IV. ruxzar: after due preparation and taking leave of the Imam, the hero’s departure from the Imam’s camp.

V. āmed: the hero’s arrival on the battlefield.

VI. ra'az: the hero’s declaration of his noble ancestry, personal virtues, and superiority as a warrior.

VII. jang: a description of the actual battle, either one on one or one against many, often both. This often contained sub-sections in praise of the hero’s horse, sword, etc. Quite often a long section would describe the intense heat of the day to underscore the plight and the courage of the hero, who faced his enemies without having taken a drink of water for many days.

VIII. -hashid: the hero’s death on the battlefield, having been wounded by the enemy horde. In the case of the Imam, he is killed only after he stopped fighting at a command from Allah.

IX. bain: the lamentations of the female relatives of the hero.

X. du'd: the pious sentiments of the poet himself, often of a prayerful nature, expressed in just one or two stanzas. These may contain the name of the poet, and, rarely, also the name of some patron.
Needless to say, the above scheme was not entirely inflexible. Individual sections could be moved around, particularly the initial ones. Also, not all *maršiyas* could have all the sections. For example, a *maršiya* describing the Imam’s departure from Medinah could not possibly have a *ṣabādah* scene. The full scheme was found mostly in those *maršiyas* that dealt with the events of the 10th of Muharram, A.H. 61. What is important to note, however, is the keen sense of organization and proportion that all good *maršiya* writers showed. They didn’t directly plunge into the tragic parts, nor did they allow a monotonously lachrymose effect throughout the poem. They displayed a fine awareness of the needs of their audience. The audience wanted pathos as much as a confirmation of their faith, brave heroes as well as tragic figures, situations that would increase the listener’s own fortitude in the face of adversity as well as situations that would force even the hardest heart to melt. As one analyses a *maršiya* one sees clearly how the poet intersperses periods of relative relaxation and exaltation with periods of intense emotional involvement, gradually leading toward the highly charged lamentatory outburst at the end. The second, tears-inducing, type of stanzas are referred to as the *nubkt* parts, while the first kind are called *ṣair-nubkt*, and in a good *maršiya* they would be intermingled very carefully. The *maršiya* writer sought to gain from his audience *rāḥ* (shouts of bravio) in the beginning and *āḥ* (shrills of despair) at the end, the audience being at one and the same time a body of connoisseurs of literature and a gathering of piety-oriented believers. Thus, to use some more indigenous categories, a *maršiya* writer sought to excel in three things: *bazm*, *razm*, and *baun*, i.e., the milieu away from the battlefield, the milieu of the battlefield, and the laments, respectively.

In order to make the above matters more clear, let us analyse the famous *maršiya* of Mir Anis (1802-1874) that begins with the line: *jab qat* ki *musafīr-e ṣab āfād nī* “When the sun cut short the night’s long trail”. It is in the form of a *musaddas*, its meter being a variant of *muẓār*, and consists of 197 stanzas (band). Although its main theme is the martyrdom of the Imam himself, several secondary themes are also introduced, making it more interesting, but not unusual. A rough analysis suggests the following sections. (Numbers in the brackets refer to the stanzas).

I. At the first signs of dawn, the Imam awakens his companions; they gather for the morning prayer, each of them a paragon of spiritual virtues—(1-10; *ma’jār*, containing some elements of *sarāpā* too).

II. A description of the morning in the wilderness, nature itself sings praises of the Creator—(11-21; *cohār*).

III. Ali Akbar, the Imam’s eldest son, says the call for the prayers; his aunt, Zainab, who particularly loves him, cries out in anguish and premonition—(22-26; *ma’jār* no. 1 continues).

IV. On the Imam’s side there is a congregational prayer, on the enemy’s side preparations for battle; as the Imam ends the prayer some arrows fail near him, making him anxious about the children; he goes into the tents to bid farewell to the ladies—(27-40; end of *ma’jār* no. 1, beginning of *ruṣqat*).

V. Abbas, the Imam’s half-brother, stands guard at the door—(41-42; *sarāpā* of Abbas).

VI. The Imam asks Zainab to bring him the relics of his ancestors—the robes of the Prophet, the sword of Ali, etc.—and gets ready—(43-53; *ma’jār* no. 2, containing also the *sarāpā* of Husain).

VII. The banner of the Imam is brought forth and the young sons of Zainab beg her to recommend their names to the Imam; she scolds them—(54-68; *ma’jār* no. 3).

VIII. The Imam praises the children of Zainab, then at her recommendation sends for Abbas to give him the banner—(69-74; end of *ma’jār* no. 3, beginning of *ma’jār* no. 4).

IX. Abbas takes the banner; Husain’s youngest daughter, Sakina, asks Abbas to bring her some water from the river; Hussain and Abbas leave the tents—(75-88; end of *ma’jār* no. no. 4; *ruṣqat*).

X. The martial aspects of the Imam and his companions; they are praise by the houris—(89-96; *sarāpā*).

XI. The Imam’s enemies start the battle; his companions go out to fight and are killed one after another; the Imam brings each corpse back to the tents—(97-108; *ma’jār* no. 5).

XII. It is mid-afternoon and the Imam is all alone; he
goes into the tents to take a final look at his infant son, Ali Asghar; a deliberately shot arrow kills the infant in the Imam’s lap; the Imam buries the tiny body—(109-113; mājara no. 6).

XIII. The Imam comes to the battle field—(114-115; āmad).

XIV. A description of the intense heat—(116-126; cēhra no. 2).

XV. After a heated exchange between the Imam and the commander of the enemies, Ibn Sa’d, the battle begins; the Imam fights with the entire army; his sword is praised in detail—(127-152; jang).

XVI. Unnerved by the ferocity of his attacks and the intensity of the heat, the Imam’s enemies seek his refuge; the Imam, as belils him, sheaths his sword—(153-162; mājara no. 7).

XVII. Ibn Sa’d taunts his soldiers and two of the most fierce attack the Imam; at a command from Allah, Husain unsheaths his sword again and kills them both—(163-175; end of mājara no. 7; jang no. 2).

XVIII. Another Divine Command now tells Husain to cease from battle; the Imam obeys the Will of Allah, is surrounded by the enemy and killed—(176-186; ṣalāḥlat).

XIX. Husain’s mother laments in Paradise; his sister, Zainab, laments on the battle field; Husain’s voice is heard comforting her—(187-196; bāin).

XX. A concluding stanza of pious sentiments and modest self-praise—(197; du’ā’).

At this point, before proceeding further, it would be useful to make note of two features that seem to be both common and crucial to all marāyiya. Firstly, what may be called the leitmotif of the Urdu marāyiya, a belief that life is followed by death followed by life again. In other words Life (transitory) → Death (transitory) → Life (eternal). Secondly, the development of the themes, primary and secondary, in terms of binary oppositions. These binary distinctions arise out of a conviction that Islam itself is anchored in a dichotomy between ISLAM and NON-ISLAM. They gain greater scope and effectiveness from another dichotomy that is crucial to the understanding of most Islamic literatures, that between the

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What immediately strikes us is the fact that only one-fourth of the mārṣiya consists of mubkī material; the rest is expressive of exaltatory ideas, celebrating the piety, bravery, resoluteness, and other virtues of the heroes of Karbalā. Further, except for the natural, long outburst at the end, the mubkī stanzas have carefully been placed, usually in ones and twos, at various strategic points. They act as brief but sharp reminders of the main tragic theme as well as neat transition devices between major sections. There is no doubt that Mir Anis has put much careful thought in this organization of his verses and that it was primarily dictated by the demands of oral presentation.

In another famous mārṣiya (manu-k-e swān-e takallum hál faṣāhat nihār, "My fair speech is to conversation as salt is to food."). Mir Anis has listed the many things that he as a poet desired God to bestow on him. "O Lord," he begins, "Give me eloquence that would soften rocks into wax//Give my verses the force that crying has." Next he says, "May I follow none but my ancestors//Let my verses show no confusion, no obscure word, no bad elipsis." He desires to be able to create scenes depicting both the bażam and the rażm, using only the everyday speech of the gentry. He prays, "Let my marṣiya be not devoid of sad discourses." In conclusion, he writes the following hif couplet: "May I depict grandeur, describe hardships, sing praises too//May the listeners’ hearts rejoice, and grieve, and also acclaim."

The Art of the Urdu Mārṣiya

Another feature that deserves to be noted is the depiction in Urdu mārṣiya of indigenous socio-cultural values and practices: the heroes and heroines are Arabs but they behave like the gentle-folks of Lucknow. Their social mores, marriage customs, uniqueness of feminine speech-habits, family relationships, these are all Indian, specifically of the Muslim upper classes of Lucknow. To a pedant that may seem detracting, if not ridiculous, but if we keep in view the fundamental goal of the mārṣiya writer—make the piety-filled audience respond in an intense emotional manner—we shall have little to object to. The Indianness in descriptions and details brings those events closer to the Indian audience, and makes it easier for it to identify with the martyrs. A historically accurate Arab milieu would have created a wide gulf between the poem and its audience, thwarting the poets in their effort to present an ideal being who could yet be emulated.

Concerning a related matter, Muhammad Sadiq has remarked, "By assigning such a large place to pathos the poets as well as their readers and listeners appear to have overlooked a very important fact, namely, that if the characters are made to wallow in distress, they would come perilously close to losing their dignity and therefore forfeiting the readers' respect." No doubt the fear that is expressed is valid. Many examples can be found where the poet may appear to have lost the necessary sense of proportion. We should, however, refrain, on our part, from projecting our own time-and-space bound values on people of a different period and place. We may not like the ideals of manhood that 19th century Lucknow cherishd, we may even regard the heroes of the Urdu mārṣiya as being slightly effete or overly sentimental, but there is no gainsaying the historical reality of those ideals, and that is what the 19th century masters were seeking to portray. Husain is resolute in the face of incredible odds, yet he is sentimental enough to shed tears too; for shedding tears was a sign of being human as well as a cherished value in the Shi‘îte milieu of the 19th century Lucknow. In any case, as indicated in the analysis above, better poets do not over-emphasize the bāli section, giving it only a relative prominence.

If we look at a marṣiya in isolation, i.e., outside of its context of a majlis, we may get a feeling that it presents only a
8th of Muharram are particularly identified with him. In the four-volume edition of the selected works of Mir Anis, we find thirteen marziyas exclusively about Abbas.11 In all of them certain themes or topics are always present, some exclusive to Abbas, the others required by the conventions of the marziya. In the first category would come references to Abbas being given the banner by Husain, Abbas receiving an empty water-bag from his favorite niece, Sakina, with the plea to bring her some water. Abbas fighting his way to the river and filling the bag, but refusing even to wet his own lips; Abbas’ horse following his master by not taking a drink; and the martyrdom of Abbas on the way back from the river. The second category would cover the more general matters, such as qānūn, rajaz, jang, etc. A closer look shows, however, that in the initial gair-nuḥā sections, Anis has found much scope for variety. (Often that is also true for the other sections.) Consider the following brief descriptions of the mājārā sections in the thirteen marziyas on Abbas.

I. (‘abbās-e ‘ali Ẓire-nayastān-e nafaj hāi, “Abbas b. Ali is the lion of the reed-jungle of Nafaj”): the birth of Abbas; Abbas’ mother gives him into the care of Husain; Abbas tells Ali his devotion to Husain.

II. (‘abbās-e ‘ali yaṣaf-e kan’ān-e ‘ali hāi, “Abbas b. Ali is the Joseph of the Canaan of Ali”): a description of Abbas’ love for Husain; Abbas tells his mother why he is so devoted to Husain, which event is then described by her to Husain; a description of the two tombs in Karbala.

III. (yā rab jahān mīn bhāṣi sē bhāṣi jūdā na hā, “O Lord, may never a brother be separated from his brother”): a meditation on the importance of fraternal ties; the sad plight of Husain after his elder brother Hasan’s death; his relief and joy as Abbas grows up.

IV. (gul āmad-e ‘abbās kā hāt fauj-e sitam mīn, “The hordes of tyranny are in turmoil as Abbas comes”): the soldiers in Yazid’s army talk in awed terms about Abbas; they lose heart thinking of Abbas’ bravery, and become bold only after a harangue by their commander.

V. (‘abbās-e ‘ali gauhar-e daryā-e ẓaraf hāi, “Abbas b. Ali is a pearl of the ocean of honor”): the poet praises Abbas; Abbas is to Husain what Ali was to the Prophet.
VI. (jāṭā hai ṣer-e biḥ-e haidar furāt pur, “The lion of the forest of Ali goes to the Euphrates”): Husain expresses grief at the impending death of Abbas.

VII. (jab qasūq kiyā nahr kā saqqad-e haram na?), “When the water-carrier of the harem set out for the river”: Husain tries to stop Abbas, but he insists on leaving for the battlefield; Abbas tells Husain how he was instructed by his mother on her death-bed never to forsake Husain.

VIII. (al ṭeq-e zabān faunkar-e taqīr dikHādī, “O sword of the tongue display your sharpness of speech”): A description of the 10th day of Muharram; after Qasim’s death, Abbas grieves over the delay in his own martyrdom; Husain’s son Ali Akbar gets ready to join battle, but Abbas complains to Husain and insists on going first.

IX. (ūnād hai karbalā kē nayastā NmNe ṣer kī, “Now arrives the lion in the reed-jungle of Karbala”): Abbas is on the battlefield; Shirm, an evil man who would later kill Husain, makes a nasty comment; Husain rushes to Abbas and restrains him; they bid farewell to each other.

X. (jab ran mēn sur-buland ‘ālī kā ‘alām huq, “When the banner of Ali was raised high on the battlefield”): The battle drum sounds in Yazid’s camp; battle begins, and all the companions of the Imam are killed, except for Ali Akbar and Abbas; Abbas claims precedence; the enemy spies carries the news to the camp.

XI. (‘abbās-e ‘ālī qibla-e arbū-e vafā hāti, “Abbas b. Ali is the cynosure of the people of fidelity”): The journey to Karbala; on the 10th of Muharram, Husain makes his final plea for peace, when Abbas reaches the battlefield, Shirm tries to woo him away through flattery; Abbas rebukes him, but the shouts of the Yazidi soldiers cause concern in Husain’s camp; Abbas’ wife, feeling ashamed, sends out her young son to get the facts.

XII. (jab laṣq-e qasīm kē ‘alāmādūr nē dēkHa, “When the banner-holder saw the corpse of Qasim”): Abbas goes to the Imam and indirectly asks permission to join the battle; Husain asks Abbas’ permission for the same purpose; Abbas now comes out explicitly and insists that he should go first; the two go into the tents; Abbas talks with Zainab and gets her to champion his cause.

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XIII. (ūnād hai jīgār-band-e Ṣah-e qil‘-e-kī Hamān kī, “Now arrives the beloved son of the king who pulled down forts”): A spy of Amr tells him of the events in Husain’s camp; when Abbas reaches the battlefield, Ibn Sa’d tries vainly to win him over; Shirm’s nasty remarks make Abbas enraged.

These brief descriptions do not indicate the degree of variety in the details of these marṣiyā sections; nor have we indicated here the variations and innovations that Anis has introduced in the ruxāt and jang sections. Suffice it to say that even a casual reading of these thirteen marṣiyās does not leave one with an impression of repetition and monotonity.

Another way to reduce monotonity, adopted by Mir Anis and other good poets, is to use carefully chosen epithets, along with his name, to refer to the protagonist of a marṣiyā. Take for example the previously noted marṣiyā: jab qat’ kī musāfat-e ṣab qātī nī, “When the sun cut short the night’s long trail.” It is about the Imam Husain, son of Ali, but in its 197 stanzas, the name Husain is used only 34 times. The rest of the time, Anis uses 72 different epithets, repeating only a few of them more than once. Such is the case also with the secondary characters. These epithets not only add a touch of variety, but also act as reminders to the audience of the various attributes of the heroes of Karbala and of the many legends about them.

There is, however, another kind of monotonity that does make itself felt due to a lack of individualization of these heroes and heroines. Given the religious constraints, the characters in a marṣiyā had to be ideal beings. Not even a suggestion of some fault can be allowed with reference to Husain and his companions; his opponents, on the other hand, have to be completely evil. Thus the protagonists in the marṣiyās are all anonymously ideal. Hardly any trait can be shown to belong exclusively to one and not to the others in the same camp. Even the two persons who do stand out somewhat carefully—namely, Zainab and Abbas—do so not because of some special traits, but rather due to the fact that they are seen interacting with the great many more persons than the others. They stand out because we see them in a vast variety of situations, but they do not develop as characters in the process of the poem.
Urdu does not possess an epic. The closest thing to an epic in spirit are the marqisyas. Recently some attempts have been made to put together several marqisyas by the same poet to form a long poem on the martyrdom of Husain. The most notable work of that kind is ras-'nāma-e unī ("The Epic of Anis"), edited by Syed Mas'ud Husain Razvi. He has chosen sections from various marqisyas by Anis, restricting himself to three meters, and joined them together with the barest minimum of his own contribution. As a result, he has come up with a long poem in the musaddas form, running to more than 1200 stanzas, that begins with the story of the birth of Husain and ends with his death at Karbala. Somewhat fragmentary in the beginning, it still displays the integrity of a single governing vision, which is definable, perhaps, more in terms of religious convictions than literary structures. No doubt it has little gaiety—the dominant note is somber—yet it has powers of exaltation. All in all, it does seem to fulfill the simplest requirements of an epic as laid down by C.M. Bowra. It is "a narrative of some length." It deals with "events which have a certain grandeur and importance and come from a life of action, especially of violent action such as a war," and it gives its readers "a special pleasure because its events and persons enhance our belief in the worth of human achievement and in the dignity and nobility of men."<sup>12</sup> But it is a synthetic work; its canvas is narrow; its characters are ideal, but flatly drawn, and lack in chiaroscuro, and its story is overly burdened with religious zeal and ritual pieté, which particularly reduce any consideration of motives. Thus, in spite of its substantial length, it is neither better nor worse than its parts, the individual marqisyas. Though not quite an epic, it is an impressive enough poem, with numerous powerful passages, and does succeed in suggesting to us the possibilities that the genre had but which could not fully be exploited due to its fundamental identification with a particular religious context.<sup>13</sup>

NOTES

*The following system has been used to transliterate Urdu words.

Consonants: b, p, t, r, f, s, sh, d, j, c, h, x, d, g, k, l, m, n, v, h, y.

Vowels: a, e, i, o, u, au.

Others: N indicates that the preceding vowel is nasalized; H indicates that the preceding consonant is aspirated. The English rules for capitalizing letters are not used.

1. For more information, see mus'īs-īn-zamānī, urdu marqishā kā irādā (Lucknow, 1968), and sīrās husain rāzvi, urdu marqisya (New Delhi, 1965).

2. ızād and the qojda, where the basic unit is a couplet. "... the six-line stanza of the musaddas works on the 'hammer and anvil' principle of the quatrain. In the quatrain, the first three lines are the anvil, being prepared for the reounding blow of the fourth, the hammer. In the musaddas, the first four lines are a preparation for the ıza, the final two lines which form a rhyming couplet. Thus the basic structure remains binary, and the basic unit a ıza, a couplet. ..." (C.M. Naim, "Urdu in the Pre-Modern Period: Synthesis or Particularism?" in *New Quest*, No. 6, February 1978, p. 10).

3. The scheme presented here is based on mus'īs-īn-zamānī, op. cit., and mus'īs-īn hūsain 'rāzvī-ī-e unī (Allahabad, 1931).

4. The text used here is in mus'īs-īn hūsain 'rāzvī, op. cit., pp. 197-236.

5. "The Quaranic outlook divides all human qualities into two radically opposed categories, which—in view of the fact that they are too concrete and semantically too pregnant to be called 'good' and 'bad', or 'right' and 'wrong'—we might simply call the class of positive moral properties and the class of negative moral properties, respectively. The final yardstick by which this division is carried out, is the belief in the one and only God, the creator of all beings. In fact, throughout the Quran there runs the keynote of dualism regarding the moral values of man: the basic dualism of believer and unbeliever." T. Jastit, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (Montreal, 1966), p. 105. Quoted in Gustav Thaiss, "Religious Symbolism and Social Change: The Drama of Husain," in Nikki R. Keddie (Ed.), *Scholars, Saints, Sofa: Muslim Religious Institutions Since 1500* (Berkeley, 1972), p. 358.


7. mus'īs-īn hūsain 'rāzvī, op. cit., pp. 177-178.


9. There are numerous Shi'ite hadith popular among the mourners in Lucknow. According to one, Muhammad promised his daughter Fatima that his followers will for ever shed tears over the brutal death of her son, and thus compensate for the fact that Husain had to die in a wilderness in the company of only a handful of companions. Cf. Gustav Thaiss, op. cit., p. 357, where he quotes a Shi'ite
14. Elsewhere I have shown how the Urdu mas'li anis cannot be regarded as the true precursor of the modern Urdu nagh (a continuous poem on a particular topic, in blank, free, or rhymed verse). Naim, op. cit., p. 10. For a vigorous, but partisan, defense of the Urdu mas'li anis against all criticism, see *alb dabbat bahs, urdu mas'li* (Lucknow, 1973).

8

Three Poems of Iqbal

A.L. Basham

Not being a specialist in the field of Islamic Studies, I cannot offer a worthy contribution to the memorial volume in honour of my old friend Aziz Ahmad. I must, however, record my sincere affection for him, and my deep sorrow at his passing. Urbane and tolerant, gentle and affectionate, he was always a delightful companion, and I still have very happy memories of long talks with him, about everything and nothing, in the Common Room of SOAS when we were colleagues there. I met him also on two occasions during his last illness, and was intensely moved by the courage and faith with which he accepted pain and the certainty of impending death. Since Aziz was a great master of the Urdu language, and a fine literary man as well as a scholar, he might have appreciated the following very humble efforts at expressing in English the thoughts of the greatest Urdu poet of this century.

The background to these translations needs explaining. On the occasion of the centenary of Iqbal’s birth a small society of which I was president, the Asian Society of Canberra, decided to organize a dinner (strictly halal) in the poet’s honour. A fine amateur *qawwāl*, who happened to be resident in Canberra, agreed to chant some of Iqbal’s poems after the meal, and my colleague Dr. S.A.A. Rizvi prepared a brief talk about the great man. But, as it was realized that most of those present would be ignorant of Urdu, it was necessary to provide translations of the poems recited. So, at short notice, I prepared these three translations, helped by Dr. Rizvi in interpreting some of the more difficult passages, and I read them...