

**SECRETS OF THE SELF  
(ASRAR-I KHUDI): A  
PHILOSOPHICAL POEM**

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Secrets of the self (Asrar-i khudi): a philosophical poem by Muhammad Iqbal

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**MUHAMMAD IQBAL**

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THE  
SECRETS OF THE SELF  
(ASRÁR-I KHUDÍ)

A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM

BY

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OF LAHORE

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL PERSIAN  
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## INTRODUCTION

THE *Asrâr-i Khudî* was first published at Lahore in 1915. I read it soon afterwards and thought so highly of it that I wrote to Iqbal, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at Cambridge some fifteen years ago, asking leave to prepare an English translation. My proposal was cordially accepted, but in the meantime I found other work to do, which caused the translation to be laid aside until last year. Before submitting it to the reader, a few remarks are necessary concerning the poem and its author.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The present translation follows the text of the second edition.



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Iqbal is an Indian Moslem. During his stay in the West he studied modern philosophy, in which subject he holds degrees from the Universities of Cambridge and Munich. His dissertation on the development of metaphysics in Persia — an illuminating sketch — appeared as a book in 1908. Since then he has developed a philosophy of his own, on which I am able to give some extremely interesting notes communicated by himself. Of this, however, the *Asrār-i Khudī* gives no systematic account, though it puts his ideas in a popular and attractive form. While the Hindu philosophers, in explaining the doctrine of the unity of being, addressed themselves to the head, Iqbal, like the Persian poets who teach the same doctrine, takes a more dangerous course and aims at the heart. He is no mean poet, and his verse can rouse or persuade even if his logic fail to

convince. His message is not for the Mohammedans of India alone, but for Moslems everywhere: accordingly he writes in Persian instead of Hindustani—a happy choice, for amongst educated Moslems there are many familiar with Persian literature, while the Persian language is singularly well adapted to express philosophical ideas in a style at once elevated and charming.

Iqbal comes forward as an apostle, if not to his own age, then to posterity—

“I have no need of the ear of To-day,  
I am the voice of the poet of To-morrow”—

and after Persian fashion he invokes the Saki to fill his cup with wine and pour moonbeams into the dark night of his thought,

“That I may lead home the wanderer,  
And imbue the idle looker-on with restless  
impatience,  
And advance hotly on a new quest,  
And become known as the champion of a new  
spirit.”

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Let us begin at the end. What is the far-off goal on which his eyes are fixed? The answer to that question will discover his true character, and we shall be less likely to stumble on the way if we see whither we are going. Iqbal has drunk deep of European literature, his philosophy owes much to Nietzsche and Bergson, and his poetry often reminds us of Shelley; yet he thinks and feels as a Moslem, and just for this reason his influence may be great. He is a religious enthusiast, inspired by the vision of a New Mecca, a world-wide, theocratic, Utopian state in which all Moslems, no longer divided by the barriers of race and country, shall be one. He will have nothing to do with nationalism and imperialism. These, he says, "rob us of Paradise": they make us strangers to each other, destroy feelings of brotherhood, and sow the bitter seed of war. He dreams