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Preface

About four years ago I received a letter from Mr. S. M. Sharif, Educational Adviser to the Government of Pakistan and now Secretary in the Ministry of Education, drawing my attention to the fact that there was no detailed History of Muslim Philosophy in the English language and inviting me to draw up a scheme for the preparation of such a History. The scheme prepared by me envisaged the collaboration of eighty scholars from all over the world. The blue-prints of the plan were placed by Mr. S. M. Sharif before the Government of Pakistan for approval and provision of funds. The Cabinet by a special ordinance deputed me to edit the History, and appointed a Committee consisting of the following to steer the scheme through:

Mr. I. I. Kazi, Vice-Chancellor, University of Sind (Chairman)

The Educational Adviser to the Government of Pakistan (Member)

Mr. Mumtaz Hasan, then Secretary Finance, Government of Pakistan, and now Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission (Member)

Dr. Khalifah Abdul Hakim, Director, Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore (Member)

Dr. Serajul Haque, Head of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. University of Dacca (Member)

Professor M. Abdul Hye, Vice-Principal, Government College, Rajshahi (Member)

Myself (Member-Secretary)

The Committee was later enlarged by the addition of Dr. M. Ahmed, ViceChancellor, Rajshahi University.

But for the initiative taken by Mr. S. M. Sharif and the constant help and encouragement received from

him, a liberal grant from the State, and most willing co-operation from the Chairman and members of the Committee, it would not have been possible for me to bring this work to completion.

From the very beginning I have been aware of the sheer impossibility of doing full justice to such a vast canvas of movements, thinkers, and thoughts. I am most grateful to the large number of contributors who have made at least the outlines of the entire picture possible.

As this is the first major work on the history of Muslim philosophy it is bound to have many deficiencies, but a beginning had to be made and it has been made with the hope that it will pave the way for future improvements.

In a collaboration work like this complete uniformity of language, style, and points of view, and evenness of quality and length, are hard to achieve. However, efforts have been made to keep disparity in these matters as well as in transliteration, capitalization and punctuation as much within bounds as possible. Credit for whatever merits these volumes have must go to those who have joined this venture; responsibility for whatever faults it may have is mine.

I wish to express the Committee of Directors' deep gratitude to Asia Foundation for its gift of the paper used in this work, and my personal thanks to its Representative in Pakistan,
Mr. Curbs Farrar, for the keen interest evinced by him throughout the course of its preparation.

I have to acknowledge my great obligation to Mr. R. K. V. Goldstein of Aitchison College, Lahore, and Mr. Hugh Gethin of the University of the Panjab for their helpful guidance in the matter of language. I am equally indebted to Professor M. Saeed Sheikh of Government College, Lahore, who has not only gone over the whole typescript and read proofs but has also suggested many improvements in thought and expression.

I must also express my thanks to Mr. Mumtaz Hasan for his valuable suggestions towards the removal of some apologetic passages from the original manuscript, and to him as well as to Professor M. Abdul Hye, Mr. A. H. Kardar, and Dr. Serajul Haque for reading several chapters and drawing my attention to some omissions.

My thanks are also due to Mr. Ashraf Darr for preparing the Index and helping me in proof-reading, to Mr. Ashiq Husain for typing the whole manuscript, Mr. Abdus Salam for putting in the diacritical marks, and Mr. Javid Altaf, a brilliant young scholar, for checking capitalization.

In the end I have to note with great regret that two of the contributors to the work,
Dr. Khalifah Abdul Hakim of Pakistan who was also a member of the Committee of Directors and Dr. Mecdut Mansuroglu of Turkey, have passed away. May their souls rest in peace!

Lahore: August 1, 1961

M. M. Sharif

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