

## ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL: A Profile

Dr. Naseem Ahmad

The doyen of Islamic Studies and a leading orientalist, Professor Annemarie Schimmel passed away on 26 January 2003. With a keen interest in the intellectual and spiritual aspects of Islamic Culture, she wrote with profound authority on sufism and Islamic religious thought. She was a prolific writer in Arabic, Turkish Persian and Urdu literature.

She was highly interested in Allâma Iqbal's works and was the chairperson, for a number of years of German-Pakistan Forum and European Iqbal Institute. She translated a number of Iqbal's works in German including *Bâl-e-Jibrail*, *Payâme-Mashriq*, in 1963 and 1977 respectively. She also wrote a book on Iqbal in German-*Muhammad Iqbal-Prophetischer Poet und Philosoph* (Prophetic Poet and Philosopher) in 1989. She also wrote the book *A Dance of Sparks Imagery of Fire in Ghalib's Poetry*. Some other important works that she wrote about the culture of Indian subcontinent are *Islamic Literature in India*, *Sindhi Literature*, *Classical Urdu*, *Literature*, *Islam in the Indian subcontinent* and *Islam in India and Pakistan*.

A great lover of *tasawwuf*, Prof. Schimmel's wrote a number of books on this theme. Her book *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (1974) is a fundamental source on the subject. Prof. Schimmel also wrote some works on the sufi legend Maulana Jalal al-din Rumi. Last but not the least is her *Und Muhammad ist Sein Prophet* (1981) that was followed by its widely known English translation *And Muhammad is His Messenger*. Annemarie Schimmel was a versatile translator also. She translated numerous works into German from Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Sindhi, Siraiki, Pashto and Punjabi.

Born in Erfurt, Germany, on 7 April, 1922, Schimmel obtained her first Ph.D. in Islamic Art from the University of Berlin in 1941 and her second doctorate in the History of Religion from the University of Marburg in 1951, where she taught Islamic Studies. She was a Professor of the History of the Religion at Ankara University between 1954-59. She was also Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Bonn in 1966. She also taught at Harvard University as Professor of Indo-Muslim culture till her retirement in 1992. Schimmel was honoured with a host of civilian awards for her excellence in Research in Islamic Studies by the Governments of Pakistan and Germany. Annemarie Schimmel's death is a great loss to human society. May Allah bless her soul.