

THE MUSLIM WORLD

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE STUDY
OF ISLAM AND OF CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM
RELATIONSHIP IN PAST AND PRESENT

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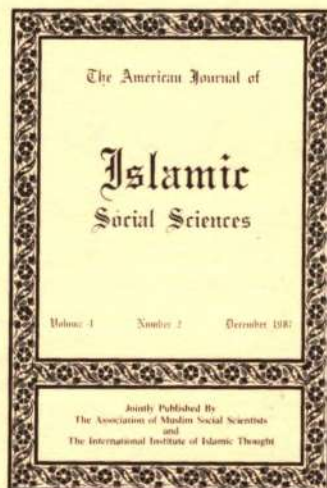
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IMAGES OF JESUS IN THE LITERATURES OF PAKISTAN

Introduction

Images of Jesus appear in national literatures throughout the Islamic world. The reasons are obvious. He is revered as a prophet, praised in the Qurʾān, and familiar from classical Arabic and Persian poetry.¹ This poetry, which ultimately influenced Islamic literatures everywhere, is replete with biblical figures based on the Qurʾānic accounts: Adam as the first man, Job as a symbol of patience, the beauty of Joseph, the faith of Abraham, the wisdom of Solomon, to name only some of the major ones. Jesus too appears in this classical literature, often as a healer, the ideal ascetic, a model for the spiritual life, or even the giver of life.

The Sufi poets in particular found the image of Jesus appealing, perhaps none more so than the thirteenth century Persian poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī:²

Our speech and action is the outer journey,
Our inner journey is above the sky
The body travels on its dusty way,
The spirit walks, like Jesus, on the sea.³

Random references from Rūmī develop related themes, sometimes in a striking manner:

Do not despair, though Mary has gone from your hands, for
That light which drew Jesus to heaven has come.⁴

Jesus from the fourth sphere calls, "Welcome! Wash your
Hands and mouth, for now is the time for the table."⁵

Other familiar images from Rūmī include references to miracles, including one of the young Jesus making a clay bird he has constructed come alive simply by breathing on it.⁶

Of course, not all the portrayals are so positive. The blind tenth century Arab poet Al-Maʿarri sarcastically develops a theme that expresses the sharp division between Islam and Christianity on the person and mission of Christ:

Marvellous! The Messiah amongst mankind, he who was said to
be unbegotten

¹ For a detailed discussion of this background, see Don Wismer, *The Islamic Jesus* (New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1977); and G. Parrinder, *Jesus in the Qurʾān* (London: Faber & Faber, 1965). See also Smail Balic, "The Image of Jesus in Contemporary Islamic Theology," in Annemarie Schimmel and Abdoldjavad Falaturi, eds., *We Believe in One God: The Experience of God in Christianity and Islam* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), pp. 1-8.

² For an interesting perspective on Sufi views of Christ, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), especially pp. 34-35 and 318-19.

³ R.A. Nicholson, tr., *Rūmī: Poet and Mystic* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1950), p. 74.

⁴ A.J. Arberry, tr., *Mystical Poems of Rūmī* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 69.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁶ See John Renard, "Jesus and the Other Gospel Figures in the Writings of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī," *Hamd Is*, X, 2 (1987), 47-64.

The Christians delivered him to the Jews and confessed that they crucified him.

When a child is beaten by lads of the same age, the judicious and reasonable man takes pity on him;

And if what they say about Jesus is true, where was his father?

Why did he abandon his son to the enemy?⁷

Rūmī too at one point emphasizes this difference:

That idea the Christian carried abroad, the Muslim has not that idea, that He is slaying this Messiah upon the cross.⁸

Interestingly, more recent Arabic literature has had less difficulty in accepting the idea of crucifixion. Here, images of the "gentle" Jesus, symbolizing healing and life for the mystic, are supplanted by those of a suffering Christ. Attitudes toward Jesus as reflected in such works as the Egyptian novelist Kamel Hussein's remarkable *City of Wrong* is one which this century,⁹ with all its war, suffering and death, can easily appreciate and understand. In this literature, it is commitment, suffering, and injustice that are emphasized—as we see in the following example from a 1968 collection entitled "Poems in Exile" by the Iraqi poet 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bayyātī:

And his eyes filled with tears
and he said to me:
Jesus
passed by here yesterday, Jesus
His cross: two tree-limbs, green,
blossoming.
His eyes: two stars
His appearance: that of a dove
His bearing: that of songs.
Yesterday he passed by here
and the garden flowered
and children awoke, abounding in grace,
and in the heavens
the stars were
like bells
like crosses
drowned in my tears—the sorrows came
our way to love and oblivion;

⁷ Quoted in R.A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), p. 171.

⁸ Arberry, *Mystical Poems of Rūmī*, p. 78.

⁹ See M. Kamel Hussein, *City of Wrong* (New York: Seabury Press, 1966). Hussein ultimately reflects the traditional view of Islam that Christ in the end was not crucified. But the rejection of Jesus by the people and the will to crucifixion is certainly evident. See also Olaf Schuman, "Present-Day Muslim Writers on Christ," *al-Mushir*, XIX, 1 (1977), 31-43.

And our green earth in her birth-pangs
 weakened by wounds
 was dreaming of lilies and the morning,
 dreaming of a thousand Jesuses who will bear
 their cross in the darkness of prisons.¹⁰

As one recent review of Arabic literature on this theme notes: "Muslim and Christian Arab poets alike have felt free to use the figure of Christ as a secular symbol of political and social commitment, as an image of suffering undertaken on behalf of one's people."¹¹

To a remarkable extent, the image of Jesus as portrayed in the Islamic literatures of Pakistan parallels these developments and presents many of these same themes. The references, although not numerous, are nonetheless intriguing, in particular those in which the transformation of the "healing" Christ of classical Urdu poetry to the "suffering" Christ is presented by more recent writers. Some of the images will immediately strike a note of sympathetic recognition for Christians. Others offer a new perspective on themes that often become clichéd or are simply taken for granted. The aim of this brief essay is to highlight some of the more interesting references to Jesus in the various literatures of Pakistan—and, perhaps, interest others enough to examine in greater detail how his life and presence have been portrayed and how these images continue to influence perceptions regarding Christ and Christianity in Pakistan today.

"Classical" Approaches

Classical Urdu poetry as well as that of the various regional languages of Pakistan¹² echoes to a great extent the figure of Jesus presented in the Arabic and particularly Persian tradition out of which these literatures grew. Arabic and Persian literary roots were firmly planted on the Subcontinent in a variety of ways, not the least because Arabic was the language of the Qurʾān and Persian the vehicle for diplomatic discourse as well as religious treatises and mystical verse. Most early Urdu writers—as well as those in Pushtu, Sindhi, Punjabi, and other regional languages of Pakistan—were intimately familiar with the literary landscape of Arabic and Persian and often wrote in one or both of these languages.

There are numerous examples that can be used to indicate the use and influence of Arabic and Persian in pre-partition Islamic literature. Some of this literature also includes references to Jesus. One interesting example is the saying which the Mughul emperor Akbar is said to have placed over one of the gateways to Fatehpur Sikri in Arabic: "Jesus, on whom be peace, has said, 'the world is merely a bridge: Ye are to pass over it, and not build your dwellings

¹⁰ David Pinault, "Images of Christ in Arabic Literature," *WI*, XXVII (1987), 116–17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 103–25.

¹² For an overview of the various languages and literatures of Pakistan, see Jonathan Addleton, "The Importance of Regional Languages in Pakistan," *al-Mushir*, XXVIII, 2 (1986), 55–80.

upon it.”¹³ Similarly, Khwaja Mir Dard, one of the early Urdu poets, writing in Arabic, makes a reference to having had “breathed into him” the spirit of God “by virtue of the sanctity of Jesus.”¹⁴ Mirza Ghalib, perhaps the most famous Urdu poet of all, reflected this theme in a Persian ghazal that reads, “Oh Ghalib, thy pen reveals the breath of Jesus when it moves in a manner God-bestowed.”¹⁵

The Persian inheritance is especially strong in Pushtu and in references to Christ which appear in the poetry of the seventeenth century literary figure Rahman Baba:

Like Jesus Christ are those who know
For by his breath the dead arose.¹⁶

Similarly, Rahman Baba gives advice to the potential mystic to follow the path of Jesus who, in the Islamic tradition (and echoing the passage from Rūmī quoted earlier), ascended to the fourth of seven heavens:

Take from this terrestrial space
Steps like Jesus into space.¹⁷

A somewhat similar image appears in the poetry of Kushal Khan Khattak, another seventeenth century Pushtu poet:

If winged words could have carried me
In their flight up to the skies
I'd be seated now in the heavenly sphere
Where the prophet Jesus is.¹⁸

So too, the familiar image of Jesus as a healer and giver of life appears in Punjabi literature, in this case as a line in Hasham Shah's eighteenth century version of the Sassi Punnun folk tale well-known throughout the Subcontinent:

¹³ Cited in several sources, including E.J. Jenkinson, “Jesus in Muslim Tradition,” *MW*, XVIII,2 (1928), 266.

¹⁴ Quoted in Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 378. Although not developed further in this brief overview, there is another strand of literature on the Subcontinent which compares other prophets to the Prophet Muḥammad to demonstrate the latter's clear superiority. Schimmel provides several examples of this, all apparently originally in Persian: “God bless him and give him peace, the leader of Moses, the guide of Jesus”; “Certainly Adam is God's special friend, Moses the one with whom God spoke, Jesus is even the spirit of God—but you are something different”; and, more bombastic, “Jesus is a fly, while your speech is sweetmeat from the shop of creation.” See Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muḥammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), pp. 138–40.

¹⁵ Yusuf Husaini, *Persian Ghazals of Ghalib* (New Delhi: Ghalib Institute, 1980), p. 81.

¹⁶ Jens Enevoldsen, tr., *Selections from Rahman Baba* (Herning, Denmark: Paul Kristensen, 1977), p. 43.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁸ D.N. MacKenzie, tr., *Poems from the Diwan of Khushal Khan Khattak* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965), p. 109.

In deepest grief had Sassi sunk,
tormented by his absence.
Her voice and body ceased their function
and senseless was her brain . . .
The tribesmen, Hasham, now like Jesus
gave her life again.¹⁹

As an aside, it is interesting to note that the recurring thread in this particular tragic love story, as told by Hasham Shah, is a comparison with the story of Joseph sold into slavery in Egypt. As the preface to Christopher Shackle's translation notes, these references include a comparison of the grief of Sassi's parents to that of Jacob when he lost his son, the mention of Joseph's concealment in the well, the merchants bringing Joseph to Egypt, his being sold into slavery, and the love felt for Joseph by Potiphar's wife.²⁰

In Sindhi too there are isolated references to Jesus, emphasizing yet again his particular gift for healing. For example, the eighteenth century Urdu mystic Abdur Rahim Girhori, in a long poem of praise to the Prophet Muhammad, refers to several other prophets, including Jesus:

To Jesus, a certain portion of grace was given from this
elixir,
With which the dead were quickened, the deaf became the
hearing;
For the blind: seeing eyes; from the lepers fell their
leprosy.²¹

Not surprisingly, classical Urdu literature contains a number of references to Jesus, most of which follow along the lines of examples already provided from Pushtu, Punjabi, and Sindhi. The eighteenth century Urdu poet Mir Hasan, for example, reflects the widely held view of the asceticism and spirituality of Christ:

If Jesus lives in heaven, it is because
For years he roamed the desert lands of love.²²

Mirza Ghalib, in the nineteenth century, also includes such references, with one ghazal wishing with some longing, "Had there been one like Mary's son, to heal and purify."²³ Elsewhere, he provides a more striking image, reflecting yet again his ability to turn situations upside down and state the unexpected:

A child at play is the throne of Solomon for me;
An ordinary thing is the miracle of the Messiah in my eyes.²⁴

¹⁹ Christopher Shackle, tr., *Hasham Shah: Sassi Punnun* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1985), p. 83.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. VII.

²¹ Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger*, p. 139.

²² Quoted in Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, *Three Moghul Poets* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 156.

²³ Sadullah Sufia, tr., *Hundred Verses of Mirza Ghalib* (Karachi: Times Press, 1965), p. lxxiii.

²⁴ Aijaz Ahmad, ed., *Ghazals of Ghalib* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 161.

On occasion, even classical Urdu love poetry manages to draw in the image of Christ, in this instance, in bombastic fashion, to indicate the depth of the poet Sayyid Insha Ali Khan's love:

I swear to you by the Holy Spirit and the Messiah
 I swear to you by Mary and her virginity
 I swear to you by the Torah and the Gospels,
 by the Psalms and the Qur'ān.²⁵

As the above should make clear, the "classical" period in each of the main literary traditions existing in Pakistan today reflects, broadly, a view of Jesus similar to the one passed down through Arabic and Persian poetry. Much of the imagery is also the same. Jesus is highly respected as a prophet, and his healing power and ability to raise the dead is given special recognition. These gifts become a symbol—at times even a metaphor—for healing experienced or described by later writers. So too, his "Sermon on the Mount" approach to the spiritual life is used as a model worthy of emulation. Jesus thus becomes one of a number of God-inspired prophets whose life and work can serve as an example for Muslims to follow.

Twentieth Century Views

Muhammad Iqbal, as the "poet-philosopher" whose ideas helped lead to the establishment of Pakistan,²⁶ is an appropriate starting point for looking at views of Christ in more recent Pakistani literature. The contrast is striking and indicates a clear break from the familiar "Sermon on the Mount" Jesus of classical Urdu poetry. As Annemarie Schimmel notes, "The person of Christ takes no important place in his religious symbolism. Whosoever has read Oriental poetry knows how widely spread the symbol of the life-giving breath of Christ is. In Iqbal, he is scarcely mentioned, and in a typical strain, turned against the Europeans."²⁷ Schimmel also states:

The figures of Adam, Abraham, and Moses are used, in Iqbal's poetry, with more or less important variations, as models of life and behaviour for every faithful Muslim. But the figure of Jesus Christ is handled quite differently in his work, and the picture of Christianity is dark and full of bitter criticism.²⁸

Again:

He had not such a relation to him as he had to Abraham and Moses, the powerful prophets, Jesus being regarded since the times of early Sufism as

²⁵ D.J. Matthews and C. Shackle, tr., *An Anthology of Classical Urdu Love Lyrics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 86.

²⁶ For a collection of essays that develop this theme, see Hafeez Malik, ed., *Iqbal: Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

²⁷ Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), p. 264.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

a model of that asceticism and renunciation of which Iqbal wanted to rid his people.²⁹

No doubt Iqbal's attitude toward the "Christian West" in particular reflects the fact that India was at that time ruled by European (Christian) powers and actively struggling for independence. Nietzsche's influence on Iqbal also played a role. To balance this perspective, one should point to the passage (in Persian) in Iqbal's *Javed-Nama* that reflects a more positive and traditional view of Christ: "The Son of Mary, that lamp of all creation whose light lit up the world."³⁰ Yet the fact remains that Iqbal was in fundamental disagreement with the basic point of orthodox Christianity. "No religious system can ignore the moral value of suffering," Iqbal himself wrote. "The error of the builders of Christianity was that they based their religion on the factor of suffering alone, and ignored all the other factors."³¹

Mirza Qalich Beg, perhaps the most outstanding Sindhi literary figure of this century and a near-contemporary of Iqbal's, had little difficulty in accepting traditional views of Jesus—not only those narrated in the Qur'an but also those provided in the Gospels. His atypical but nonetheless fascinating *Sawanih-i-umr-i Yasu Masih* ("Life of Jesus Christ") relates the life of Christ in verse, beginning with the Old Testament prophecies and including his birth, teaching in the temple as a child, baptism, temptation, teachings, parables, and even crucifixion and resurrection. The love and humility attributed to Christ are highlighted throughout, and the closing "Request to the Readers" is especially remarkable:

All you readers have had this news,
Ponder on whatever you read.
You know the full account of Jesus;
You know also all his deeds.
He had loved the world greatly always,
Suffered and sacrificed for the world.
He gave teaching, preached everywhere;
In every way he expressed the truth.
The ones who believe will live joyfully,
And have salvation hereafter.³²

Further background on Beg's life and times is perhaps important to understanding this literary work. His father came from an area which is now in Soviet Georgia and apparently was a Christian. Captured in war, he became a Muslim and was eventually brought to Hyderabad in Sind during the time of the Talpurs. Beg, one of several sons, was born in 1853 and died in 1929. He entered government service and finished his career as a minor official in Shikarpur in

²⁹ Ibid., p. 265.

³⁰ A.J. Arberry, tr., *Sir Muhammad Iqbal's "Javed-Nama"* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966), p. 50.

³¹ Quoted in Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 266.

³² Translation provided by F.H. Addleton and Muktar Ahmad Hajano of Karachi.

upper Sind. He is believed to have assisted early missionaries in the translation of at least the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

Beg is best known for his wide-ranging interests and prodigious literary production—several hundred volumes, not all of which have been published. His legacy includes historic treatises and religious works as well as the first novel in Sindhi. He single-handedly introduced a wide range of European literature and history to a Sindhi-speaking audience, placing his translations of Shakespeare's dramas in an Indian setting. Other translations included biographies, self-help books, histories, and novels (including versions of Sherlock Holmes, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Robinson Crusoe*). Beg's combination of Sufi universalism and Victorian practicality is in many ways more a product of the nineteenth than the twentieth century. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that his eclectic literary output in Sindhi included an almost unique and heretofore unprecedented presentation of Christ.³³

Also in contrast to Iqbal's largely negative view of Christ—at least the image of a suffering Christ—there is a remarkable poem by that other giant of twentieth century Urdu literature, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, that touches not so much on the moral value as on the redemptive possibilities of suffering. The date is December 1954, the scene a jail cell in the Punjabi district town of Montgomery (now Sahiwal). The crosses referred to in the poem are formed by the crossed bars over the cell window. The poem, from Faiz's *Zindan-Nama* ("Prison Thoughts"), is quoted here in its entirety:

In my barred window is hung many a cross
Each colored with the blood of its own Christ,
Each craving to hug tight a divine form.

On one the heaven's spring cloud is sacrificed,
On one the radiant moon is crucified,
On one is torn asunder the trance-filled grove,
And on another the delicate breeze has died.

Daily these kind and beautiful godlike things
Come weltering in their blood to my bitter cell;
And day by day before my watching eyes
Their martyred bodies are raised up and made well.³⁴

As the translator Victor Kiernan points out (and as the classical literary tradition confirms), "for Muslims Jesus is a prophet and miracle-worker, but is not believed to have suffered the shameful humiliation of crucifixion," and that "Faiz is the first Urdu poet to make an imaginative use of the idea of death on the cross."³⁵ Although it is debatable whether in fact Faiz was the first to em-

³³ Much of this background material is taken from Annemarie Schimmel's essay on Mirza Qalich Beg ("Mirza Qalich Beg and his Novel *Zinat*") in her *Pearls From the Indus: Studies in Sindhi Culture* (Hyderabad: Sindhi Adabi Board, 1986), pp. 175–205.

³⁴ V.G. Kiernan, tr., *Poems by Faiz* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), pp. 205, 207.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

ploy this idea, it is nevertheless one of a growing number of clear references to Christ on the cross in Urdu literature in contexts that would have been inexplicable to the classical writers.

Ahmad Faraz, like Faiz familiar with jail as well as exile, provides another example from contemporary Urdu poetry. Here too the emphasis is on suffering and death—and, in this case perhaps, on shared responsibility and blame:

Come, let us mourn
the bloodied corpse of that Jesus
whom we crucified,
and weep.

We have not done our duty well;
it is time to settle accounts.

Let him take the slippers
who made the cross;
the shroud belongs to the one
who nailed him;
and he deserves the crown of thorns
whose eyes had tears.

Come, let us claim now
we are all Christ;
let us alone show them
we can wake the dead!
But his word was everything:
Where is the word?³⁶

Not all references to Jesus and the cross in contemporary Urdu literature are necessarily so long.³⁷ In Zia Jalandhari's interesting poem entitled "Habil" (Abel), the cross becomes one example in a long list of secular symbols, taken from history, religious tradition, and current events, used to underscore injustice and oppression:

The earth had its first taste of the bitterness of blood,
When I fell on it like a severed bough.
What baleful fire showed in Cain's eyes!
Was it envy, greed, anger or contempt? What was it?

For countless generations this thirst for my blood had
taken the form
Of Nimrod's fire and Pharaoh's arrogance;

³⁶ Mahmood Jamal, tr., *The Penguin Book of Modern Urdu Poetry* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 94.

³⁷ Nor so sympathetic. The Urdu poet (from Bombay) Akhtar-ul-Imam refers to both Christ and Buddha in one of his poems with the cynical phrase, "Sit beneath the Bodhi tree or go and get crucified, the bulls will go on fighting." See Mahmood Jamal, tr., *The Penguin Book of Modern Urdu Poetry*, p. 65.

The Poisoned Chalice, the Adze, the Cross,
 The dagger of Shamr, and the quiver of Changez Khan;
 The bloodshed of Asia and Africa,
 And the bombs dropped all over Vietnam.³⁸

Although crucifixion is the most common image in those occasional instances where Jesus does make an entry into contemporary Pakistani literature, it is not the only one. For example, Ahsan Danish, who often alludes to Jesus in his poetry, makes an interesting image at one point:

the rays of the sunset on the church
 make it look like the son of Mary's rose³⁹

Finally, Alamgir Hashmi provides an interesting and unusual perspective on an incident in the life of Jesus recorded in the New Testament that even many Christians would be hard-pressed to recall. The poem, most of which is quoted here, is written originally in English and titled simply "Galilee." The name Jesus is not mentioned but the reference is clear and strangely moving:

For all this, hot and tired,
 with his dozen men, he had walked all day
 over the dusty roads in Galilee.
 And, now, the two messengers
 were returning with the news;
 they could not stay the night in this village
 below the hill.

Their cheeks were flushed,
 their voices angry. And as they came
 nearer, they quickened their pace,
 each wanting to be first to explode.
 Breathlessly they told it . . .

The people in the village had refused
 to receive them,
 had given them blunt notice
 to seek shelter somewhere else.
 The other ten were indignant too.
 This backwoods country refused to have their master
 while crowds in the metropolis followed
 his shadow.
 He had healed the sick
 and given freely to the poor.

³⁸ Quoted in Muhammad Sadiq, *A History of Urdu Literature* (second edition, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 564.

³⁹ Translation and reference supplied by Joel De Hurt and Mohammad Isaq Shor.

“Lord, these people are insufferable,”
 one cried. “Let us call down fire from heaven,”
 The other joined,
 “Make them pay for their boorishness.
 Show them they cannot affront
 us with impunity. Come, Lord,
 the fire . . .”

But there are times when nothing a man can say
 is saying
 that fire would consume where words failed;
 that even his silence
 would convict them of their folly.
 They wish they had not spoken
 so quickly, they wonder what he thinks.

His lips tightened.
 His eyes strained, foreshadowing the bitter weeks.
 Quietly he gathered up his shawl.
 Down the hot road they trailed
 after him to his silence.⁴⁰

This final poem, vaguely reminiscent of Jorge Luis Borges' "John 1:14"⁴¹ or Robert Graves' "In the Wilderness,"⁴² touches on the humanness of Jesus that in the Christian tradition can all too easily be forgotten. Although reflecting very much a secular view of Jesus, it nevertheless shows him as a compelling figure, inspiring not only contemporaries in first century Palestine but also writers of today. In *Jesus Through the Centuries*, Jaroslav Pelikan notes that the Islamic view of Jesus as "only" a prophet and forerunner to Muḥammad meant that "the potential significance of the figure of Jesus as a meeting ground . . . for Christians and Muslims has never materialized."⁴³ And yet, in these and similar perspectives on Christ in contemporary Pakistani literatures, the very ambiguity of the description offers a kind of meeting place—and leaves room for wonder—among Muslims as well as Christians.

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⁴⁰ Alamgir Hashmi, *My Second in Kentucky* (Lahore: Vision Press, 1981), pp. 57–58.

⁴¹ Jorge Luis Borges, *In Praise of Darkness* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1974), pp. 15, 17.

⁴² Robert Graves, *Collected Poems* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1966), p. 3.

⁴³ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 17.