

Destiny Unknown

By MRS. HABEEB

WHEN the untimely hand of death takes away one from among us, our thoughts turn to the futility of life.

We wonder why their works, hopes, ambitions, dreams should have been so rudely cut off before being realised. We wonder if we too will be taken away so suddenly! Should we give up now? Why strive when we do not know our destiny?

When a tragedy takes away so many precious lives in one sweep as did the PIA plane crash at Cairo every thought turns to the one question: Why should these particular people have been on this flight?

One thinks of one's friends and acquaintances. Would they have been safe and happy and alive amongst us today had they not gone on this ill-fated flight?

The near and dear ones of the departed keep feeling if only they hadn't travelled on this flight their people would have been safe today. This one thought keeps chopping their grief-stricken wits.

Sober reflections bring to mind thoughts like, "our life span is pre-ordained, the time of our death, too," "God's ways are strange," "we must bow to the inevitable"—but can these reflections help the grief-stricken man, woman or child?

What of those who were the earners of bread?

God the Sustainer will provide for them.

What of those who were protectors of their family?

God the Protector, Who never sleeps, and Who watches over all, is there.

Who will guide young sons to their future.

God is one's best Guide.

What of those who gave Love, Comfort, and Encouragement to their families?

God can and will fill this void—in His own way, with His unseen Hand.

Why did Allah choose certain people to depart from this life early? To punish someone on earth? No. Was the person needed there more than here? Does He take away those He loves more? Or do these things happen because they are a part of His plan?

People are born, they grow, they work, they marry, they bring forth more human beings—and then they die. What for—to make the scene change—a sequence of the changing scene to complete the drama by and by?

Does man learn his lesson, will he make the grade; will he triumph? Why does he not give up hope? Knowing the futility of this life, how does he still continue to do his earthly duties

God Willed it so. Our only salvation in the hour of gloom lies in putting our trust in God and praying that in His Infinite Mercy He gives patience and perseverance, hope and strength, to those left behind to carry on, and bear their irreparable loss with fortitude.

A Courageous Girl

By Mrs. Habeeb

THIS is the fourth consecutive year that Shamim Akhtar has taken part in the Flower Show. The first year in 1962 Shamim received a first prize, the next year she said all her flowers drooped so she did not get any prize. Last year she received the second prize in the Children's party table arrangements, and 1965 brought her the coveted Zeb-un-Nissa Hamidullah Challenge Bowl.

Shamim Akhtar said that she enjoyed doing the Dinner Table arrangements most of all. For her arrangements for the Flower Show she had bought all the flowers, some from the Market and the rest from the Zoological Gardens the same morning. She said she lives at Pir Illahi Bukhsh Colony but does not have a garden.

Besides her fondness for flower arrangement, she loves

to be at home with her mother and to help her keep the house clean and pretty. Her interests are Stamp Collection, Sewing and Embroidery. She is a member of the Girl Guides Association in Karachi and usually spends one morning there every week. One morning a week she takes lessons in English from a friend and one morning a week she attends the Civil Hospital where a number of ladies spare a weekly morning for the patients who are bed-ridden in the Orthopedic Ward. These ladies help to plan and distribute sewing and embroidery to help the women patients pass their time usefully. These works or sewn garments or other toys and knock knacks are collected and sold in aid of charity again, at the annual YWCA fete.

While I interviewed her at the Flower Show I was asked to look directly at her and speak so that she may be able to see

the formation of the words, because Shamim does lip reading. Having been deaf and dumb from birth, she said, "I am very grateful to my brother who sent me to England for three and half years so that I can speak now."

She can follow English conversation fully but not so in Urdu. Shamim Akhtar wants to be able to learn her own language now. Her brother has promised to find her a tutor who is trained to teach the deaf and dumb. Shamim is from a family of five sisters and two brothers.

When it was announced that she had won the Challenge Bowl at the judging in the morning, Shamim flushed with happiness, spoke excitedly in her limited speech and hugged her friends. Her sincerity and affection has won her many friends. Interested in people and everything she has a happy personality which is delightful.