

Muhammad IQBAL

شکوہ و جوابِ شکوہ

*Shikwa &
Jawab-i-Shikwa*

COMPLAINT AND ANSWER

Iqbal's Dialogue with Allah

*Translated from the Urdu
with an introduction by*

KHUSHWANT SINGH

MUHAMMAD
IQBAL

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Complaint and Answer
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Translated from the Urdu, with an introduction, by

KHUSHWANT SINGH

and a foreword by

RAFIQ ZAKARIA



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Though much of Iqbal's best poetry is written in Persian, notably *Asrar-i-khudi* (1915) and *Javednama* (1932), he is a poet of colossal stature in Urdu, the language he chose to put across his ideas of a regenerated Islam as the hope of the world.

Iqbal especially does this in two of his most controversial poems, *Shikwa* (1909) and *Jawab-i-Shikwa* (1913). They extol the legacy of Islam and its civilizing role in history, bemoan the fate of Muslims everywhere, and squarely confront the dilemmas of Islam in modern times. *Shikwa* is, thus, in the form of a complaint to Allah for having let down the Muslims, and *Jawab-i-Shikwa* is Allah's reply to the poet's complaint. The poems employ some of the traditional Sufi imagery, but the thrust of their arguments is strongly Western. They represent a poignant effort to reconcile Islam and the West. Though Iqbal's message is expressed in Islamic terms, Asians of all faiths have acknowledged his inspiration.

Earlier translations in English of these poems have largely been unsuccessful. The present translation by Khushwant Singh makes Iqbal come alive on the page. It includes an introduction and explanatory notes by him, and a foreword by Rafiq Zakaria.

Khushwant Singh, novelist, translator and historian, is the author of *Train to Pakistan* (1955), *The Mark of Vishnu and Other Stories* (1950), *Hymns of Nanak the Guru* (1969) and *A History of the Sikhs 1469-1964* (1963-66). Currently, he is editor of *The Hindustan Times*, and a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha.

