

## Preface

As we are approaching the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Muhammad Iqbal's visit to Germany, we can take the chance to review Iqbalīyāt, comparing the times when Iqbal wrote with the time we live in and find out what he said and how we benefit from his words. It may be interesting to read a German's contribution to these reflections.

Annemarie Schimmel's translations of Payām-i Mašriq gave me a first notion of how "Muslims" face the world of "today". Being an undergraduate student, I did not see much of the fact that these views were already seventy years old by then but was amazed by opinions that seemed as fascinating as they seemed different from my own. For example, I never would have thought of Goethe as a saint. Iqbal's poems also were the first to take me out of that Arabian Nights romanticism many of our guild start with and put me on the way towards reality. At that time, I also never would have thought that I should survey Iqbal's world on an arduous but fruitful journey.

Readers of this book will get a close look on what Iqbal actually says in his poems, how he manages to read Hegel and call it Islam and how his poems try to convince their readers of this Islam. Moreover, this book will examine the role of Iqbal as a link between traditional and modern poetry.

Critics may argue that this study is again cold, rational reason instead of burning love for Iqbal, and thus the opposite of what he himself would have wanted. However, I do not intend to deny the joy of reading Iqbal its right. Just as nobody reads a study about increasing the vitamin C content of Punjab oranges in order to know they taste, I refer those who seek taste for Iqbal to enjoying the poems. Those who are curious where this taste comes from, however, may consider this book as enrichment or as challenge to their own point of view.

I hope this study may advance this dialogue between two cultures, which Iqbal himself started, and add to the understanding in a world that is growing together.