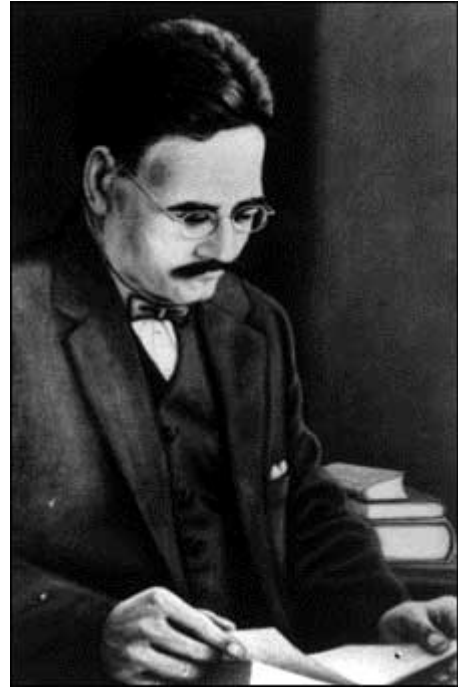


Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938)

Poet, philosopher and political leader, Sir Muhammad Iqbal was born in Sialkot, Western Punjab, in present-day Pakistan on 9th November 1873. After completing his university education at Government College, Lahore, Pakistan, his keen interest in philosophy – in particular, the metaphysics of Persia – brought him to Europe in 1905. He studied for philosophy honours at Cambridge, and then proceeded to Munich to obtain his doctorate in philosophy. Returning to India, he became actively involved in politics, becoming the first advocate of a two-state solution in India. Considered a poet par excellence and foremost Muslim thinker of his time, his poetry and philosophy became instrumental in igniting the Pakistan movement at the time, while enduring as a source of inspiration for many until today.



Among his greatest and longest poems is ***Asrar-e-Khudi*** (1915). Written in Persian, and inspired by Rumi, it concerns itself with the philosophy of religion and stresses the rebirth of Islamic and spiritual redemption through self-development, moral integrity, and individual freedom. R.A. Nicholson, a Cambridge academic translated the poem from Persian into English and titled it *The Secrets of the Self*.

What is being recited is a very brief excerpt from the epilogue to the poem, which takes the form of an invocation (*Dua*), in which Iqbal expounds God's relation with man, expresses his own intellectual and spiritual solitude in this world, and prays for a comrade who could share his vision and feel his passion in life and beyond.

The second recital is an extract from the well-known twin poems ***Shikwa*** (1909) and ***Jawab-e-Shikwa*** (1913) wherein Iqbal articulates the lament of a Muslim on the downfall of the once strong Muslim civilization in the form of a complaint to God (*Shikwa*), and then presents God's answer thereto (*Jawaab-e-Shikwa*).