Jacobüs Michael: A Pioneer Designer and Calligrapher of Indo-Pakistan

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ABSTRACT: *Jacobüs Michael's contribution in the field of research, design and calligraphy in Indo-Pakistan is prodigious, yet he was lost to history, primarily because he did not promote his work, and partly because those responsible for giving him credit failed to do so. This paper attempts to reconstruct the life and works of this researcher-designer through the narratives of his life, and his seminal works, the impact of which is phenomenal.*

Key words: writer, designer, calligrapher, researcher, sūfi.

Jacobüs Michael was one of the pioneer commercial artists of twentieth century sub-continent, Indo-Pakistan. Despite the fact, Michael's literary style and his virtuosity in design and calligraphy were hailed in the beginning, yet he was lost to history; mainly because he lived a life of a Ṣūfi, caring little about promoting himself, and partly because credit was not given to him that was his due. This paper endeavours to retrieve Michael from the lost archives of history, by piecing together the narratives of his life, designed to give this researcher-designer credit for his seminal works, the impact of which is beyond measure.

In Colonial India, at the turn of the twentieth century, Jacobüs Michael was born to Nūr Aḥmed Michael, a local Christian of Indo-Pakistan. A black and white photograph of Michael is significant from many angles. It gives the date and place of birth of the artist, in his own handwriting, authenticated by his shortened signature. The information written on this photograph is, "*Mac.* 44. 'Mac' means Jacobüs Michael, s/o. N. A. Michael. Born. 20ṭḥ December 1905 at Rawalpindi" (fig. 1). According to this information, the photograph was shot in 1944, when Michael was thirty nine years old, whereby at the time of creation of Pakistan in 1947, he was forty two years old. Later the designer underwent a radical change; he grew a beard, became more of a recluse, appeared comfortable in his unkempt demeanor, and developed Ṣūfi tendencies.

Michael's photograph is important from another angle; it successfully portrays his fascinating personality. It appears Michael posed for this photograph so as to reflect his self. The portrait is in profile. His brownish complexion is spotted with conspicuous marks left by small-pox. He holds a cigarette between the index and middle finger of his right hand, from which smoke meanders rhythmically. The contour of his face is angular and his features are well-defined. Michael has not made an attempt to put up a smile. His sharp nose and deep-set pensive eyes give a determined and focused look, and reflect his forceful but magnanimous nature, and mirrors his romantic but contemplative disposition that is tinted by melancholy. Michael's well-visualized and well-shot photograph proves that he was a skilled and creative photographer, who understood the technique and art of photography. His imagination and technical ability is also noticeable from the conscious display and successful capture of the smoke that emits from his cigarette.

Coincidently, this portrait of Michael bears resembles with a painting by Chughtā'i, *Will and Power*, which is one of his masterpieces (fig. 2). Michael and Chughtā'i belong to the same era, city and profession. There is evidence that both artists were in contact, as may be seen from a clipping of *Mashriq* newspaper, of an interview of Michael, conducted by a journalist (fig. 3). It is not to imply, Michael sat for the portrait since it is a well-known fact that Chughtā'i did not paint from models. But it cannot be denied that all artists draw inspiration from their environment, and Chughtā'i was no exception. After all, if an artist does not absorb his surrounding and echo it in his work, in his own way and style, he can hardly be termed as a genuine artist.

Concerning the clipping of *Mashriq* newspaper, it presents Michael's defense regarding his faith, Islam, and his stand on plagiarism about a famous cartoonist. Some part of the content of this clipping has been translated in English:

> "Being a Muslim, I am providing evidence of my openheartedness, and instead of filing a suit in court, I leave my matter to the Messenger of Ḥijāz. He himself and those who take his name, that is his followers (*ummat*), will demand the settlement of my right (*ḥaq*)"
>
> Mr. Michal said, "As far as the issue of plagiarism of Mīr Ṣāhib's cartoons is concerned, I have given my views in the joint statement that was issued. I am happy that the famous artists of Pakistan, including, Mr. Ȧbd al-Raḥmān Chughtā'i, Ustād Allāh Bukhsh, and Muḥammad Ḥuṣṣain Ṣāhib, agree with my standpoint; and have given their sincere opinion" (*Mashriq* 11 Aug. 1964, trans. author).

It is not in the purview of this paper to discuss the issue of plagiarism of the cartoons, but the matter of Michael's faith has been solved beyond doubt, backed by evidence. For our present purpose, the clipping gives us insightful hints into the character of the artist. Worth noting are some points, Michael's clarity of thought, his economy of words and his forgiving nature for those who erred against him, as opposed to the negative role of society that denied him his rights. His reverence for the Messenger of Ḥijāz, Prophet Muḥmmad (*saw*), and his

remarkable faith in providence, perhaps which is being realized almost three decades after his death. Worth appreciating is his confidence in the wisdom of adopting a collective approach, and his recognition for the value of giving sincere advice.

In his early days, Michael operated films in Nathiagali and Murree for which he had to commute between the two hills in a single day. Later he settled in Lahore, where he lived most of his life, stationed in his studio at Royal Park, Lakshmi Chauk, Macleod Road. There were many cinemas and offices of the film industry in this area, from where promotional work for the films and advertisements was carried out. In those days the film industry was a lucrative business in Lahore. It supported secondary and tertiary industries and services, including signboard and backdrop paintings for stage and film, printing presses, commercial art, photography and bill board painting. The business of advertising suited Michael because he was trained in the field of arts and auto-graphic methods of printing. Michael set up his studio in this area and started working as a free-lance commercial artist.

Though many books have been written on the artists of Pakistan, yet none of these books have given an exclusive note on Michael, mainly because he was a commercial artist and does not fall in the category of painters of Pakistan. Since no book or research work has so far been carried out on the contributions of the designers of Pakistan, hence Michael's name is in the oblivion. But it must be remembered that in some manner his contribution out smarts that of many painters, as such he must be given his due. Few writers have mentioned his name but only in reference with Aḥmed Pervez (d. 1979), who was a prominent artist of Pakistan, besides being Michael's student, Pervez was his elder brother Jehāngir Janjūa's son.

The information regarding Pervez's background also overlaps Michael's ancestry. Ȧdīl Shafi'a has written a book in Urdu, *Char Jadīd Maṣawwīr* [*Four Modern Artists*]: *Aḥmed Pervez, Sayyīd Ȧli Imām, Anwar Jalāl Shamza, Qaṭab Sheikh.* In which he quotes Aḥmed Pervez and his sister Begum Nāz, the distinguish writer of English, to fill-in the data on the background of Pervez. According to the brother and sister their ancestors were Rājputs, belonging to Janjūa tribe. Their great-grand-father was Rāja Mal who was a Hindu in the times of the Mughals,

but after the death of the Rāja, his son accepted Islam. The family of Pervez hailed from a village, Malut in Photohar, subsequently they settled in Rawalpindi. Their grandfather, Nūr al-Dīn [Nūr Aḥmed Michael] was a Christian and their Nana was the Chief Minister of Chamba State, near Dalhousie, Hindustan (33). *The Glossary of Tribes* records that when Maḥmūd of Ghazni (971-1030) invaded India, Rāja Mal's authority was largely recognized from Rawalpindi to Jhelum. The Janjūas opposed Maḥmūd, but were defeated, they fled to the jungles. Maḥmūd went after them and captured Rāja Mal, but let him go on the condition that the Rāja and his tribe should embrace Islam (vol. 2. 355). According to this information Michael's ancestors had become Muslims in the times of Maḥmūd of Ghazni.

Muḥammad Ȧta ur-Raḥīm (d. 2003) better known as M. A. Raḥīm (fig. 5) was Michael's most trusted friend. His press was in the same vicinity as Michael's studio. The archival material and information on Michael was provided to me by my father, Raḥīm a year before he passed away[1]. According to this information, Jacobüs Michael's father, Nūr Aḥmed Michael was born to a Muslim family, as per tradition he was sent to a mosque for his early education. It so happened, the *maulvi* (priest) of the mosque thrashed Nūr with a *ḋanḋa* (thick stick) ruthlessly. Nūr was terrified and ran away from home to a Christian Priest, who raised him up to be a Christian and educated him to be a successful civil-engineer-contractor of Punjab. Nūr built some important buildings of Punjab, especially the missionary schools and churches, and was a very wealthy land owner of Ṭench Bhāṭṭa, Rawalpindi.

The evidence that Jacobüs Michael's father was a Muslim who accepted Christianity is authenticated from Michael's note written in his fluid handwriting, on the obverse side of his research paper, *AlFātiḥa* (fig. 11). The note reads, "Dedicated to the ignorance of my deceased father, Noor Ahmed Michael; which became a bliss to me" (fig. 12). The fact that Nūr Michael was a successful engineer working with the priests of Lahore is corroborated by a reference to an Engineer, Mr. Michael, in Colonel H. R. Goulding's book, *Old Lahore: Reminiscences of a*

[1] The photographs and all the archival material presented in this Research Paper are in the possession of the author of the thesis, Dr. Ṣafīa Raḥīm Farooq, who reserves all the copyrights of this archival material.

Resident, associated with the Civil Military Gazette Press, Lahore, of 1924. The allusion relates to the editing and printing of the *Delhi Institute Journal* from Lahore, at the press located in *Naulakha* area:

> The chronicle press was described as being, "kept and used at Lahore, in the Naulakha suburbs of Lahore", Naulakha being the name of locality in which Dai Anga's Mosque is situated.
>
> Mr. Wagentrieber, a well-known resident of Delhi was the proprietor and editor and it was arranged that he should be aided in his editorial duties by Mr. Fred Cooper, others associated with the editorial duties staff were the Civil Surgeon the Headmaster Mr. Michael Railway Engineer; Mr. Campbell – Executive Engineer, the Revered. Thomas Evans and […] (39).

The Naulakha Church is a Presbyterian Church. It is a simple building and is located on Nicholson Road in Lahore, opposite Ḥajj Complex (fig.6). The reference to a Mr. Michael in the *Civil Military Gazette* shows Nūr Michael was an educated and accomplished man, influential in the high circles of Colonial India and active in the field of education, printing, publishing, engineering and construction of buildings. According to the information passed on by Michael to Raḥīm, at the time of war between Ireland and England, Nūr Michael supported Ireland because the nuns and priests, who were his friends, were from Ireland. He even sent two ship loads full of armament to Ireland.

Nūr Michael married a Christian girl, from whom Jacobüs Michael was born. When Jacobüs Michael passed his Matric Exam, his father sent him to Vatican, Rome to become a priest. At Vatican, Michael became an accomplished man of letters and art. While studying in the archives at Vatican, a momentous event transpired, Michael came across two archival manuscripts of the Bible, in which the coming of Prophet Muḥammad (*saws*) had been foretold. This opened Michael's eyes and changed his life forever. In the last year of his education at Vatican, Michael managed to steal the two Bibles and fled to Delhi, where he presented these Bibles to the Imām of Jāmi'ah Mosque Delhi and accepted Islam on the hands of the Imām. The new name given to

Michael was Y'aqwb Michael, but hardly anyone called him by this name.

Michael possessed a distinct personality, people either feared or revered him; a few even disliked him, primarily because he was a power to be reckoned with. The stories of his life illustrate this lucidly. Michael fell in love with a Christian girl and decided to tie in wedlock with her. But the priest of Naulkha Church declined him this right and proclaimed, "This bell will not toll on your wedding". Infuriated, Michael retorted, "If this bell will not toll on my wedding it will not toll at all". The following Sunday, the bell did not toll; because the clapper of the bell had gone missing. In the dark of the night Michael had removed the clapper. The priests were enraged and registered a case against Michael. After four to five days the clapper was found by some fisherman from the river Rāvi, who took it to Landa Bazār to sell it, but they were caught there and put behind bars and were beaten. News of this reached Michael so he sent an advocate to free the fishermen and instruct them to say that Ḥaḍrat Khiḍar had given the clapper to them.

The whole incident annoyed Michael's fiancée, so he publically announced that a search be conducted for the clapper, and to everyone's surprise the clapper was found on the roof of the priest's house, which was then fixed back in place. In order to authenticate this story, I sent my students to conduct interviews and carry out research. After several tiring visits they were successful in interviewing Pastor Rev. Majid Abel, Rev. Jāwīd Khān, Father Māni, and Bābu Rāji, assistant secretary of the church. They were all cordial and allowed the students to take photographs, but efforts to get information and access to the archival material of the church were denied, on the grounds that these had been sent to America. They validate the story to the extent, that it was within their knowledge that the clapper had been stolen, but was later found and fixed. The Naulakha Church has been renovated, though the bell that adorns the tower of the Church is the same bell (fig. 7). The incident says much about the personality of Michael.

Michael married (wife fig. 8) and had a daughter, whom he named, Mona Michael, but when the child was about two and half years old, unfortunately his wife died. Michael tried desperately that his daughter could be raised by a Muslim family, especially by his friend,

Ala al-Dīn Ṣaddīqi of Islāmīyāt Department, University of the Punjab, but this was not to happen. Michael sent his daughter, Mona to study at the Convent in Murree. It is important to note that Michael regularly paid Mona's school dues and boarding expenses.

Mona grew up at the Convent. She was in contact with her father through letters in which she tried to convince him to revert to Christianity. On the other hand, Michael persuaded her to be a Muslim. Much to the dismay of Michael the nuns raised Mona to be a Christian. Michael threatened to disinherit Mona, but she did not succumb to his will. The situation was further aggravated when Mona decided to marry John Carapiett, a Christian pilot in the Pakistan Air Force, who later rose to the rank of Group Captain. Relationship between Michael and Mona remained estranged for some years. On Mona's request, Raḥīm made persistent efforts and managed to convince Michael to mend matters with his daughter. Mona became the mother of three children, Catharine, John (Junior), and Mona (Junior). Michael maintained a diary in which he noted the successive addresses of the Carapietts (fig. 9). Occasionally Mona and Carapiett visited Michael in Lahore and met Raḥīm and his family, who reciprocated by visiting them at Sargodha Air Base (fig. 10).

I interviewed Group Captain Cecil Chaudhry (d. 2012), when he was the Principal of Saint Anthony's High School, Lahore. Cecil told me, his sister and Mona studied at Presentation Convent Murree, where Mona met Carapiett when she was teaching there. And when Carapiett went to meet Michael to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage, Cecil too accompanied him. Cecil remembered graphically, that when he introduced Carapiett to Michael and stated the purpose of their visit, Michael kept on doodling, and did not speak for a while. Finally, he looked up and pushed his sketch book towards Cecil, enquiring whether Cecil approved that Michael should marry his daughter to a person who looked like the man he had drawn in the sketches. To the astonishment of Cecil, Michael had made caricatures of Carapiett with funny expressions on his face. Cecil could not help being amused. This account reveals that Michael was a witty man and a skilled cartoonist, who could draw caricatures within minutes, an ability that must have been useful in making advertisements.

Michael's personal life was that of a Ṣūfi, devoted to furthering and imparting knowledge and bringing it to the service of Allāh and His people. In the colonial times and after the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Michael used his overpowering personality to defend the rights of the Muslims and oppressed people of Pakistan, as is also obvious from the newspaper clipping (fig. 4), which states Michael was active like a *Mujāhid* (striving in the way of Allāh). Michael gifted his vast land in Rawalpindi to the landless farmers who were cultivating it. This was no mean act, but a great sacrifice, since Michael had no alternate means of income, other than his earning from commercial art. Raḥīm was a witness to this fact, because on Michael's request, Raḥīm drove him to his land in Rawalpindi. There, he saw that the poor farmers, to whom Michael had gifted his land, were full of reverence for him. They touched his feet and kissed his hands most affectionately.

It was part of Raḥīm's routine to visit Michael daily, but when Raḥīm had to go out of the city, his press manager and someone from the staff took over the responsibility. Once, when Raḥīm was in Michael's studio he asked him, how he met his expenses, because at times Michael had no money on him and Raḥīm had to bear his expenses. Michael answered *tawakkul* (reliance on God). This perplexed Raḥīm because even though he was a firm believer, yet he had a pragmatic approach to life. So he commented, if he were to do the same his children would starve to death. Michael answered that it all depends on the level of faith. To demonstrate his claim, Michael opened the door of his studio and shortly a man came and asked Michael to design a monogram with the two letters "SB". Michael agreed and asked for four hundred rupees in advance. Knowing Michael's reputation and ability as a designer, his client made the payment instantly. Soon thereafter, a woman and a girl came by, she begged for alms for her daughter's marriage. Without giving a second thought, Michael kept the change of twelve *annas* (Rs. 00.75) on one side, and gave the rest of the money to the woman. Raḥīm tried to stop Michael, but he did not listen. Michael proclaimed he had demonstrated what he meant by "*tawakkul*".

Michael's love for Prophet Muḥammad (*saw*) was exemplary, he could not bear to listen anything against the Prophet or against Islam. In the days shortly after independence, the Church still had a strong hold on Pakistan. In the Missionary Schools in those days a controversial prayer

was read which the Muslims found highly objectionable, because the wordings of the prayer were derogatory to their faith. The recitation was, "Oh Jesus! Thou save me from the darkness of Islam". Michael unilaterally raised objection with the priests demanding that the practice of reciting the prayer should be stopped. But they did not pay any heed, so Michael went to court. The priests sought permission from the court, through their attorney, to exempt them from appearing before the court. As the proceedings progressed, Michael realized his advocate was unable to convince the court on the matter, so he stepped forward and asked the court for permission to speak. The court granted the permission. Michael pleaded, if Jesus Christ could appear before a pagan Judge, Pontius Pilates, why should the priests have objection to appear before a Muslim court, who believed in One God. Michael argued the priests were not above Jesus. This ignited a tug of war between the priests and Michael.

During the proceedings of the case, an elder from the Maiman Barādari came to Michael with a handsome cheque of Rs. 35,000 and told him that the Maiman Barādari would bear all the expenses incurred on the case. Michael refused, saying that his love and respect for Islam could not be bought. Quite naturally, the Christian community turned against Michael, and the order was passed to arrest him. But the high officials in the Police Service and the Judiciary were great admirers of Michael, as was the local police, because Michael stood stoically where they faltered. The *thānidār* (head constable) who was deputed to arrest Michael went to visit him in his studio at night. He put his belt on the table saying, he would prefer to leave his job rather than arrest Michael. He suggested that Michael get a Bail before arrest, so that the following day when he would come to arrest him, Michael would have obtained the Bail. Michael asked the *thānidār* to contact Raḥīm for help. Raḥīm rode Michael on a bicycle so as to avoid detection and took him to the clerk of Ex-judge/Advocate, Ẓaffar Aḥsan Maḥmūd, who prepared the case. The following morning the Bail was granted to Michael. Later Michael won the case, whereby the practice of reciting the controversial prayer was abandoned. A newspaper clipping (fig. 4) of 30 Jan. n.d (c 1962) mentions of a case that had been going on in the past, between Michael and the Bishops in which Michael had upheld the honour of Islam. In all probability the reference is to the same case.

There is another incident worth quoting, which establishes Michael's ethics and valour. Around 1958, two brothers, Allāl ud-Dīn Lāwa and Riaḍ ud-Dīn Lāwa, who were very powerful smugglers, operated at Barqi Border. They had a den in the garage of the mosque in Royal Park, which was constructed with the help of a shoe-maker and the local community. In this garage trucks in which gold was concealed were parked at night. The residents of the area took notice of these suspicious activities and repeatedly approached Raḥīm for help, who associated Michael with him. Together they tried to convince the smugglers to give up their nefarious business. But the smugglers were defiant, so Michael and Raḥīm filed a case against them. Both had to put up with fierce opposition from the smugglers and were even attacked physically, but both being trained combatants, they defended themselves masterfully. Justice Munīr came to the locality and delivered a speech, advocating that smuggling was not a sin, because it was not prohibited in Islam. But finally they won the case, and the police cleared the garage, in the walls of which were secret compartments where gold was stashed. The property of the smugglers was confiscated and the residents of the locality triumphed.

According to Michael's narrative, ʾAbd al-Ḥamīd Bājwa and ʾAbd al-Majīd Bājwa were two brothers, in the Civil Service of Pakistan. Probably, Ḥamīd was the same civil servant who is mentioned in the Bhutto's Case, "late Mr. Abdul Hamid Bajwa" (*Lahore High Court Judgment* 21). Ḥamīd was sent to Egypt on Diplomatic Service. Relationship between Egypt and Pakistan were estranged because of an adverse stand that Pakistan had taken on an issue which did not suit Egypt. The Foreign Office tried to improve the situation, but was not successful. This was the time when England wanted to get control over the Suez Canal. Ḥamīd sought Michael's advice as to how he could improve the image of Pakistan in the eyes of the Egyptian people. Michael had an idea, he wrote an essay, "Sphinx Speaks" in which he quoted from the Bible, interpreting that England was destined to be destroyed, as it would go under water. Ḥamīd had the pamphlets printed and distributed these in Egypt. It is told, women in Ireland cried. The essay gave courage to the people of Egypt and helped to change their views in favour of Pakistan. Much has transpired since then. But the important point to note is, Michael was silently but bravely active on

many fronts, and his words carried weight, probably mystical powers as well,- befitting that of a true Ṣūfi.

An important event that illustrates the seminal contribution of Michael in the field of printing and photography relates to the "first meeting of Michael with Raḥīm". It was in the office of Raḥīm, at 15. A. Beadon Road, Lahore, that they met for the first time. Raḥīm was experimenting on slides, trying to improve its quality, but he was not getting the desired result. In the process, he had wasted many slides and had run out of stock, so he ordered his servant to get fresh stock. It was at this crucial moment that Michael walked in Raḥīm's office, accessing the situating he offered to help, but Raḥīm took no notice of the shabbily dressed stranger, because he was skeptical, as to how a man who could not take care of himself, possess the knowledge of developing slides. On Michael's insistence Raḥīm conceded. The first slide Michael developed was perfect. Worth noting is that Raḥīm was one of the founding fathers of the printing industry in Pakistan, he passed on this technical skill to others in his press, who in turn got jobs at prestigious institutions, or established their own studios and presses, both in East Pakistan (Bangladesh) and West Pakistan. The incident confirms Michael's magnanimity in disseminating knowledge proactively, for no monetary gains.

Another incident that reflects the creative mind of the artist, relates to his friend, an editor-cum-proprietor of a small newspaper, who came to him for help. He told Michael that he wanted to close the paper because it was no longer financially feasible. Michael had an idea, he wrote an article in which he drew "two sets" of "pairs of symbols", and compared these by putting labels on them. The first was a cross "**+**", which he labeled "Good" and the other was the swastika of Hitler "卐" which he labeled "Bad"; while the second set comprise the letter "S" which he labeled, the "Open Book/Divine Verses [Qur'ān]", and marked it "Good", whereas he made the Dollar "$" sign and labeled it "Devil", and marked it "Bad", representing lust for money and riches, and devilish ambition for worldly power, be it individual or state. As Michael had anticipated, the paper was closed down. Michael comes forth as a genius, whose insight into foreign and internal affairs was remarkable, and his forte is established as being the integral "relationship between idea/word and image".

Towards the end of his days Michael suffered a stroke that rendered him paralyzed and bedridden. He was devastated, and all he could think of was his studio. Raḥīm took care of Michael as best as he could, to the point that a few times when the attendant whom Raḥīm had kept for Michael went on leave, Raḥīm did not hesitate to bath and feed him. For a few months, Mona took her father to her residence in Sargodha. There she took care of him most lovingly. This was the best time of his life, when he enjoyed the comfort of a home and presence of the family. But it was not to last long, since Michael was a difficult man and being bed-ridden the task became telling on the Carapietts, who brought him back to his studio and left him under Raḥīm's care. In 1973[2], at the age of sixty seven, after having been paralyzed for more than two years, Michael's health deteriorated, and he died at the United Christian Hospital (UCH). He was buried in Miyāni Ṣāḥib Graveyard, Lahore. Many times, in his life Michael tried to gift part of his land to Raḥīm, who declined the offer genuinely, yet Michael left his studio to him.

Regarding the work of Michael not much has survived, but what has surfaced marks his place in history. He was an authority on matters of religion. He was a well-read and well-versed man in many languages. He was exceptionally good at Punjabi, Urdu, English and Persian; he studied Hebrew and Latin at Vatican. He learnt Arabic in order to understand the Qur'ān. Michael wrote a Research Paper in 1956, *AlFātiḥa*: *Reality Verses Invention* (fig. 11-15) in which he transcribes,

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[2] Extensive efforts were made to access the record of UCH, Lahore, where Michael passed away, but no record bearing his name was found, either of his admission in the hospital, or his death there, though the record of two years was found missing.

"I have studied the Arabic language out of Curiosity in an aspiring, vehement and determined manner in order to anchor myself to the Holy Quran, and never claim to be a conversant authority on it" (1). He understood fully that the Qur'ān is a phenomenal book, "It is not in the capacity of a single mind to survey its depth of meaning which is unfathomable" (9). Michael's insightful study of the Bible and Qur'ān gives him authority to drawn comparisons between the Christian's *The Lord's Prayer* (6: 9-13 Math.) with *Sūra AlFātiḥa*, the first Sūra of the Qur'ān. In this Research Paper, Michael writes, the Bible speaks of Muḥammad (*saw*) and the Qur'ān when it says, "he held in his hand a little book open" (Apoc. 10: 2), (fig. 11). In this research paper Michael has worked out some complex mathematical calculations from the Bible, prophesying the end times, and has pleaded argumentatively, to convince the Christians to read *Sūra AlFātiḥa* in place of *The Lord's Prayer*, for salvation. He boldly puts forward the truth regarding Islam, the belief in One God, Who was neither born from anyone, nor did He give birth to anyone, and negates the concept of Trinity.

From the point of view of design and calligraphy, Michael's training at Vatican was of vital importance. He produced an elementary workbook on calligraphy, *Muraqqa-i-Alif-Lām-Mīm* (fig. 16-20) in *Nasta'līq*, a cursive script of Arabic, Persian and Urdu. The title of the book is named after the three *Maqat'āt* (mystic letters), *Alif-Lām-Mīm* of the Qur'ān, that appear at the beginning of six *Sūras*, *Sūra Baqara* (Cow 2: 1), *Sūra al-'Imrān* (Children of Imrān 3: 1), *Sūra al-ĀnKabūt* (Spider 29: 1), *Sūra al-Rūm* (Romans 30: 1), *Sūra Luqmān* (31: 1), and *As-Sajdha* (Prostrate 32: 1). The three letters *Alif-Lām-Mīm* also appear at the beginning of two other Sūras, but with the suffix of a fourth letter. In *Sūra al-Ā'rāf* (Heights 7: 1) the suffix is the letter "S" *Alif-Lām-Mīm-Ṣud*; and in *Sūra Ar-R'ad* (Thunder 13: 1) the suffix is letter "R", *Alif-Lām-Mīm-Ra*. In all *Alif-Lām-Mīm* appear eight times in the Qur'ān.

The *Muraqqa* has four pages of English Calligraphy, *Old English*, *Script & Round type, Classical Roman* (fig. 18), and *Cutout*; and two pages of graphic-forms that have been labelled to expound the symbol (fig. 19). Michael refers to the pages of *Nasta'līq* calligraphy of the *Muraqqa* the *Takhti, Ḥarūf-i Tahajji*: *abjad, hawwaz, ḥuṭṭi, kalman, sa'faṣ, thakhadh, qarashat, ḍaẓẓagh. Ṣirāṭ Ālī ḥaq-i namishkh hai* (fig. 17). The *Muraqqa* also has loose printed work-sheets corresponding to

each page of the *Nasta'līq* script. These are printed on thinner and smaller size paper. On the *takhti* Michael has written, "The summary of the twenty nine *Ḥarūf-i Maqat'āt* [cryptic letters] of the Qur'ān" along with a verse by Ārzu Lakhnawi:

جو حقیقتوں کی بہار تھی کبھی چشم اہل نیاز میں
تیرے راز حسن کے پھول تھے جو کھلے ہیں آ کے مجاز میں

ju ḥaqīqataūn ki bahār thi khabi chasham-i ahal-i nayadh main
tairay radh-i ḥusn ki phūl thi ju khalay hain aa kai majādh main

It was the ultimate Spring of Realities, when you graced me with a glance of your Being

That unveiled the secret Beauty of your flowers, which have blossomed on my being.

Michael has written one liners on the *takhti* (tablet), including a line in Old English, from Ȃli Ḥajwari's, *Kashf-al-Maḥjūb* (*Unveiling the Veiled*), "O my patron Sufi? I have uncovered the veiled through the pen at thy command and request thee to uncover my Veiled One by thy superior condition, to gratify my desire". In order to authenticate the fact that the *takhti* (tablet) is his original work, Michael has written on it, "All copy rights are reserved with the author, Jacobüs Michael, Art Director, Competent Method, author, *Muraqqa-i Alif-Lām-Mīm*, *Ṣalṣala al-Jaras*". A statement of Michael given on the *takhti* (tablet) reads, "This work has not been undertaken for personal benefit, but the Reality has been presented before the *qawm* [Nation]". Point to emphasize is that the *Muraqqa* along with the *takhti* (tablet) and the lines written on it, give access to the mind of the great calligrapher-designer that Michael was, who selflessly worked to further the cause of education, driven by his Ṣūfi nature.

On one of the pages of *Muraqqa-Alif-Lām-Mīm* Michael has posed the question, "Why *Alif-Lām-Mīm*" (fig. 19)? He has innovatively answered this question on the same and followed pages through imagery

and has explained the concept in text. The title of the *Muraqqa* (fig. 16) is in black and white. It has the image of *takhti* (tablet) drawn on it, the right-side of which is slightly tilted up. On it is written, the name of the book, both in Urdu and English, whereas *Nasta'līq* is written in Urdu only. The author's name, Jacobüs Michael is written in Urdu and English, and the publisher's name "Modern Publishers, Lahore" is given in Urdu. On the right-side of the *takhti* (tablet) is a composition of the three basic shapes, the square, oval/circle and triangle. The dot of *Nasta'līq* script is the square, which is embedded in an egg-shaped-oval, that is juxtaposed on a straight angle triangle, the right-angle of which is set parallel with the right-side of the *takhti* (tablet). These three basic shapes symbolize the momentous Praise of God, written on top of the *takhtai* (tablet) in Old English, "Beauty is Thine from Alpha to Omega" meaning, "All Beauty and Praise is for Allāh". In many ways and sensibilities, "*Alif-Lām-Mīm*" is the same as "*Alpha to Omega*", as is "Beginning till the End". Because "*Alpha*" is the first letter "A" and *Omega* is the last letter "Ω" of the Greek language. "*Alif*" is the first letter of Arabic, Persian and Urdu language, but "*Mīm*" is not the last letter, yet it completes the anatomical form of the entire alphabets. Michael explicates the formation, "On the circle of "*Nūn*", place "*Alif* " upright, so as to create "*Lām*" and from "*Lām*", "*Mīm*" takes birth.

Michael links this anatomical form with the mystical dimension of the three alphabets *Alif-Lām-Mīm*, when joined together in an integrated continuous calligraphic line, takes the mirrored form of the audio-visual sign of the musical note "&",- the treble clef (fig. 19-20). To put it more explicitly, Michael holds the treble clef sign is based on the cryptic letters of the Qur'ān, *Alif-Lām-Mīm*, which echoes throughout the Churches and resonates the praise of Allāh, the Most Beautiful, the Originator and Everlasting. Michael associates the three letters with the concept of Beauty of God, both in form and spirit, thereby putting into practice the theory, that the three letters *Alif-Lām-Mīm* are the entire script of the Qur'ān. He further accomplished this task by presenting and analysing the "from" and "concept" of "*Alif-Lām-Mīm*", and by equating it with the Divine Harp, which he has drawn on the same page where he has posed the question. Through "diagrams" and "labels" he explains the entrenched concept of the symphony of the "composition" and "combination" of the three letters *Alif-Lām-Mīm*. Close look at the

diagrams on the page (fig. 19) renders the concept self-explanatory, freeing it from elaborate explanation.

Michael beautifully furthers this concept from another angle. He propagates the idea of education by placing at the bottom, on the right-side of the *takhti* (tablet) an inkpot and a *qulam* (pen). The handle of the *takhti* (tablet) is intertwined with two stems of roses, which symbolize, "hope lies in education in general and in the study of Qur'ān in particular". The drawing is naturalistic and tones have been worked out in shading. The design and rendering show the artist was a master draftsman, who employed symbolic language. *Alif-Lām-Mīm* is a testament of Michael's knowledge of calligraphy both in Urdu and English, and the rules that govern it. This makes *Alif-Lām-Mīm* an excellent elementary workbook for students of calligraphy, typography and design.

Michael's phenomenal contribution is his singular invention, the moveable type of *Nasta'līq*, which is a beautiful script of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, for which he was not given the credit. According to Michael, a famous foundry from Karachi approached him to design the moveable type in *Nasta'līq.* The task was extremely difficult, because the script is curvilinear and its alphabets are problematic to breakdown and re-join to construct words, especially because the forms of its alphabets change depending on the position where these occur in the word. Michael worked day and night at this work, carving out bits and pieces of alphabets on plywood, working out the forms to hairline perfection, till each piece of the letter fitted the other pieces faultlessly, to form newer words. Authority is stamped to this claim by a review published in "*The Pakistan Times*", Lahore of 2 Nov., 1947. Ȧmir Ḥabīb Allāh Khān's has included this review in his "Introduction iv" to Michael's article, *Pakistan Ensign and its colour Echo*, which is a testament of the truth:

> Mr. Jacobüs Michael is a man of many parts, and besides being a great calligraphist, has considerable knowledge of Islamic scripts, their evolution, form and significance. This is revealed in his illustrated booklet '*Muraqqa-i-Alif-Laam-Meem.*' The book explains the immense artistic possibilities underling the dot, oval and 90 degree triangle

> – the key to the Nastaliq script. The book also elaborates the phenomenal factor involved in Imam Hussain's metaphysical thesis that the initial alphabet of Al-Quran, 'Alif-Laam-Meem' are the entire script in condensed form. Mr. Michael has also contrived an educational toy, which he has named 'Dabistan' (the kindergarten). This is an extremely interesting device to facilitate the process of literacy in children. In his system, 'Noon' is represented as 'Hilal' (Crescent) and 'Dot' as Akhtar (star). This approach is so devised as to enlist the young learner's native creative faculties: the anatomical dissection of the alphabet process of literacy in children, in learning through doing. This process is carried stages ahead in the designing of a 'Nastaliq type' on which Michael is reported to be working, which preserves all the elegance and dignity of the immortal (Islami) script (*The Pakistan Times*, 1 Dec. 1947, 23-24).

According to Michael, once he had carved out the bits and pieces of the alphabets, he gave it to a famous foundry from Karachi. Unfortunately, the Publishing House/foundry did not acknowledge that Michael was the inventor of "*Nasta'līq* type". Had they done so, Michael's name would have been well-known and he would have received the highest award of the country. It is contended, that no one else could have accomplished this feat, because it demanded skills par-excellence in drawing and drafting, calligraphy and carving, coupled with the level of intelligence and time consuming commitment that was only Michael's forte. It is not to undermine others who were working in the same field, but to emphasise that other calligraphers, designers and artists of Michael's times, excelled in either one field or the other, but most of them were not accomplished craftsman in all the requisite fields necessary for the invention of *Nasta'līq* type. To make the point clear it is argued, Chughtā'i (1897-1975) was excellent in line drawing and etching, besides he could have taken out time to labour at perfecting the type, if he willed, but he was not a calligrapher. Anna Molka Aḥmed (1917-1995) was an artist and a trained illustrator, she was taught engraving at the Royal School of Arts, England. But neither could she do Urdu calligrapher, nor did she have the requisite time to devote for the

accomplishment of such a job as invention of type. Ṣadqain (1930-87) was a creative modern calligrapher, committed to his art, but he was not an engraver. Engraving is an essential skill needed for inventing type. It may be noted that the German inventor of moveable type in the west, Johannes Gutenberg (1398-1468) was a blacksmith and a goldsmith, who started the printing revolution. Michael possessed the requisite skills need for the invention in *Nasta'līq* type, coupled with the drive and the passion to carve out time from his life to devote to the job at hand. Michael's invention was the triumph of education for the Muslim world. It gave boost to book-production in Arabic, Persian and Urdu, and to the printing of the Qur'ān. Providence has its ways, in my humble capacity as a researcher I am paying back the *ḥaq* (debt) of Michael, who is the rightful owner of the credit, on behalf of the Messenger of Ḥijāz (Muḥammad) and his *ummat* (Muslims), as he would have liked it.

Pakistan Ensign and it's Colour Echo (fig. 21) is Michael's "little book", though in length only, yet it is paramount in concept and style. Michael speaks in poetic language of puns, references and theology,- analysing the symbolism of the colour and idea of the flag of Pakistan, seen in the light of its Spirit and ground Reality. The booklet has been jointly reprinted in 2011, by Pioneer Futurist In Pakistan (PFI) and Margalla Voices (MVs), at the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of PFI. The reprint of *Pakistan Ensign and it's Colour Echo* has two Parts, "Part I" relates to the new publishers, while Part II is the reprint of Michael's book. Ikram Ā'ẓam's "Introduction" in "Part I" throws light on Michael's exceptional gift for writing, "The late Jacobus Michael was an original thinker, writer and mystic, as is evident from his little booklet by him. He was also a stylist par excellence" (22). This statement of Ā'ẓam is apt and commendable, yet some facts relating to the life of Michael, included in this Introduction printed book in 2011, are not wholly correct. Latitude is given because much time has lapsed and it is an uphill task to retrieve facts from the oblivion of lost history. It may be noticed that in this research paper I have attempted to present facts through evidence, and by including interviews of a cross section of the people, who were close to Michael, except in cases where the individual is deceased. It is hoped, with the passing of time and concerted efforts that truth will triumph.

Michael wrote the "Preface" of *Pakistan Ensign and it's Colour Echo* on 27 Dec. 1947, in which he explains, "Red is not Red orange. Orange is not Red. Red orange is a combination of Red plus orange. In terms of Music: Red stands for C. […] In the Vedic system for music, Red orange is 'Re' *Komal.* For complete information see the author's '*Colour-Symphony*' based on the theory of a Jesuit, Father Castle and Prof. Rimington, adopted by Tudor-hart in Paris for painters" (29). Michael's understanding of colour is exceptional, as can be seen from an excerpt given in *Pakistan Ensign and it's Colour Echo*, from another book authored by him, *Language of Colour*:

> Being a colourist, I personally like and appreciate all the colours. In my '*Language of Colours'*, is written about green's complementary: "Red is the easiest colour to see. Man saw it first. The Red ray of life (blood) and love is conquering, dominating ray. It overcomes to preserve itself. The red uniform of the king's soldier has its significance. For love of king and country they will go forth to dare and die. Red is the colour of Victory. His banner over me was love – God is love […] (29).

Michael designed and wrote an *Illuminated Single Page Qur'ān* (fig. 22) in *Nasta'līq*. A small script at the bottom of the page of this Qur'ān gives the information, "CIRCULATED WITH THE KIND PERMISSION OF HIS EXCELLENCY MAULANA ABDUL GHAFOOR "BARAY BHAYYA" SHANTI NAGAR, DACCA, (COURTESY J. MICHAEL)". Maulāna ʾAbd al-Ghafūr was a Ṣūfi elder of Dacca. It was on his request that Michael produced the *Illuminated Single Page Qur'ān* meant for display on the wall. According to Raḥīm, Michael wrote the Qur'ān in one and a half month and got it printed in Western Germany, the place of printing is confirmed by a line written in small print, aligned with the right border of the page, "Printed in Western - Germany". The funding was provided by Raḥīm and another benefactor. Raḥīm's wife ʾĀisha (fig. 10) remembers she gave her savings for the printing of the Qur'ān, which had left the family tied up financially for some time. Five thousand copies of the Holy Qur'ān were printed and distributed free of cost. It must be remembered that gold was used for the embellishment of the Qur'ān, which made its printing costly.

The artwork of this Qur'ān is of exceptionally high standard. In its simplicity lies its beauty. In its excellence of execution lies its authority. The Qur'ān is designed vertically up, the size of the page is "55 x 83. 5 cms" and it is divided in two parts, the ratio of the upper rectangle to the lower rectangle is roughly in the ratio 1: 3.303, which is close to half of the golden ratio 1: 1. 618. Michael has used the golden section intelligently, both by retaining the formal and time tested measure of beauty, and by deviating enough to create an echo that comes back to the ear after a lapse of a few moments, so that the formal arrangement of text does not harp too strongly on the senses. The embellishment is minimalistic, but tasteful. It is bounded by a scalloped border, which is "4 cm", wide. The arc of each scallop is "5. 5 cm", and has a circular medallion of "1. 2 cm" placed a little above the cleavage, formed by the meeting of the two scallops. The pattern that embellishes the border is painted in light blue, with a touch of black at its base which adds depth to the design. And richness is added to the whole by the complementary orange, while a continuous curvilinear line used as a filler of the border forms a Persian pattern in gold. The text is written in black on the off-white background. The pattern harmonizes with the whole and does not over power the text, instead harmonizes with it.

The lower part of the page is divided in thirty narrow columns of "1. 4 cm" width, that run vertically parallel. The measure of these columns to the whole is perfectly balanced. The columns are arched at the top, and are rendered in orange, in between which is written the numbers of the *Paras* (Chapters) that are contained in each column. Under the arches, white space has been left, which acts as a breather in the otherwise filled surface, and gives the design the appearance similar to the colonnaded open veranda built by the Turks around the Khāna Kāba, and lends the elongated columns a transcendental quality. The dividing lines of these columns are formed by three lines, resting on a semi-circular base. The central line of the strip is red, bounded on both sides by lines in gold, which contain the thirty *Pāras* (Chapters) of the Qur'ān, though one *Pāra* (Chapter) is not enclosed within a single column, wherever the need arises one *Pāra* (Chapter) runs into its succeeding column. But, the overall spacing of the line and length of the text has been handled expertly. The text is neither stretched nor squeezed. This perfect control and command of the word of God has

been remarkably executed. It appears as though the calligraphy has been done effortlessly, but this is a fallacy, because it is the work of arduous labour and skill acquired over a lifetime. The Sūras have been written with immense clarity, but owing to the minuteness of script, it is not readable to the naked eye. But read through a magnifying glass the accuracy of the text is revealed. It is incredible how Michael produced such an excellent piece, for no financial gains, nor for any ulterior aims, and in such a short time. It is a labour of love.

The arches of the columns are designed and placed in perfect symmetry, above it is a panel on which is written in large *Nasta'līq* type, *Sūra AlFātiḥa*, which is the abstract and heart of the Qur'ān. Even though the Sūra dominates the page the effect is beautiful. It is written in black on gold, with remarkable virtuosity and elegance, but for the sake of beauty and innovation legibility has not been compromised. The top centre of the page is crowned by a small rectangular cornice, with its upper edge slightly arched, forming a small handle of the tablet, in which is written, "Qur'ān Al-Karīm". Thus the shape of the *Illumination Single Page Qur'ān* takes the form of a *takhti* (tablet), which Michael has used as a symbol for "Education & Qur'ān", reminder of the first verse that descended on Muḥammad, "*Iqra*, Read in the name of thy Sustainer" (96: 1 Asad). Michael's aptness in visualization and execution of this *Qur'ān* is a masterpiece. The Tāj Company also produced a similar *Illuminated Single Page Qur'ān*, but its aesthetics and execution is in no way near to Michael's Qur'ān. Michael's page is formal in form and conforms to the classical ideal of design and order - Beauty resulting from harmony, balance and rhythm.

As regards Michael's art and design, there is no evidence that Michael made film hoardings, as has been erroneously presumed by Ȧdīl (35). But there is certain proof that Michael made book titles, posters, sliders and sho-cards. The proof is evident from the back title of the book authored and designed by Michael, *Pakistan Ensign and its Colour Echo* (fig. 21). The image serves as an advertisement for the services Michael's studio provided. It is a full figure composition of a designer in profile, at work on his drafting table, with his instruments placed in a bowl on the low table placed next to him, rendered in green silhouette over white background. This image is set within a thin circle of green, and along its top on the outside is written, "POSTERS. SLIDERS. SHO-

CARDS." Set in the rectangular white space, formed by the negative space created under the table is written in black, "ART DIRECTOR, JMICHAEL". The base on which the image rests is a quadrilateral, its horizontal sides are parallel, but its vertical sides slightly taper downwards. On this base is written "MODERN ADS COY" in a modulated form of **SHOWCARD GOTHIC** typestyle.

In the same vein, as the back-title, the design of the front-title of the booklet, *Pakistan Ensign and it's Colour Echo* has been rendered. It is simple and relates to the concept of the book, which relates to the symbolism of the flag, quite appropriately the image of the flag is printed on it. But it is not the typical half-fluttering type image, instead it is the graphic imprint of a fully stretched out flag with the crescent and star in perfect shape. The flag is set at a slight angle to the left. Its horizontal sides are parallel, while its vertical sides are arched to the right. It is in two colours, green on white. The mast and the rope are in solid black. The name of the book is written in large ornamental letters in green, designed and modulated from Old English Style. The author's name, Jacobüs Michael is written in Round type in green. The use of two colours is economical and conceptually fits well with the ideas expressed in the booklet authored by Michael. It is akin to the rare work of art, regardless of its genre, where the author and the artist are the same person, similar to the English poet-artist, William Blake's work, who illustrated his own poems, whereby art and word complement each other, and where there is no gap between the concept of the writer and the artist.

Regrettably, even though the contribution of Michael in the field of literature and religion, art and design, calligraphy and typography, and social activism were known to the early scholars of Pakistan, yet he was bypassed in the books on art history. Mussarat Ḥaṣan and I'jāz-ul Ḥaṣṣan (Ȁjāz) have mentioned Michael in their books. But they too have made a passing reference to him in connection with his nephew Aḥmad Pervez. Mussarat Haṣan writes, "After his education, he came to Lahore and took his basic training at the studio of his uncle Mr. Michael" (250). I'jāz-ul Ḥaṣṣan comment on Pervez is:

> Ahmed Pervez (1926-1979) much to the chagrin of his parents decided to become a painter. Disapproval of the

> family in his case meant the immediate necessity of finding a means of livelihood […]. But the urge to paint was only temporarily shelved, because at the very first opportunity he joined the commercial studio of his uncle, Jacobus Michael, in Lahore in 1952.
>
> Ahmed Pervez's early work is fashioned on his uncle's style who made copies from European old masters and painted fat, sensuous females in rather studied attitudes" (69).

I'jāz al-Ḥaṣan's comment on Michael's work gives an idea of the style in which he drew the female figure. Perhaps the paintings Haṣan refers to as copies of Old Master works, were Michael's commissioned work, but it is not known in whose possession are these paintings. According to Musarrat, in her interview with Pervez, he told her that a sculpture by his Uncle adorns a church in Rawalpindi. This again proves that Michael was good at three dimensional work, this skill must have come handy in carving the alphabets of *Nasta'līq* type. Pervez also acknowledges, "My Uncle was a great Drafts man […]. I was under his training for three years. During this time I did not come across any student of his. One day Michael threw his shaving kit outside, saying that in art there is no use of it" (Ȧqīl 37).

Writing on Pervez, Salīma Ḥāshmi makes a significant observation, "There is no doubt that today in Pakistan, a large number of painters owe their modus operandi to the trail blazer that was Aḥmed Pervez" (*Paintings from Pakistan* 96). It is confirmed Pervez's skill and passion for art and calligraphy, and his sense of colour composition (fig. 23) came from Michael's brush. Perhaps, had Pervez received education from an art institution he would not have possessed the level of technical and drafting skill. Pervez was Michael's best student, whose influence on the other painters of Pakistan is established, more important from our present point of view is the fact that this influence of Pervez can be traced back to Michael, who not only taught Pervez the craft of art, but the quest to learn and break new barriers.

I conducted many interviews to find out if there were other painters who were trained by Michael, one of them is Chaudhry Khālid Sarmad, Director PNP Marketing, Designer of Signage and Flex. Sarmad

narrates his first meeting with Michael, which was arranged by a friend. According to Sarmad, Michael picked up his pencil and drew a perfect circle, after which he challenged Sarmad to check the accuracy of the circle with a compass. Michael then made some dots on the wall to mark the rulings, he again asked Sarmad to check the distance between the dots, with a ruler. Sarmad checked and found the measurement to be exact.

Muḥammad Aslām Kāshir, a graphic designer, artist and sculptor, whose special oeuvre is calligraphy; when I interviewed him, he was working on a hundred and fifty feet long mural, on the wall of the lounge of Gulāb Dīvi Hospital in Lahore, bearing the ninety nine names and attributes of Muḥammad (*saws*). According to Kashīr, he had not charged for the mural, but the material had been provided to him by the hospital. Kāshir was full of Michael and paid accolade to his virtuosity in calligraphy, graphic arts and design. Kāshir's remarkable skill in calligraphy was taught to him by Michael, as was his desire to serve the people, in whatever form possible.

Maḥmūd Ḥaṣan Rūmi was the Art Director of Packages, after his retirement he became the Principal of Naqash School of Art (2002-2009) of Babar Ali Foundation. He is presently designing and publishing five elementary books on drawing, *Drawing Book 1-5*. Rūmi told me, after he qualified from Mao School of Arts in 1953, Raḥīm set-up a studio for Rūmi in his building at Beadon Road, Lahore, where he did the art work for Raḥīm's Presses, *Pioneer Block Company*, and *Focus Limited* including free-lance work as well. After a few years Rūmi opened his own studio at Royal Park and later joined Packages (1959-1988). According to Rūmi, meetings were held at Pioneer Block Company, among those present were, Raḥīm, his younger brother Ajāz al-Raḥīm, Michael, and Rūmi himself. Rūmi recalled, Michael had a magnetic aura about him. He drew the attention of everyone in the meetings and he was vocal on issues, voicing his views on Islam and Christianity as well. Rūmi and Michael visited each other's studios, found Michael proactive in extending advice and tips to him and the other artists and businessmen who he happened to came across, on matters concerning etymology, ideas, advertisement and business. He extended appreciated where it was due, but did not hesitate to criticise, at times his straightforwardness generated opposition.

Bashīr Mūjīd is the designer of the titles of the newspaper *Mazdūr* [*Mazdoor*] *Weekly*, of which Raḥīm was the proprietor and editor. Mūjīd recalls, when Michael died, at first he was denied burial in the Muslim graveyard. But Raḥīm produced witnesses including, Michael's daughter Mona, and Mūjīd, to testify that Michael had accepted Islam. Mūjīd admits he became a witness because Raḥīm asked him, and he believed in Rahim's word, for he was a truthful man. Unfortunately, all along his life Michael faced this dilemma. The Christian community rejected him, because he had accepted Islam, whereas most Muslims did not accept him as one of their own. Mūjīd thinks this was so because of Michael's outfit. He wore shirt, pants and hat, partly because he had a Christian name. No wonder Michael rightly lamented concerning faith, "only form is left, but the spirit is lost". It took scholars of caliber, to appreciate Michael and his work. Faiḍ Aḥmed Faiḍ, the then editor of *The Pakistan Times* comment on Michael's article *Pakistan Ensign and it's Colour Echo* was, "This profound article is above the intelligence of the average reader" (qtd. in *Pakistan Ensign* 28)[3].

Mūjīd did not seem to remember whether Michael had done much work in the field of art, but he could not deny the artist was a knowledgeable man. The reason for this could be that in the later part of his life, Michael's priorities changed, he increasingly concerned himself with matters of Islam and the *ummat* and did less commercial work. Though Mūjīd did remember Michael's workbook on calligraphy, which he thinks was not received well. Not only is there evidence to the contrary, as has been presented, it is also confirmed Michael was the

[3] PS: In 2004, I submitted a research article on Jacobüs Michael and made public his work, as part of my assignment for PhD Course Work, CAD, PU. It caused a stir because Michael had been lost to history, and it was for the first time that most people heard his name or saw his work. Again in my PhD thesis, submitted to CAD, PU, in June 2010, I wrote on Michael, his work surfaced once again. The archival works of Michael sparked interest and became the source of research for others. Subsequently, a website on Michael's book on calligraphy *Muraqqa-i-Alif-Lām-Mīm* was uploaded on the website, http://calligraphyislamic.com/Profiles/ jacobus_michael.htm. And in 2011, Michael's book *Pakistan Ensign and its Colour Echo* was reprinted by the learned writers of PFI and Margalla Voices. **Point to note, the date of my research article 2004, predates, the other works of/on Michael that have surfaced since then, or shall continue to do so in the future.**

artist who was working on the "*Nasta'līq* type". As has been stated by Amir Ḥabib Allāh Khān in his review of *Pakistan Times* written in 1947, "**This process is carried stages ahead in the designing of a 'Nastaliq type' on which Michael is reported to be working**" (Intro. *Pakistan Ensign* 24). This part of the review has been repeated for the sake of emphasis, to prove that it was not only Michael's claim that he had invented the *Nasta'līq* type, but is an established fact that had been reported in 1947, in one of the most important newspapers of that time *Pakistan Times*.

Unfortunately, except for the few people who are still alive from Michael's era, most designers and artists have neither heard of Michael's name, nor have seen his work. Of those who knew him, some bypass him because they are unsure of his faith. But the narratives of Michael and his works that have survived, testify to his faith. There is a newspaper clippings of 22 Feb. n.d. (about 1963), that confirms the fact, according to which Michael was not only a Muslim he was also active in spreading Islam (fig. 4). This news item offers felicitation to Michael for the conversion of seven Christians of Lahore, to Islam. It also refers to Michael as a great and established artist and author of Pakistan, who had become a *Mujāhid*.

Even though I am not Michael's student, yet I acknowledge the debt I owe to him for having benefited from the art material and books left behind by him, and form his research paper, *AlFātiḥa* that served as a key to understanding the Qur'ān from a researcher's approach. I am disseminating this knowledge to my students personally and through my writings, the credit of which partly goes back to my father, Raḥīm and Michael. From the evidence that has surfaced so far it is clear, even though Michael was not associated with any educational institution, yet he passed his skill and knowledge to those he could, through his person, his works and his books, which proves he was a seminal teacher.

Michael's place in history is secure, as a pioneer designer (fig. 16, 19, 21, 22) and calligrapher (fig. 11, 16-22) of Indo-Pakistan, the contemporary of Chughtā'i, Allāh Bakhsh, Ṣādqain and Anna Molka Ahmed. Commercial artists in Michael's times painted backdrops for theatres and stage, and make advertisement, but most of them could not make slides, because it involved technology and virtuosity in

draftsmanship and calligraphy, at which Michael excelled. Merely labeling Michael a commercial artist is a misnomer, because the commercial work that he did for earning a living has not survived, but the work he produced with passion and creativity, for the advancement of art and education, and for the struggle for the survival of Pakistan is extant, in the form of his books, such as *Alif-Lām-Mīm,* and *Pakistan Ensign and its Colour Echo*, which are worth their merit. His immaculate *Illuminated Single Page Qur'ān* is to be revered and enjoyed. Perhaps, it would be impossible to surpass this piece in its present genre.

His triumph is the "word" and the relationship between "word-image-word". To elaborate this point, consider his command over the English language and his apt use of the word, with which he works wonders, and is referred to as a great stylist writer. As regards his contribution in Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages is concerned it is phenomenal because of his singular invention, "the *Nasta'līq* type" which is a triumph of the "word" of the Qur'ān and education as it gave boost to Book Production.

It must be realized that it was the invention of the "*Nasta'līq* type" which became the base of "*Inpage* computer software for *Noori* [*Nūri*] *Nasta'līq*, used in the Arabic, Persian, and Urdu languages". This is so because, at the designing and programming stage of *Inpage*, the broken down forms of *Nasta'līq* alphabets employed to construct words, are the same as were meticulously calligraphed and carved by Michael for the *Nasta'līq* typewriter. As the awareness of what Michael accomplished increases, appreciation for him grows. Michael's contribution is universal.

Michael stands tall in the annals of history for another reason and that is his Ṣūfi nature. History has shown that the few who give all they had become icons in their own right. Michael demonstrated the Ṣūfi concept, "in *fana* is embedded *baqa* (salvation)", and *baqa* is peace. Perhaps, this is the reason why by the end of his days, Michael who was a well-built man and had a towering personality, appeared a man consumed by art, or/and the love of God, and Muḥammad (*saw*) and his *ummat* (people). Michael's education and training at Vatican became a blessing in disguise, not only for himself, but for the whole Muslim World.

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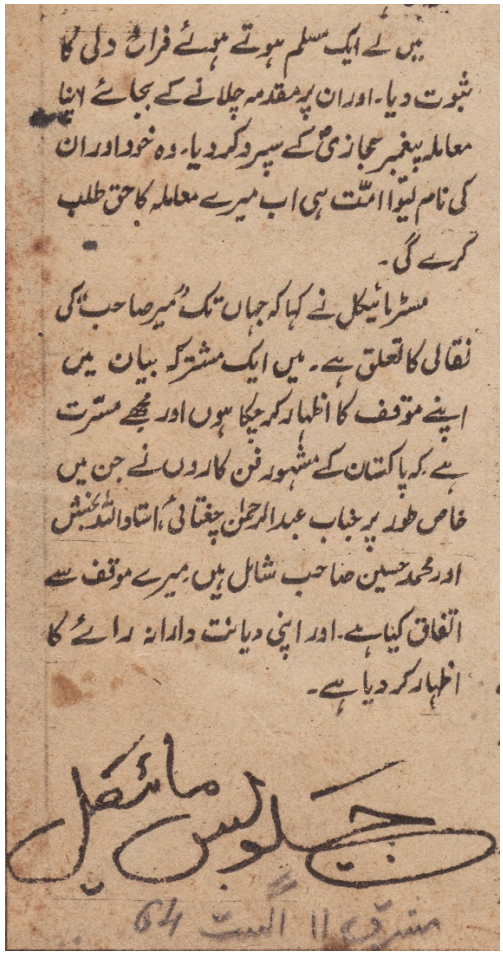
Figures



Fig. 1. Jacobüs Michael, photograph, 1949, (author's possession).



Fig. 2. *Will and Power*, Ăbd al-Raḥmān Chughtā'i, (close-up).



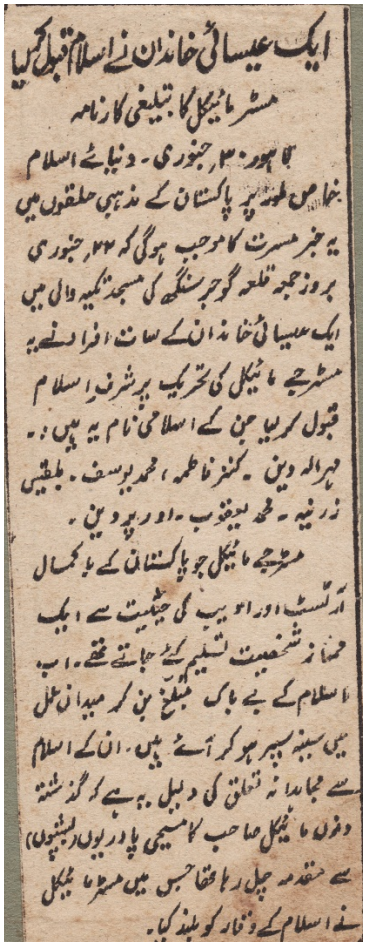
میں نے ایک مسلم ہوتے ہوئے فراخ دلی کا
ثبوت دیا۔ اور ان پر مقدمہ چلانے کے بجائے اپنا
معاملہ پیغمبر حجازیؐ کے سپرد کر دیا۔ وہ خود اور ان
کی نام لیوا امّت ہی اب میرے معاملہ کا حق طلب
کرے گی۔

مسٹر مائیکل نے کہا کہ جہاں تک "میر صاحب" کی
نقالی کا تعلق ہے۔ میں ایک مشترکہ بیان میں
اپنے موقف کا اظہار کر چکا ہوں اور مجھے مسرت
ہے کہ پاکستان کے مشہور فن کاروں نے جن میں
خاص طور پر جناب عبدالرحمٰن چغتائی، استاد اللہ بخش
اور محمد حسین صاحب شامل ہیں، میرے موقف سے
اتفاق کیا ہے۔ اور اپنی دیانت دارانہ رائے کا
اظہار کر دیا ہے۔

جیکوبس مائیکل

مشرق ۱۱ اگست 64

Fig. 3. Newspaper clipping, *Mashriq*, 11 Aug. 1964, (author's possession).



ایک عیسائی خاندان نے اسلام قبول کیا

مسٹر مائیکل کا تبلیغی کارنامہ

لاہور ۲۲ جنوری۔ دنیائے اسلام
بخاص طور پر پاکستان کے مذہبی حلقوں میں
یہ خبر مسرت کا موجب ہوگی کہ ۲۲ جنوری
بروز جمعہ قلعہ گوجر سنگھ کی مسجد نگیہ والی میں
ایک عیسائی خاندان کے سات افراد نے
مسٹر جے مائیکل کی تحریک پر شرف اسلام
قبول کر لیا جن کے اسلامی نام یہ ہیں:۔
مہر الہ دین۔ کنز فاطمہ، محمد یوسف۔ بلقیس
زرینہ۔ محمد یعقوب۔ اور پروین۔

مسٹر جے مائیکل جو پاکستان کے باکمال
آرٹسٹ اور ادیب کی حیثیت سے ایک
ممتاز شخصیت تسلیم کیے جاتے تھے۔ اب
اسلام کے بے باک مبلغ بن کر میدان عمل
میں سینہ سپر ہو کر آئے ہیں۔ ان کے اسلام
سے مجاہدانہ تعلق کی دلیل یہ ہے کہ گذشتہ
دنوں مائیکل صاحب کا مسیحی پادریوں (بشپوں)
سے مقدمہ چل رہا تھا جس میں مسٹر مائیکل
نے اسلام کے وقار کو بلند کیا۔

Fig. 4. Newspaper clipping, 22 Feb. n.d., (author's possession).

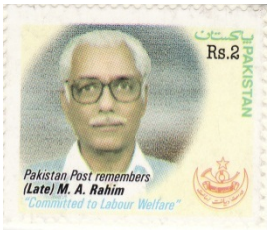


Fig. 5. M. A. Raḥīm, Pakistan Post, 2003.

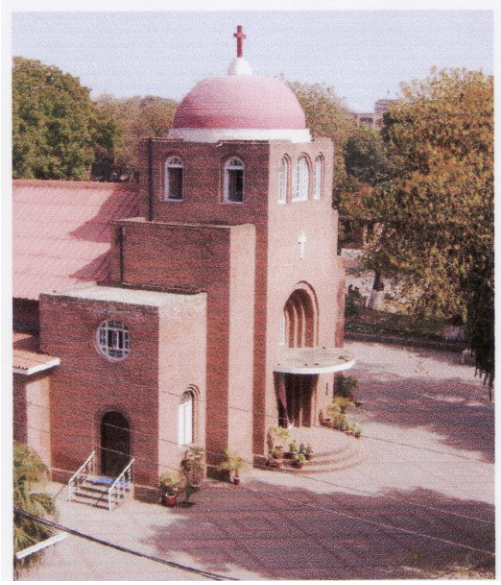


Fig. 6. Naulakha Church, Lahore, 2011.

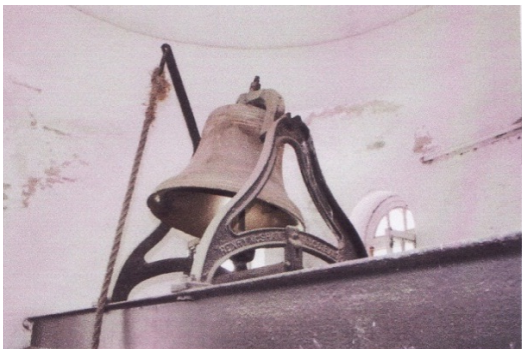


Fig. 7. Bell, Naulakha Church, Lahore.



Fig. 8. Michael's wife, (author's possession).

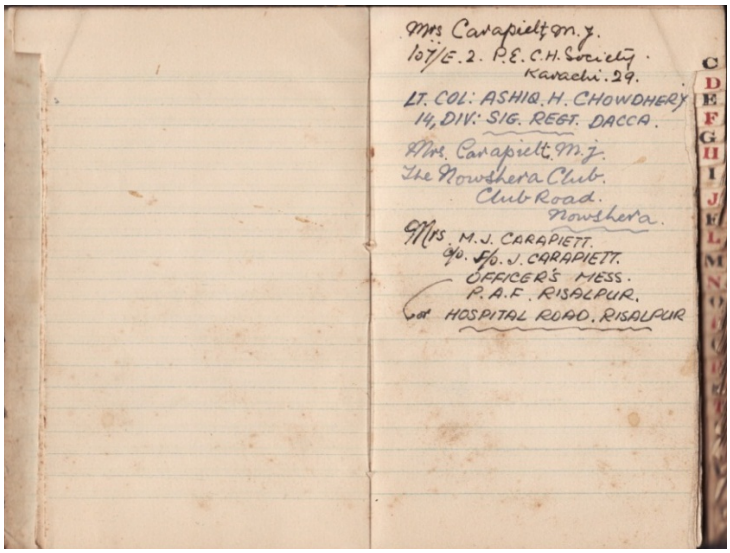


Fig. 9. Diary, of Jacobüs Michael, (author's possession).

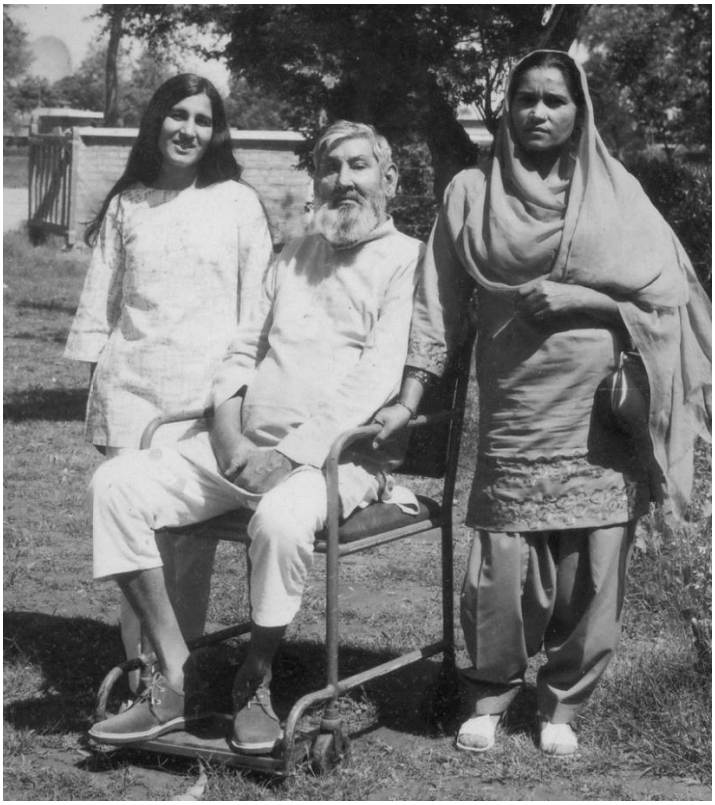


Fig. 10. Mona Michael, Jacobüs Michael and Ā̈īs̲ha Raḥīm, w/o Raḥīm, (author's possession).

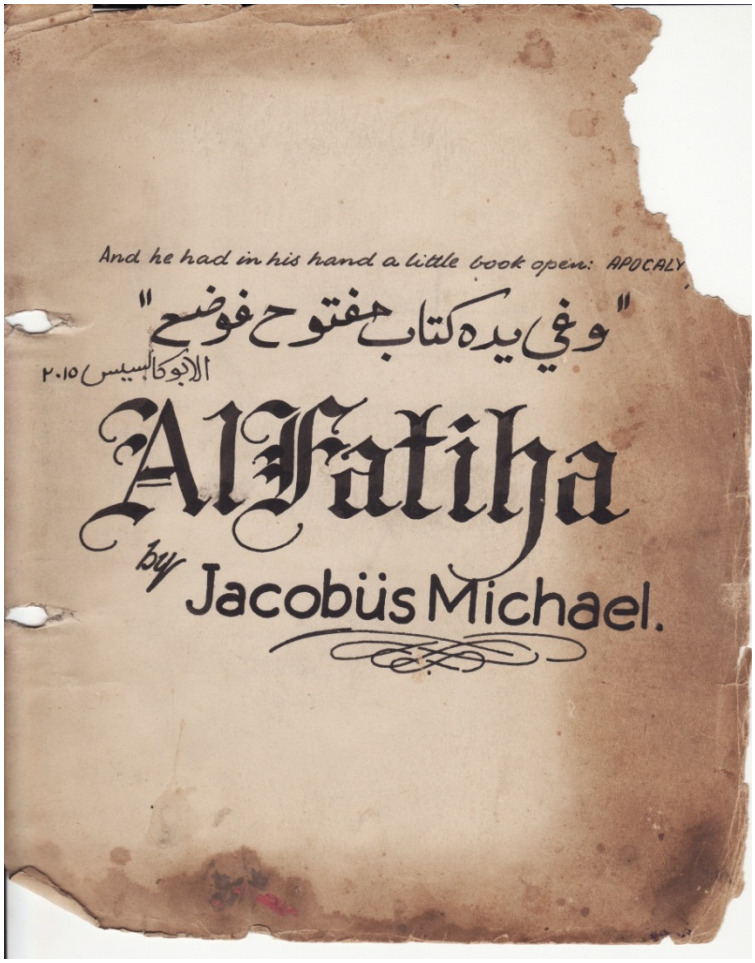


Fig. 11. Jacobüs Michael, *AlFātiḥa,* "Reality Verses Invention". Lahore: Royal Park, 1956, (author's possession).

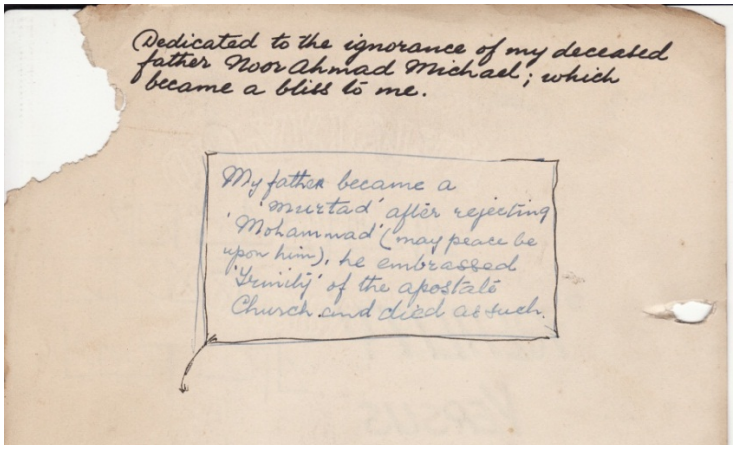


Fig.12. Obverse side of Michael's research paper, *AlFātiḥa*, with a note in Michael's hand writing, (author's possession).

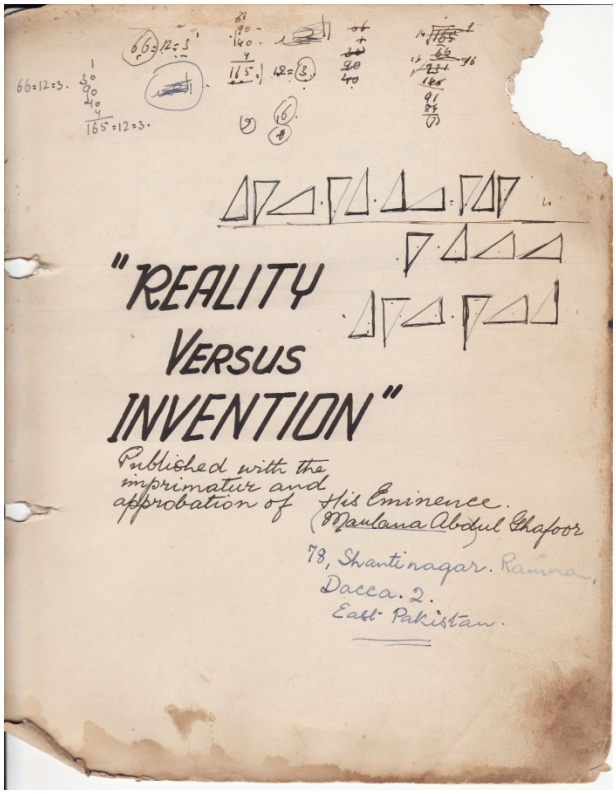
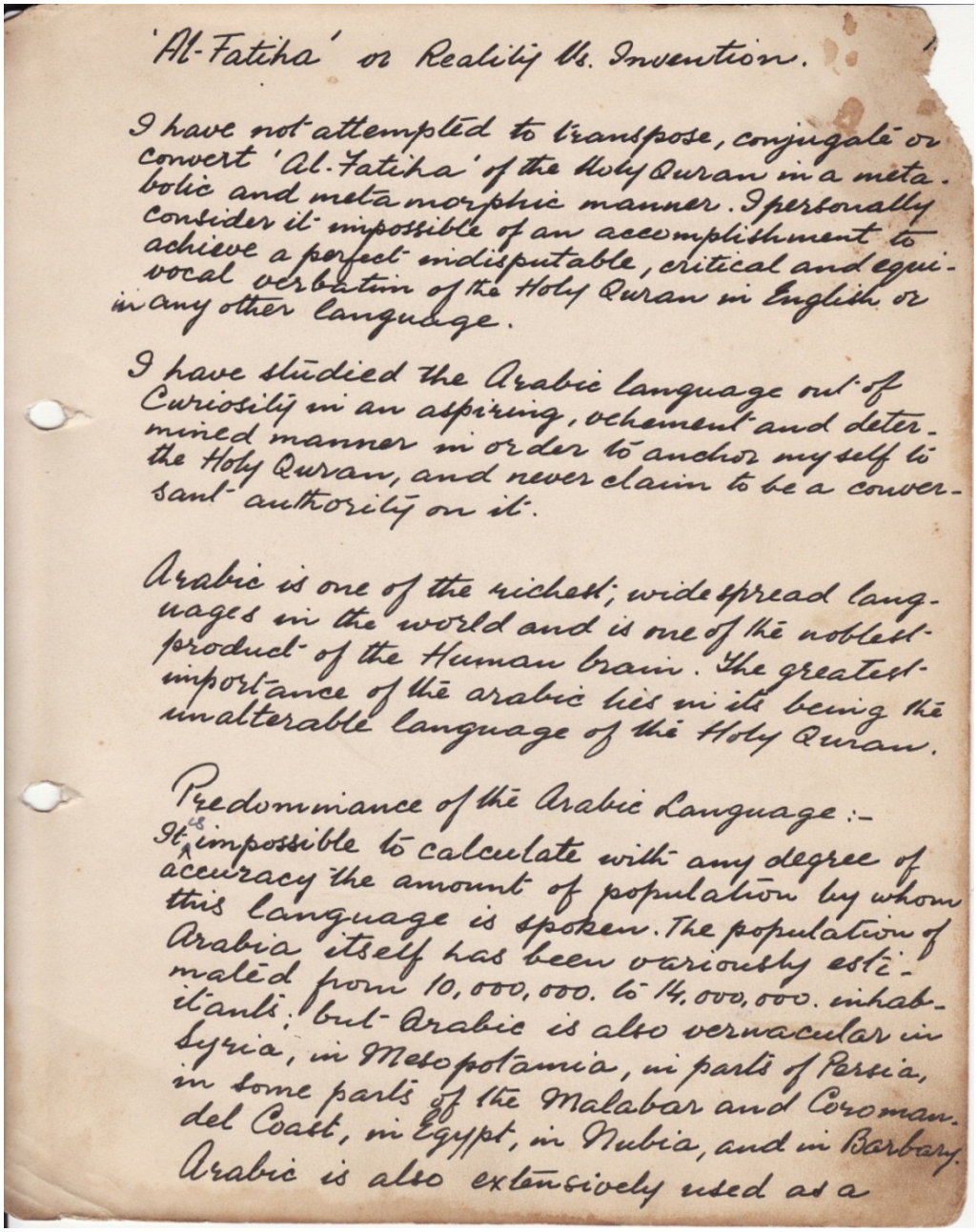


Fig. 13. Michael, Subtitle, *AlFātiḥa*, (author's possession).



Fig. 14. Michael, *AlFātiḥa*, diagram, (author's possession).



'Al-Fatiha' or Reality Vs. Invention.

I have not attempted to transpose, conjugate or convert 'Al-Fatiha' of the Holy Quran in a metabolic and metamorphic manner. I personally consider it impossible of an accomplishment to achieve a perfect indisputable, critical and equivocal verbatim of the Holy Quran in English or in any other language.

I have studied the Arabic language out of Curiosity in an aspiring, vehement and determined manner in order to anchor myself to the Holy Quran, and never claim to be a conversant authority on it.

Arabic is one of the richest; widespread languages in the world and is one of the noblest product of the Human brain. The greatest importance of the arabic lies in its being the unalterable language of the Holy Quran.

Predominance of the Arabic Language :-

It is impossible to calculate with any degree of accuracy the amount of population by whom this language is spoken. The population of Arabia itself has been variously estimated from 10,000,000. to 14,000,000. inhabitants; but Arabic is also vernacular in Syria, in Mesopotamia, in parts of Persia, in some parts of the Malabar and Coromandel Coast, in Egypt, in Nubia, and in Barbary. Arabic is also extensively used as a

Fig. 15. Jacobüs Michael, *AlFātiḥa* 1, (author's possession).



Fig. 16. Jacobüs Michael, *Muraqqa-i Alif-Lām-Mīm*, (author's possession).

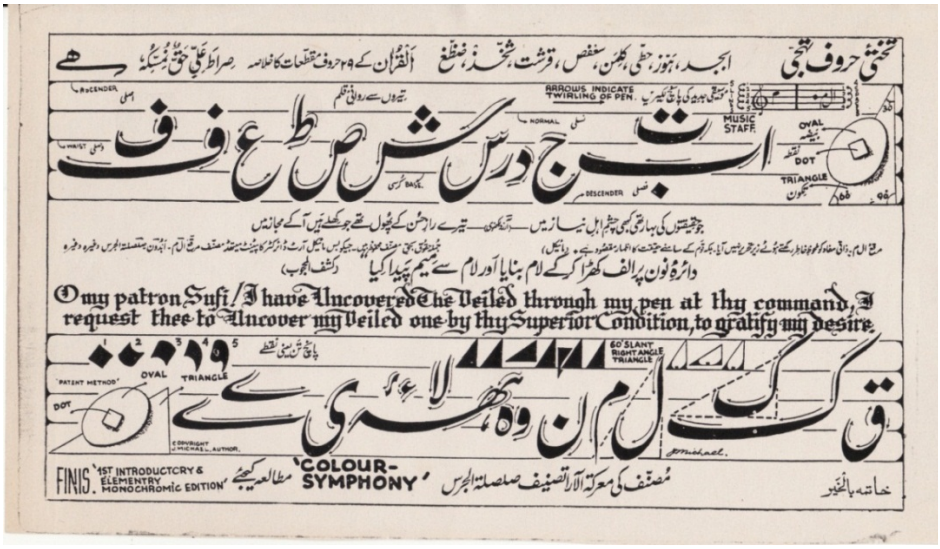


Fig. 17. Jacobüs Michael, *Alif-Lām-Mīm*, (author's possession).



Fig. 18. Jacobüs Michael, *Muraqqa-i Alif-Lām-Mīm*, (author's possession).

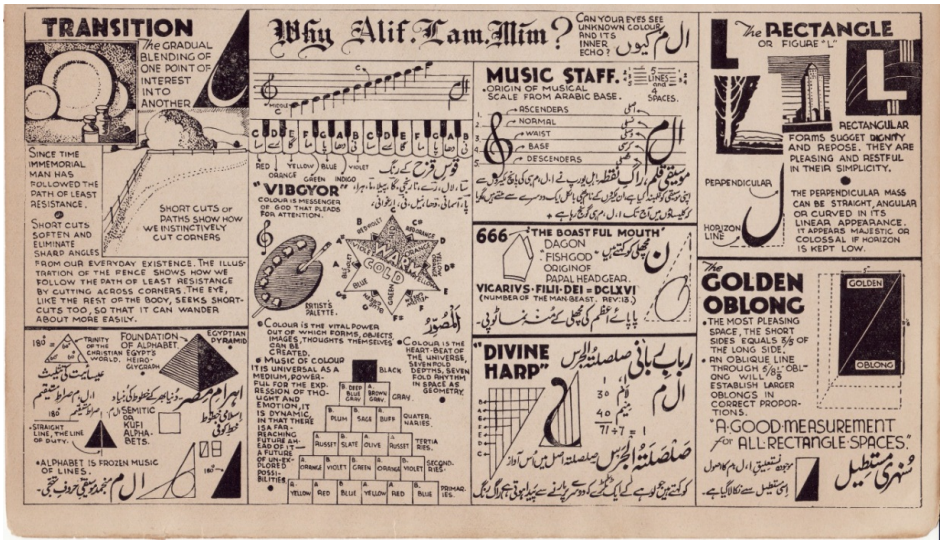
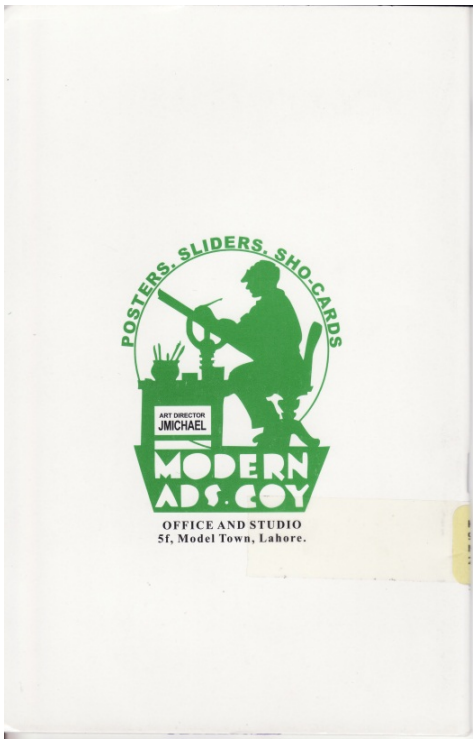


Fig. 19. Jacabüs Michael, *Muraqqa-i Alif-Lām-Mīm*, (author's possession).
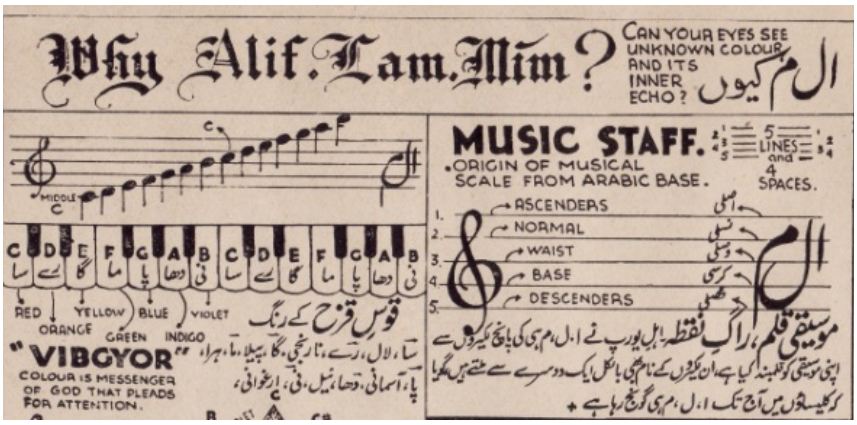


Fig. 20. Jacobüs Michael, (close-up *Muraqqa-i Alif-Lām-Mīm*). Musical note "Treble" and *Alif-Lām-Mīm*.


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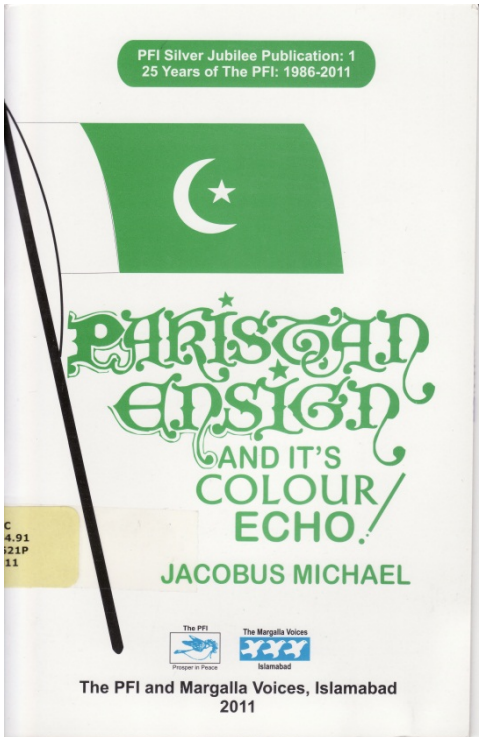


Fig. 21. Jacobüs Michael. Back-title and Title. *Pakistan Ensign and its Colour Echoes*. Lahore: Pakistan Ensign League, 1949. Reprint (with part addition of Part I).
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Fig. 22. *Illuminated Single Page Qur'ān*, Jacobüs Michael, (author's possession).



Fig. 23. Aḥmed Pervez, Calligraphy, Oil.