



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

Winter 2012

IIS UPDATE

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Summer programme on Islam

How did culture and context affect participants' understanding of Islam?

Muslim Societies and Civilisations

Learn about the new secondary curriculum modules published this year

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Message from the Co-Director

Dr Farhad Daftary

This year has been an exciting year for London and for the IIS. While we have not yet won a gold medal for our academic achievements, we gained accreditation from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), whose purpose is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of higher education in the UK. We were highly commended by the inspectors who visited us. They were particularly impressed by the thorough and rigorous admissions process to our graduate programmes, the worldwide perspective that underpins our specialist curriculum; the preparation, support

and the operation of the committees and boards together with strong governance. While we scored well on the three key areas on which the QAA judges, there is no room for complacency. In the coming years, the Department of Graduate Studies will continue to improve so that we can be sure that our graduate programmes are not only unique in their offering, but give our students the best possible grounding for their future careers.

Our scholars continue to focus on furthering academic thought in the realm of Shi'i studies and related subjects. We have published 10 books this year, including Professor Eric Ormsby's translation of the last known work of the renowned Ismaili thinker Nasir-i Khusraw, entitled *Between Reason and Revelation*; the latest in the Companion series by Dr Aryn B Sajoo and *The Vernacular Qur'an: Translation and the Rise of Persian Exegesis* by Dr Travis Zadeh, which you can read about further in this issue. Our scholars and visiting academics continue to add to the corpus of knowledge on subjects that have remained untouched for many years, such as the epistles of Ikhwān al-Safā'. They are also contributing to the discourse on contemporary issues by unpicking and elaborating on Islamic thought through the ages, such as Dr Reza Shah-Kazemi's work, *The Spirit of Tolerance in Islam*.

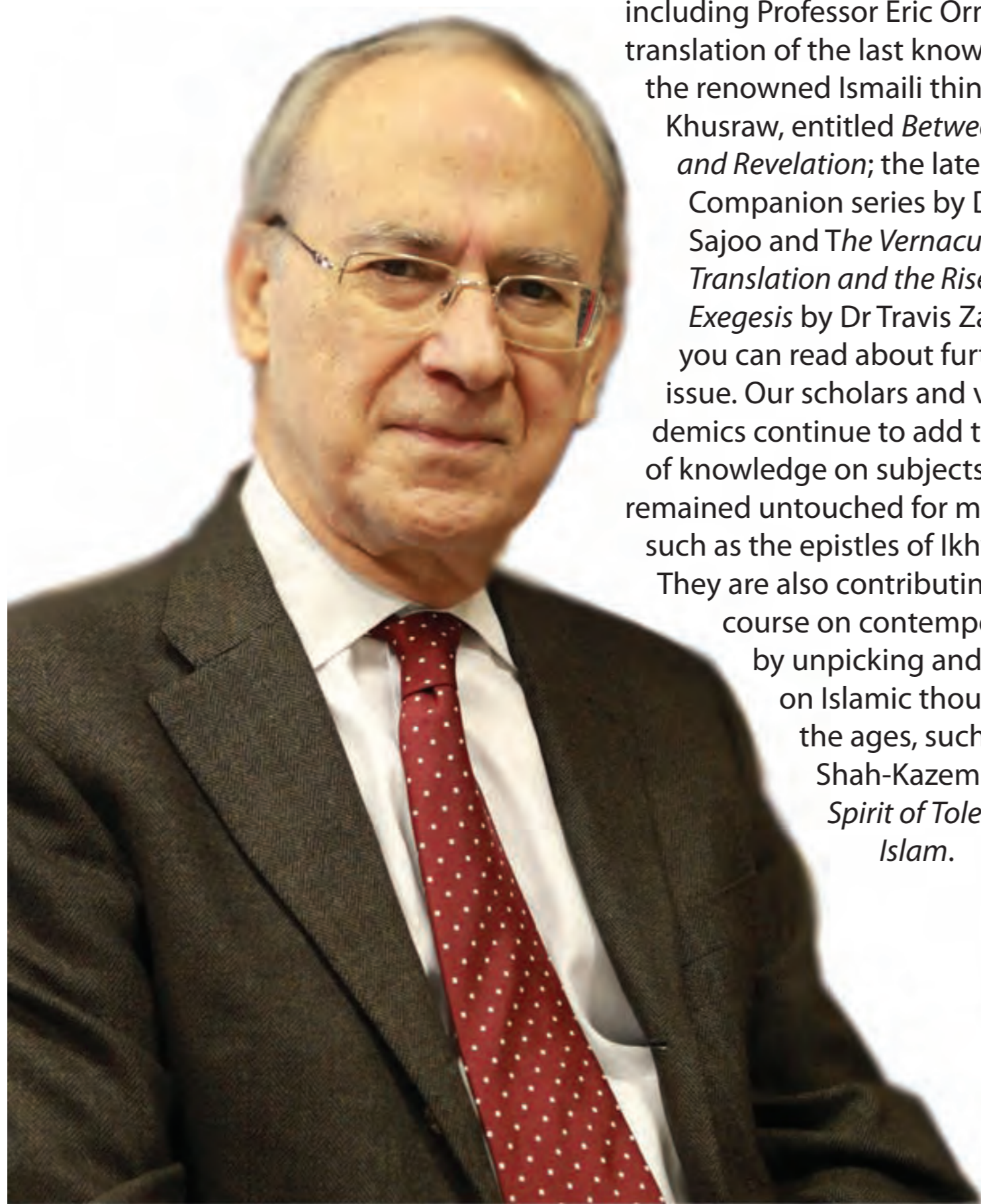
We continue to bring together scholars from across the globe to discuss subjects such as Qu'ran and Adab traditions. At the same time, we are contributing to learning within the Ismaili community through the work of our Department of Community Relations. All of these activities remain an important part of the Institute's work.

In 2010, a great contributor to the field of Ismaili studies and a member of the IIS board of governors, Professor Mohammed Arkoun passed away. In his honour, we have established a new doctoral scholarship, which will be awarded once every four years to a graduate student pursuing research in the field of Islamic studies, with emphasis on areas relevant to the work of Professor Arkoun.

“We continue to bring together scholars from across the globe”

As Co-Director I feel honoured to extend to staff, students, alumni, friends and supporters of the IIS, my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for your enthusiasm and support, which is vital for us as we move towards new horizons in our activities.

I feel honoured to extend to you, friends and supporters of the IIS, our heartfelt gratitude for your unfailing support, which is indispensable for the maintenance of our academic excellence and provisions of service to the global Ismaili community under the guidance of His Highness, the Aga Khan IV.



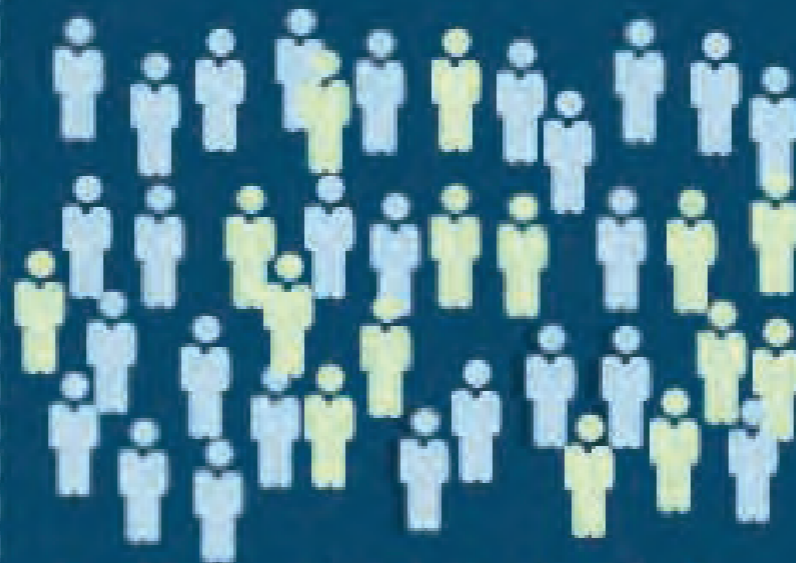
Dr Farhad Daftary, at the IIS, 2012

The IIS in numbers: Highlights from 2012

10 IIS books published



41 students joined the IIS



10 academic conferences, events and lectures held



38 students graduated from STEP and GPISH

18 book launch programmes held across **7** countries with more than **13000** participants



7 programmes held by the Department of Community Relations with over **250** participants

3 alumni chapter group meetings with over **120** delegates

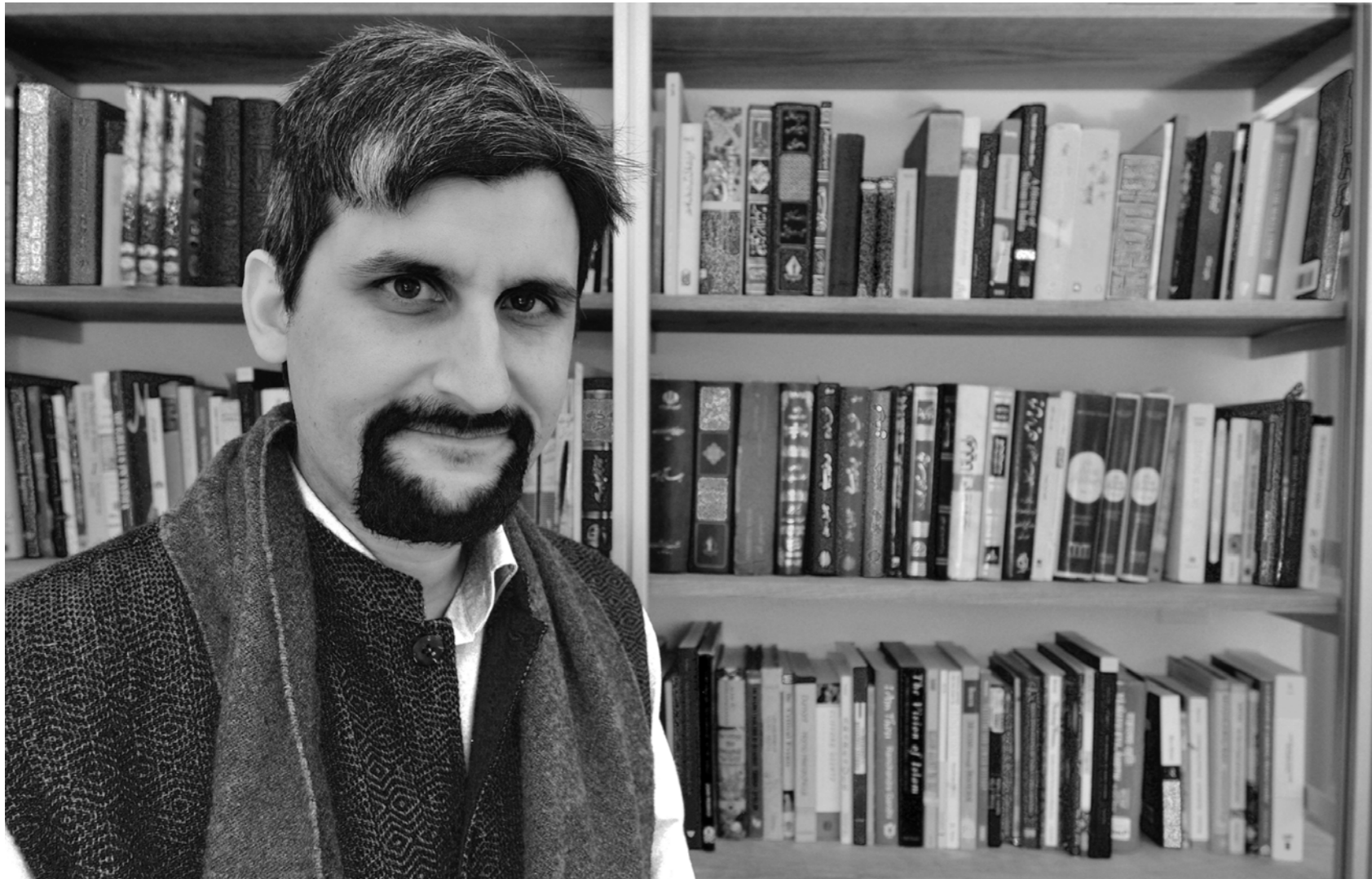
1 summer programme delivered with **30** participants

from **15** countries



Discussing The Vernacular Qur'an

Dr Travis Zadeh talks about the seventh book in the Qur'anic Studies Series, *The Vernacular Qur'an, Translation and the Rise of Persian Exegesis*, which was published this year.



Dr Travis Zadeh

What are the implications of translating the Qur'an into vernacular languages?

On several occasions, the Qur'an refers to itself as an Arabic revelation, such as in the opening to Surat Yusuf, 'We have revealed it as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand' (Q. 12:2). Whether or not Arabic is a quintessential characteristic of the revelation, however, is not directly addressed within the Qur'an. Yet, as this particular verse highlights, there are moments which would suggest that the choice of Arabic as a linguistic medium of communication was designed to make the message readily comprehensible to the Arabic-speaking community of the Prophet. For instance, several early Muslim exegetes inferred this from the following verse, 'We have never sent a messenger who did not use the language of his people to make things clear to them' (Q. 14:4).

The Qur'an does not explicitly develop a doctrine on the translation of scripture. It does, however contain several passages ridiculing opponents of the early Muslim community for their inability to produce anything that could rival the revelation to Prophet Muhammad. Many early Muslim religious authorities turned to these passages as proof of the Qur'an's miraculous inimitability and thus untranslatability. There is a widespread belief that can be traced throughout Islamic theology and jurisprudence that the Qur'an is a *sui generis* and an immutable Arabic expression, and thus is fundamentally untranslatable, in the sense that no other language could replace the cultic or ritual significance of the original text. Similarly, there are verses within the Qur'an that refer to the willful distortion and alteration of the Torah and Gospel by Jews and Christians alike. These passages presage an anxiety expressed by early Muslim authorities that by translating the Qur'an one would distort its original message.

Yet, from an early period, there developed a robust tradition of commenting upon and interpreting the Qur'an in Arabic. Muslim authorities generally trace this exegetical tradition back to the Prophet and his Companions, particularly the figure of Ibn 'Abbas, known by the sobriquet 'the translator' or 'interpreter' of the Qur'an. A good number of the disciples of Ibn 'Abbas were non-Arab converts. Furthermore, many of the most famous exegetes in the classical period were non-Arab scholars originally from Iran or Central Asia. Indeed there is much to suggest that, like the fields of Arabic lexicography and grammar, the exegetical tradition in Arabic evolved through the participation of non-Arabs who were intent on understanding and disseminating the meaning of the Qur'an.

Any process of translation produces both the loss and gain of information; such a deficit and surplus has symbolic, and in this case sacred, implications.

With the rise of Early New Persian as a written language of learning and education in the tenth century, there also developed a written tradition of interpreting and translating the Qur'an in the vernacular. This early Persian commentarial corpus builds upon established exegetical models in Arabic. As for the translations, these could range from literal word-for-word glosses to full rhyming paraphrases that significantly moved beyond the original Arabic meaning of the text.

Despite this broad heterogeneity of forms and styles, Persian translations would invariably maintain the Arabic of the Qur'an alongside the translated text. This was done often, for instance, through a line-by-line (or interlinear) presentation of the original Arabic followed by the Persian rendition. These early translations emerged within an exegetical sphere of interpretation. As such they were designed to preserve the sacrality of the Arabic Qur'an, while also making its meaning accessible to a broader audience.

Any process of translation produces both the loss and gain of information; such a deficit and surplus has symbolic, and in this case sacred, implications. The interlinear model became particularly common within the broader Persian ecumene; it sought to open up the Qur'an while also affirming that the original Arabic form was irreplaceable. One of the strongest arguments made by Muslim jurists for the use of the vernacular within the exegetical fields of interpretation was that translating the Qur'an would aid in the spread of Islam, while also allowing non-Arabs to access the meaning of scripture. In this respect one can view translation as not diminishing the sacrality of the Qur'an but rather supplementing it.

Which is the earliest known translation of the Qur'an in Persian and who was the translator?

Given the proselytising force which shaped much of early Islamic history, we may assume that early Persian converts learned of Prophet Muhammad and elements of the Qur'anic message through translation. Nonetheless, the documentary evidence for recording this early history of conversion is almost entirely circumstantial. That said, we have numismatic material that points to the use of Middle Persian translations of Qur'anic material during the early Umayyad period.

In a similar vein, Abu Hanifa (d. 767), the eponymous founder of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence in Iraq, argued that regardless of one's command of the original Arabic it was permissible to perform ritual prayer using Persian translations. Through historical chronicles, juridical manuals and theological writings, there is evidence that some early Persian converts indeed recited translations of the Fatiha, that is the first sura of the Qur'an, when performing ritual prayer. It is important to stress that only a relatively small amount of the Qur'an actually needs to be recited during the performance of ritual activity and that the memorisation of the Arabic liturgy comes to serve as a largely normative marker of participation in a larger scriptural community.

It is against this backdrop of early conversion, or at least the memory of it, that we should consider the Persian translation of the Fatiha ascribed to the Companion Salman al-Farisi, the first Persian convert to Islam. One particularly popular Hanafi justification for Abu Hanifa's position on ritual prayer is that Salman sent his translation to Persian converts so that they could perform ritual prayer in Persian until they had mastered the original Arabic.

There are accounts that Salman received direct permission from the Prophet for his translation and there is the suggestion in one source that Salman produced an entire translation of the Qur'an in Persian. Such claims must be met with a good amount of suspicion, as far as the historical record of early translation is concerned, as they serve to substantiate in the Sunna of the early community a particular Hanafi juridical ruling. It is of note, nonetheless, that Hanafi sources preserve a translation of the Fatiha, in what is referred to as ancient Pahlavi, ascribed to Salman.

In the field of exegesis, we also have the account of the preacher and exegete Musa b. Sayyar al-Aswari (fl. 738) a descendant of the Sasanian cavalry who resided in Basra. Aswari is famously remembered for his assemblies where Arabs would sit at his right side and Persians on his left. Reciting a verse from the scripture, he would explain it to the Arabs in Arabic, then he would turn to face the Persians and explain it to them in Persian. Such accounts reflect a collective memory of scriptural translation and vernacular interpretation in the early spread of Islamic civilisation.

As for actual written translations in the vernacular, they emerge concomitantly with the birth of Early New Persian in the tenth century. While many early Persian translations are anonymous, such as the rhyming Mashhad fragment, and the Qur'an-i Quds, several are associated with particular commentaries, as is the case with the interlinear translation accompanying the tenth-century Samanid work *Tafsir-i Tabari*, which purports to be a translation of the multivolume Arabic commentary by Abu Ja'far Tabari (d. 923), or the interlinear translation in the commentary of the Shafi'i jurist of Khurasan, 'Imad al-Din Shahfur al-Isfara'ini (d 1079).



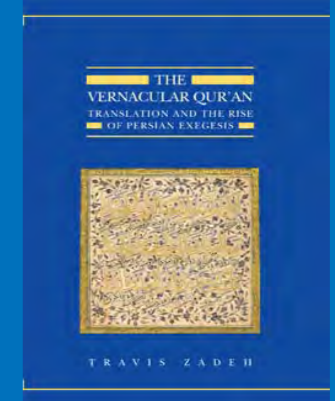


Featured in *The Vernacular Qur'an*: Angels writing Qur'anic lines. From Kakariyya Qazwini (d.682/1283), *Aja'ib al-makhlūqat*, dated 678/1280 (MS Cod. arab. 464, fol. 36a). Courtesy of Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

Where does the notion that translating the Qur'an is not allowed come from?

There is a widespread belief that Muslims are forbidden from translating the Qur'an. Generally juridical authorities address this matter when treating the lawfulness of using translations for the performance of prayer. Yet, beyond the domain of ritual practice, translation as interpretation has generally been considered licit within classical juridical thought. Thus, for instance, the Hanbali reformist Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) rejects the ritual use of Qur'anic translations; he also holds that Arabic is the sacred language of Islam and the marker of Islamic civilisation. Nonetheless, in cases of need, he claims that one may translate the Qur'an for the purposes of comprehension. Indeed it is largely in this exegetical sphere that translation gains juridical legitimacy during the classical period.

On the one hand, the doctrinal claim that the Qur'an is untranslatable serves as an apologetic defence of the miraculous status of the revelation to Prophet Muhammad. In contrast, for much of Western scholarship on Islam, the notion that Muslims are forbidden from translating the Qur'an reflects a particular polemical critique of Islam as anti-rationalist. Thus, the idea that Muslims do not translate their scripture has fed into a larger critique, still quite current, that Islam never went through a historical process akin to the Reformation, and is therefore stuck in some sense in the haze of medieval ignorance. Of course, such a formulation ignores vibrant traditions, which continue on to this day, of accessing the meaning of the Qur'an through various vernacular forms.



The Vernacular Qur'an dispels the myth that early Muslims were averse to translating the Qur'an. Dr Zadeh shows that even though some schools of law argued that the divine nature of the Qur'an could not be conveyed in a language other than Arabic, the reality was that Persian translations were considered acceptable in certain cases, such as for use by new converts to Islam.

In this book Dr Zadeh focuses on Persian translations of the Qur'an and says that translation and interpretation are inextricably intertwined. An act of translation is also an act of interpretation, and the translations that resulted could be considered to be 'exegetical translations'.

These translations preserved the Arabic text of the Qur'an and wove Persian commentaries throughout its lines, thereby preserving the original script while expanding on and making the text available to a wider audience.

The Vernacular Qur'an gives a thorough overview of the evolution of a range of Persian exegetical writings, from rhyming translations to major commentaries, and shows the inter-relationship between such writing and Persian culture, institutions of education and dynastic authority.

A new chapter in Russian scholarship

Celebrating and reviving the work of Ivanow and his predecessors

Among academics with an interest in Ismaili Studies, the work of Wladimir Alekseevich Ivanow (1886-1970) is seen as a turning point in scholarship on the subject. He has been described as the “moving spirit behind the modern progress in Ismaili Studies” by AAA Fyze in the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bombay*. His academic contributions, in particular his *Guide to Ismaili Literature* (1933), provided an academic framework which has been invaluable for further research in most aspects of Ismaili Studies.

Ivanow enjoyed the patronage of Imam Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan III, and was given access to the literary heritage of the Ismailis. This opportunity and unwavering search for new manuscripts in various parts of Asia made it possible for him to publish his fundamental work on the Ismailis – *A Guide to Ismaili Literature* – which brought to light the richness and diversity of Ismaili literature and intellectual traditions.

The Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS), in conjunction with the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (IOM) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), held an international conference in December 2011, entitled *Ismaili Traditions and Spirituality of the People of the Pamirs in the Works of Russian Scholars*.

The conference, held in St Petersburg, celebrated the extensive contributions of Russian and Soviet orientalists to Ismaili scholarship on the traditions of the Pamiri people and commemorated the 125th anniversary of the birth of Ivanow, a pioneer of modern Ismaili studies and a close associate of the IOM.

The conference brought together scholars from Russia, Central Asia and the West to discuss relevant experiences of research in historical and contemporary contexts, as well as explore opportunities for future engagement between scholars and institutions in related fields.

Speeches were delivered by Professor Irina Popova, Director of the IOM and Hakim Elnazarov, Coordinator of the IIS’ Central Asian Studies Unit. Further speakers included scholars from academic institutions such as the University of Central Asia, University of Toronto, Khorog State University, and the Moscow Institute of Ethnography and Anthropology. These scholars presented papers on the contributions of Russian scholarship to Ismaili Studies across a range of disciplines; the evolution, approaches and methodologies of Ismaili Studies in Russia and prospects for the development of critical research in this field.

According to Dr Farhad Daftary, who has written about Ivanow and his work, there are three phases in Ismaili Studies: the medieval period, the period associated with the development of Oriental Studies in the West, and modern Ismaili scholarship starting from the 1930s with the discovery of genuine Ismaili manuscripts. This is the period where Ivanow made a real



Dr Najam Abbas in conversation with Dr Andrey Smirnov



IIS and ISMC Staff



Professor Andrey Smirnov, Daulat Khudonazarov and Professor Stanislav Prozorov



Hakim Elnazarov speaking at the IIS conference on 5 November 2012

impact to help change the academic discourse on Ismaili Muslims. Ivanow collected and catalogued a large number of manuscripts for the IOM, while under the patronage of Imam Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan III. It was access to these manuscripts which allowed him to present a new perspective on the Ismailis, which gradually came to replace myths about the community in academic scholarship.

Hakim Elnazarov, the Co-ordinator for the IIS' Central Asian Studies Unit says there is a growing interest in the history and traditions of the Central Asian Ismailis in Russia and Central Asia, and that the IIS is exploring collaborative projects with Russian academics to support and revive interest in Ismaili Studies in the Russian Federation. "Russia, today is home to a large number of the Ismailis who have settled there after migrating from Central Asia," says Elnazarov.

"Through the conference in 2011 and our seminar this November we are building opportunities for engagement between scholars and institutions that I hope will lead to a better understanding of the culture and traditions of the Central Asian mountain societies among Russian audiences. Russian scholars, such as, Aleksey Bobrinskoy (1861-1938), Alexandr Semyonov (1873-1958) and Ivan Zarubin (1887-1964) made original contributions to the academic scholarship on Ismailis in the pre-Soviet, and Soviet periods. It's important that we recognise this contribution and revive interest in it."

In November 2012, which coincided with the 100th year anniversary of Imam Sultan Mahomed Shah's first visit to St Petersburg, Russia, a follow-up seminar was held at the IIS by the Central Asian Studies Unit. The seminar entitled 'Ismailis and Russian Muslims: Over a Century of Learning' aimed to further explore the depth of the Russian scholarship in Ismaili Studies.

The seminar demonstrated the contribution of Russian scholarship to Ismaili Studies and the potential which exists in Russian academia to engage scholars in the field of Ismaili studies, providing a better understanding of the Ismailis of Central Asia and the Russian Federation.

Professor Andrey Smirnov, deputy director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, who translated Al-Kirmani's *'Rahat al-Aql'* into Russian, spoke about the originality of al-Kirmani's thought and philosophical disposition; Davlat Khudonazarov, a Pamiri Tajik filmmaker, talked about the visit of Imam Sultan Mahomed Shah to Russia in 1912. The seminar was accompanied with an exhibition of Russian books, pictures of Russian scholars and military officers at the Ismaili Centre which was attended by Russian dignitaries and Ismaili leadership in London.



Vladimir Alekseevich Ivanow, (b. St Petersburg, Russia, 3 November 1886, d. Tehran, 19 June 1970), was a Russian orientalist and leading pioneer in modern Ismaili Studies. From 1907 to 1911, he studied at the Faculty of Oriental Languages of The University of St Petersburg. After studying Arabic with the noted Russian scholar Victor Rosen (1849-1908), Ivanow read Islamic and Central Asian history with Vasilii Vladimirovich Barthold (1869-1930), while specialising in Persian dialects under the eminent Russian authority, Valentin A. Zhukovsky (1858-1918; Barthold, p. 320).

In 1914, Ivanow joined The Asiatic Museum and had his first contact with Ismaili literature, cataloguing a small collection of Persian Ismaili manuscripts. In November 1920, Ivanow went to India, settling in Calcutta, where Sir Ashutosh Mukerji, President of The Asiatic Society of Bengal, commissioned him to catalogue the extensive collection of Persian manuscripts in the Society's library. He completed this task meticulously in two annotated volumes and two supplements, which were published during 1924-28 in the *Bibliotheca Indica* series (Daftary, 1971, p. 64). The same decade saw the appearance of his first major Ismaili publication ("Ismailitica," in *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 8, 1922, pp. 1-76), which contained first editions of certain Nizari Ismaili texts. In 1928, Ivanow went to Persia to collect manuscripts for the Asiatic Society, and made the first of several visits to Alamut and other former Ismaili strongholds in northern Persia. Having also done considerable work on a catalogue of the Asiatic Society's Arabic manuscripts, Ivanow ended his association with the Asiatic Society in 1930 and moved to Bombay. This initiated a new phase in his scholarly career, a phase devoted exclusively to his ground-breaking work in Ismaili Studies.

During his time in India, Ivanow had established relations with some members of the Nizari Khoja community of Bombay who, in turn, introduced him to Imam Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan III (1877-1957), the forty-eighth Imam of the Nizari Ismailis. In January 1931, the Aga Khan employed Ivanow on a permanent basis to research into the literature, history, and the teachings of the Ismailis. Henceforth, Ivanow rapidly found access to the private collections of Ismaili manuscripts held by the Nizari Ismailis of India, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Persia and elsewhere. Through the network of his Ismaili connections, Ivanow managed to identify a large number of Ismaili texts, which he described in an annotated catalogue (*A Guide to Ismaili Literature*, London, 1933). This catalogue was the first pointer to the so far unknown richness and diversity of the literary heritage of the Ismailis and remained an indispensable research tool for several decades, providing the material for the advancement of Ismaili scholarship.

The GPIISH journey

GPIISH students go through a rigorous three year journey to stretch their minds and build their academic skills.

These pages tell you about the journey GPIISH students go through during their three year programme with the IIS

Courses

During the first two years, students undertake around 24 modules on subjects such as Muslim societies and civilisations; law, ethics and society; and the philosophy of religion.

Students complete at least four modules a term and attend weekly classes on these.

Language classes

Over two years, all students learn a new language that supports their study of Islamic texts and culture. Students study Arabic (or Persian for those proficient in Arabic) for the whole duration of the programme.

Before the first term of study officially starts, students attend intensive language sessions to get them started.

Language immersion project

Students live with host families in Morocco, Tunisia, Iran or Tajikistan, while undergoing a full language immersion programme.

This takes place at the end of term three of the first year to hone their language skills. This is for a period of three to eight weeks.

In addition to honing language skills, students get a valuable insight into the cultures and traditions of non-native Muslim countries.



As part of their cultural and historical education, students go for an educational trip to Cairo during their first year. Dr Laila Halani, STEP & GPIISH Course Director says, "Field trips give students a direct encounter with two of the societies they study. They are given relevant readings prior to their trip and are accompanied by a lecturer to make sure it's an enriching experience academically as well as culturally."



31 students are currently part of GPIISH

FIELD PROJECTS

Students conceptualise, design and conduct field research during the summer of their second year.

This November, students from the class of 2013 presented the results of their research to their peers and faculty at the IIS.

Al-Noor Daod Nathoo

A hostel for a better future: Exploring the foyers (Ismaili youth hostels) in Madagascar

"My project reinforced that foyers are essential for young Ismailis in Madagascar. They provide accommodation, education and social support for young people who have been separated from their families at a young age, says Al-Noor.

He says the project allowed him to conduct a study in a developing country, something which he has never done before. "This project gave me invaluable experience on how to create and conduct a field project, which will help a great deal with my MA dissertation."



In the second year, students take an educational trip to Andalusia, which forms an integral part of their study of art and architecture in Muslim societies.

Hussain Rajwani

Engagement through space: Ismaili leadership views on the Ismaili Centre, Dubai

"I examined how the Ismaili Centre in Dubai provided opportunities for building bridges between different faith communities," says Hussain.

"I hope it can be used to highlight best practice for programmatic activities and give insight as to what is effective in building relationships with other communities."

Naureen Firdous Ali

Migration and change: Indian Ismaili women's lives in London

"The main aim of my research was to contribute to existing literature on the impact of migration on women, with a specific focus on the Ismaili community. My research showed that while migration has many challenges, the local Ismaili community was a stabilising force."

Naureen says that she has made contacts that can help her do further research in this area, giving her specific experience for her MA dissertation.

MASTERSLEVEL STUDY

Following completion of the initial two year programme, students undertake a Master's at a UK university in a subject area that resonates with the objectives of the Graduate Programme. Students from the class of 2013 are studying subjects such as public management and governance, media and communications, education, public health, development, Islamic studies and social anthropology.

Follow the STEPs

The Secondary Teaching Education Programme (STEP) is a two year course for practising and prospective teachers. On completing STEP, graduates from the programme will teach the Institute's Secondary Curriculum to Ismaili students aged 11 to 16 years, in their home countries.

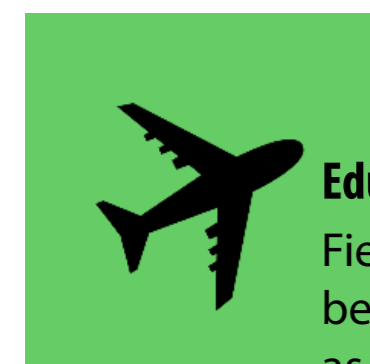
Working towards a Master of Arts in Education

Over two years, students undertake five MA modules focused on Muslim societies and civilisations. They attend lectures and seminars at the IIS which give them a grounding in the subjects they will teach as part of the Secondary Curriculum.



Master of Teaching

Students also go through five MTeach modules, taught by the Institute of Education (IOE). Through this part of the programme they receive broad insights into pedagogy, allowing them to apply the skills they learn to a variety of educational spheres.



Educational trips to Spain & Egypt

Field trips to Cairo and Spain have proven to be a good educational experience. "We went as researchers, not as tourists", said *Rahima Zavidly*, a second year STEP student. Meticulous preparation for such excursions means that every day is an educational experience. The trips also provide a unique advantage for the classroom placements, "we can use our own notes, our own videos and our own knowledge when teaching students about these historical landmarks," says *Rahima*.



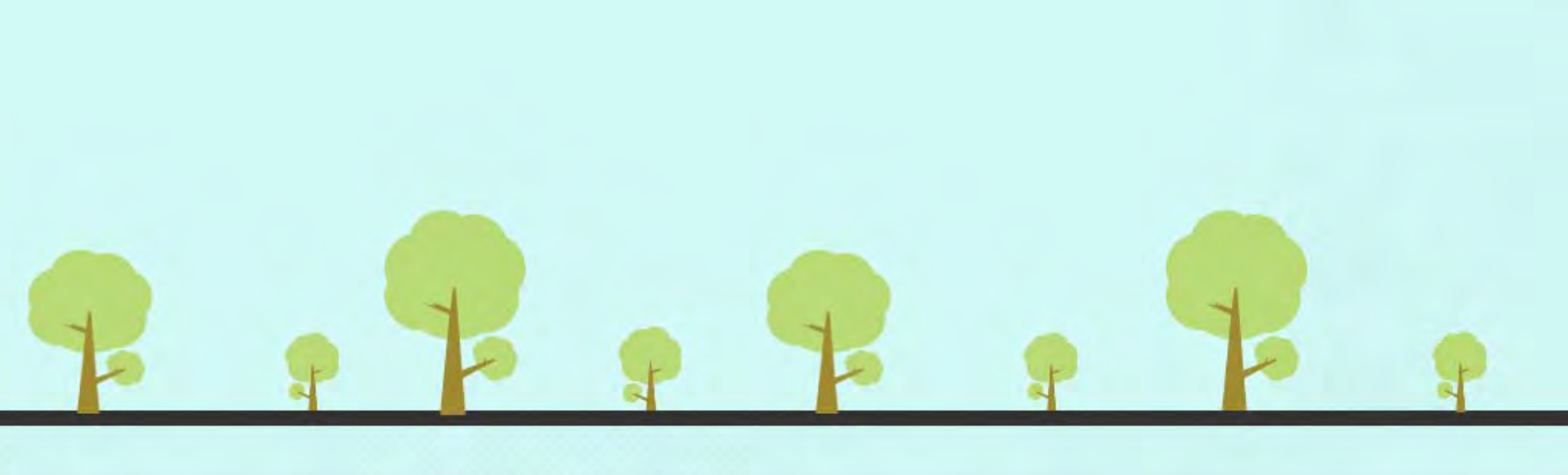
State school teaching experience

Students are given the opportunity to experience the UK educational context throughout the first year of study. Each student is allocated a UK secondary school where they observe and deliver lessons in a number of cognate subjects.

Placements at UK state schools have given STEP students the opportunity to learn more about classroom situations. Observing professional teachers at the Chatham Grammar School in Kent, *Rahima* was able to learn about the classroom environment, and her skills were put to the test when she was asked, at a moment's notice, to teach French (her first language), to a class of 30 teenagers in the absence of the regular teacher.




STEP has expanded this year, with 70 students from 10 countries currently studying as part of the programme.



In these pages we walk through the steps these students take to become inspiring teachers and mentors, with a special focus on how their practical teaching experience in both state schools and Ismaili religious education classes helps them to develop their skills and put into practice what they learn in class.

Practicum teaching experience




On joining the course, participants bring a range of perspectives on teaching and learning from the diverse educational contexts in which they operate.

Sharing these perspectives and analysing professional practice with peers is central to developing a deeper understanding of subject knowledge and the way adolescents learn. As part of this process, STEP students get the opportunity to teach religious education classes on Saturdays during their first year.

Amreen Mistry leading her class in assembly



Field research and home practicum teaching

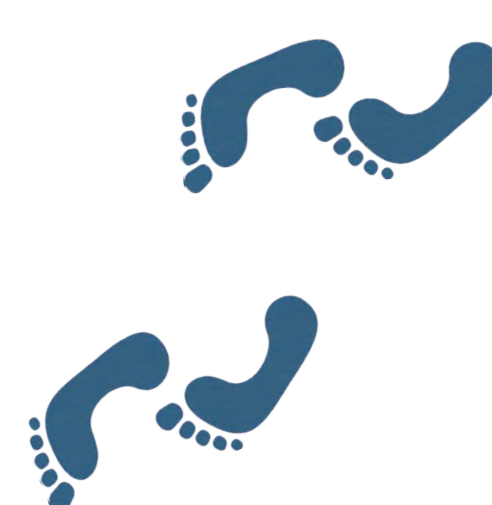


Students return to their home countries for a whole term to engage in field research and gain exposure to the environment in which they will be working after the completion of their studies. Based on their field research, students write their MA and MTEACH report/dissertation.




Amreen Mistry teaching at South London Bait al-Ilm

Amreen Mistry, a second year STEP student, was most struck by her “first hand experience of the differences in cultures” between South London and her native India. The teaching experience has helped her learn how to adapt to different classroom situations, giving her practical skills to build on what she had already learnt at the IIS.



Rahima Zavidaly, another second year STEP student with a background in religious education believes that there has been a change in London religious education classes since the introduction of the STEP programme: “The children are interested in learning something they haven’t been taught before”.

The final step - teaching the Secondary Curriculum



Following successful completion of the programme, students return home and embark on a career in teaching having received a double Masters from the IOE.

An exploration of this years' Summer Programme on Islam

How does culture and context affect understanding and practices?

Participants from across the globe, with different cultures and individual perspectives on Islam, came together for this year's Summer Programme on Islam (SPI), delivered by the IIS' Department of Community Relations. The week long programme put participants through their intellectual paces by challenging their assumptions and encouraging them to look at the reality of Islam in diverse cultural contexts.

The perception of Islam that many of the participants encounter in their daily lives can be one dimensional. So, the programme faculty worked with them to explore the different articulations and expressions of Islam across the world.

One aspect of this was to look at the different expressions and traditions of Muslim communities across the globe, both current and historical. The participants examined the different ways faith in Allah and reverence of the Prophet and his family are expressed, and discussed the implications this had on their understanding of Islam.

Each of the participants was asked for their initial reaction to a news story or video clip on a contemporary issue. They were given the time to step-back and learn more about the historical context and development of contemporary issues and see if that changed their perspective or understanding of those issues.

Participants discussed a range of issues including the Qur'an, depictions of the Prophet, Shari'a, and the negotiation of spaces of worship.

Can an expression of faith be instantly recognised as Islamic? Can Islam exist in a vacuum? These were some of the questions asked and explored with the help of Dr Alnoor Dhanani and Dr Nadia Eboo-Jamal.

Using a civilisational approach to the study of Islam, the lecturers at SPI aimed to show how Islam is a living entity that can be studied and explored on many levels.

Participants debate a topic



Participants present their ideas



The Department of Community Relations organised the tenth *Summer Programme on Islam (SPI)* at the University of Cambridge from 14th to 19th August. The six-day residential programme this year was specially designed for Ismaili professionals working in the fields of diplomacy, judiciary, government, social policy, media and journalism.

Thirty participants from 15 countries attended the programme, which was designed to help them develop a more informed understanding of the factors that have influenced historical developments and contemporary expressions of Islam which continue to shape contemporary Muslim societies.

Among the themes that the programme touched upon were the following: approaches to the study of Islam; the historical importance and contemporary relevance of the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad; situating Imamat as a model of authority and leadership in the Muslim tradition; law and its Muslim contexts; contemporary landscape of the Muslim ummah; and the Aga Khan Development Network as an Imamat endeavour to realise the social conscience of Islam.

The lecturers included Dr Aziz Esmail, Dr Alnoor Dhanani, Dr Nadia Eboo-Jamal, and Mr Khalil Shariff, CEO of Aga Khan Foundation Canada. Mr Hussain Jasani, Mrs Selina Kassam-Ramji, and Ms Fatima Dhanani served as facilitators.

Group discussions



Quotes from the participants

Dr Nadia Eboo-Jamal, Author of *Surviving the Mongols*, and a key faculty member of the programme said:

“We are living in a world of rapidly changing contexts. On one side, we are witnessing a rising empowerment of the voice of the people and interconnectedness through social media; on the other, the rise of fundamentalisms, secularism, individualism, intolerance, conflict and disunities, and vast disparities between rich and poor. As Muslims, we are bombarded with questions and images about Islam, a subject at the forefront of discourses today. As a result, it is essential for us to equip ourselves with both knowledge and tools to respond intelligently to these questions so we can be true representatives of our faith.”

Mr Khalil Shariff presents to the group



Hafez, from France

“For me the key consequence of the programme was that it helped provide participants like myself with the intellectual tools to analyse their faith in context. By taking current issues as a starting point, SPI managed the delicate balance of providing participants with an informed perspective while allowing each one to formulate their own conclusions.”

Zulfiqar from Pakistan

“As the Muslim Ummah encounters new global realities, the Summer Programme on Islam was a timely effort to understand the historical and contemporary issues and complexities of Muslim societies through scholarly exchanges. The sessions provided me a new intellectual perspective in locating and understanding my faith within the diverse communities of Islamic interpretations. I am inspired to explore new ways of thinking about Islam and Muslim societies”.

Aliya, from Canada “Through the course, I had the opportunity to benefit from the knowledge and perspective of distinguished scholars who bring a more inclusive and pluralist lens to the study of Islam than in any other course on the subject that I have been exposed to in an academic or professional setting. The fact that the professors are familiar with my own faith tradition meant that they were able to engage in discussion in a way that is directly relevant to me, and the issues and questions I encounter in the course of my personal and professional life. As Ismailis we try to embrace diversity and the richness of the different traditions that are part of our global community. But, seeing it in pictures and engaging with it in reality are not at all the same; sometimes diversity can be uncomfortable. Despite being part of the same community, we are all naturally influenced by our contexts and I was struck, in some of our discussions, by the quite significant differences in our points of reference. I found the Summer Programme offered a non-judgmental space in which to take in different perspectives and challenge some of my own assumptions, in a way that will be reflected in my professional life.”

Nabat from Bangladesh

“The summer programme on Islam was interesting and thought provoking. We revisited the basics on Islam in a diverse socio-religious context and the challenges this brings up. For me, it was one of the best places where both critical and basic questions were addressed. The sessions opened up debate and provided a better understanding of the factors that have influenced the evolution and existing expression of Islam which continue to shape contemporary Muslim society”.



Participants and faculty of the 2012 summer programme

Educating young Ismaili Muslims

An exploration of the Secondary Curriculum on *Muslim Societies and Civilisations*

In 2012, the Department of Curriculum Studies published a new secondary level curriculum module to educate 12-16 year-olds about Muslim Societies and Civilisations. The aim is to introduce a global secondary curriculum for students attending Ismaili religious education centres in various countries. The textbooks adopt a humanistic and civilisational approach to the study of Islam, charting how diverse Muslim societies and communities have developed over the course of over fourteen centuries. Within this framework, special attention is given to the history of the Shia tradition and its Ismaili tariqah in their interactions with wider Muslim contexts.

The curriculum, which makes reference to periods, places and cultures of significance linked to Muslim communities and societies, aims to present content from interdisciplinary perspectives, including philosophy, theology, social sciences and the humanities. It explores the interplay between religious, cultural and social dimensions, covering subjects such as history, literature, ethics, faith and practice, the Qur'an and its interpretations, and Muslims in the contemporary world.

"The educational approach adopted in the textbooks is designed to appeal to the natural inquisitiveness of young minds. Topics are explored through enquiry-based learning, guided discussions and debates, creative activities, as well as project work covering various aspects of the curriculum," says Dr Shiraz Thobani, Head of Curriculum Studies at the Institute.

"The new curriculum is a significant departure from past forms of religious instruction in the community which relied on materials that were not always age appropriate.

"The new modules draw on recognised scholarship and research in Islamic studies, and utilise the best of traditional and modern philosophies of education to help young people become acquainted with the history, thought, culture and faith of Muslim societies in general, and the Ismaili community specifically. The modules engage with subject areas and issues that are of consequence to the religious education of young Ismailis in the contexts in which they live today."

UNIT 4.3

THE RISE OF NEW DYNASTIES

During the tenth and eleventh centuries, there were further developments in philosophy, the sciences, literature, learning, and many other aspects of culture and civilisation. However, in this period the Abbasid caliphate was considerably weakened. New ruling dynasties were emerging in distant provinces. Over time, some of these dynasties took control of Baghdad, which meant the caliph was reduced to a figurehead. Although Baghdad remained an important city, other capitals emerged in the Abbasid empire, with their own courts where culture and learning flourished.

The rise of new powers

As early as the beginning of the ninth century, the Abbasid empire had begun to break up. There were many reasons for this. The Abbasids had appointed governors in some provinces who were allowed to govern as long as they agreed to send revenues to Baghdad and provide troops to defend the Abbasids. In other provinces, local governors had grown powerful and had begun to act independently of the caliph. In still other provinces, there were rebellions and the caliph lost control of his territories.

These and other conditions led to the rise of independent dynasties and powers in Central Asia, Iran, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, and other parts of the Abbasid empire. They recognised the Abbasid caliph as a figurehead.

Although the rise of the new ruling dynasties reduced the political power of the Abbasids, it did not damage the cultural life. Instead, it allowed for the growth of new political and cultural centres in other regions of the empire. These centres also gave rise to their own significant achievements.

'The Shia century'

Several of the ruling powers and dynasties that emerged in various regions of the Abbasid empire were either led by the descendants of Hazrat Imam Ali or proclaimed belief in their authority.

For this reason, some scholars have called the period between the tenth and eleventh centuries the 'Shia century'. Dynasties linked to the Shias emerged across the breadth of Muslim lands, from the Caspian Sea in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

These dynasties included, for instance, the Zaydi Imams in Tabaristan, the Buyids in Iran and Iraq, and the Hamdanids in Northern Iraq and Syria. In addition, the Fatimids (who claimed direct descent from Hazrat Imam Ali and Hazrat Bibi Fatima) established their own caliphate in North Africa in 909. They would build a vast empire, ruling from Cairo. We will return to the Fatimids in Unit 6.

New ruling dynasties in the Abbasid empire

Dynasty	Region	Approximate Dates
AGHLABIDS	Tunisia	800-909
SAMANIDS	Central Asia	819-1005
ZAYDIS	Tabaristan	c. 864-928
TAHIRIDS	Khurasan	821-891
SAFFARIDS	Iran	861-1003
TULUNIDS	Egypt/Syria	868-905
HAMDANIDS	Syria	c. 905-1004
BUYIDS	Iran/Iraq	945-1055
HAZNAVIDS	Afghanistan	c. 977-1187
SELUQS	Iran/Iraq/Syria	1038-1194

Map of new dynasties: This map shows approximately the territories under the influence of the Samanids, Buyids and Hamdanids around the 10th century.

Maps are used in the curriculum to provide students with the geographical context of the societies and civilisations they are learning about.

Students attending religious education classes will be taught the new modules by teachers on the Secondary Teacher Education Programme (STEP), with the hope that these new materials, in conjunction with STEP, will help upgrade the quality of religious education in Ismaili Jamats globally. STEP teachers, who have been using these new materials since 2008, are assuming a vital role in presenting the new curriculum in their classes. As STEP teachers set out to cater to the religious education of young Ismailis, the IIS is helping to nurture a new generation of educators and leaders who will become an important asset in the community in the decades to come.

THE FLOWERING OF CULTURE AND LEARNING

In this Exploration, we will look at the developments in culture and learning that took place during Abbasid times. There were new developments in literature, in both poetry and prose. Numerous scholarly works were translated from Greek, Persian, and Sanskrit into Arabic. The period also saw original contributions in mathematics, philosophy, the sciences, and other fields. Scholars made new discoveries by adapting and challenging earlier theories. The religious sciences also advanced with the study of the Qur'an, the collection and study of hadith, and the study and formulation of law.

Developments in culture and learning

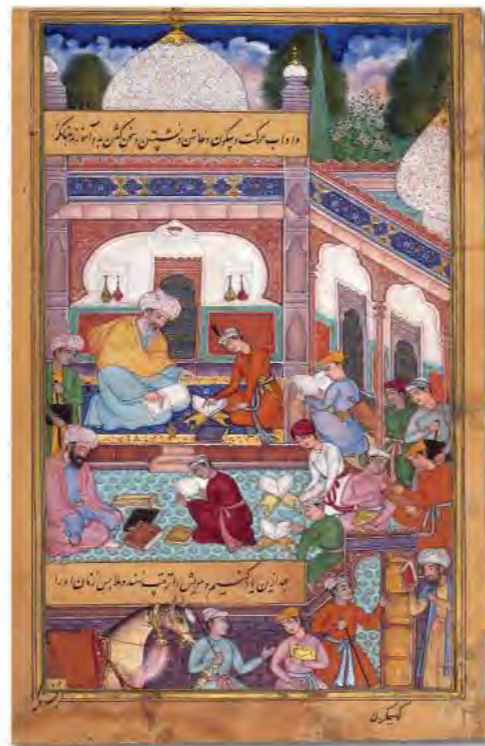
During the Abbasid period, there were significant developments in many areas of learning. Scholars studied the Arabic language and wrote dictionaries and works on grammar. Historians debated the causes of events in the past and wrote several works of history, including the history of the Prophet. Scholars also reflected on the Prophet's teachings, the way in which he had led his life, and the guidance given in the Qur'an.

In addition, scholars studied the natural world, mathematics, philosophy, medicine, astronomy, politics, and many other disciplines. It was a time when knowledge was valued and pursued. Scholars built upon the achievements of past

civilisations and helped to give rise to a civilisation of their own. Muslims were interested in Greek thinkers, in part because their principles, such as the emphasis on the intellect, resonated in some aspects with the teachings of the Qur'an, the Prophet and the Imams. An important question we can ask is: what might have led to the rapid growth of culture and learning at this time? This question may help us to discover what Ibn Khaldun referred to as 'the how and why of events'.

Court patronage

In the previous Exploration, we saw how the Abbasid courts promoted culture and encouraged the pursuit of knowledge. The Abbasid caliphs and other wealthy individuals sponsored works of



THE FLOWERING OF CULTURE AND LEARNING

School courtyard with boys reading and writing, from *Ethics of Nasir* ('Ethics of Nasir'), Lahore, c. 16th century. This painting shows a master working with a young student while other students read alone or with tutors. The painting demonstrates the importance given to knowledge, and to teaching and learning. The painting, attributed to Kahir Karan, features in a work by the 13th-century philosopher and scientist Nasir al-Din Tusi.

poetry and prose, as well as the study of a wide range of subjects.

Many of the caliphs valued the knowledge of previous civilisations. They sponsored one of the largest transfers of knowledge of the time: the translation of Greek, Persian, and Sanskrit texts into Arabic. These translations encompassed

many subjects, including science, mathematics, philosophy, medicine, and politics. As scholars studied these subjects, they engaged with and challenged earlier ideas. In doing so, they were able to make fresh discoveries in various subjects and produce many new works.

What were the main branches of learning that developed during the Abbasid period and what was the importance of these developments?

What impact did the translated works have on the development of different forms of knowledge during the Abbasid period?

What were some key themes that were being studied and debated by Muslims in the religious sciences during this period?

An example of how culture is explored through literature in the module.

The principle of pluralism embodied in the curriculum encourages the young to cultivate respect and understanding towards people of all faiths, while providing a sound basis for the development of their own identity and belonging to the Ismaili tradition. The curriculum as a whole endeavours to prepare the young for the social and ethical challenges of living in a culturally diverse world.

The Secondary Curriculum modules are at various stages of development. Three modules are currently being used by STEP teachers, mainly in the pilot countries of Canada, India, Pakistan, Tajikistan and the USA.

As the STEP programme extends to more countries, the Secondary Curriculum will also be rolled out there, with five more modules being made available over the next few years. Among the additional countries where STEP teachers will begin to introduce the new curriculum are France, Portugal, Syria, Tanzania, UAE, and the UK.

Cultural developments: The Ikhwan al-Safa (Brethren of Purity)

Many thinkers and writers emerged during the time when the Abbasid caliphate was weakening. One group was the Ikhwan al-Safa. Scholars believe that they were active in the ninth or tenth centuries in Basra and Baghdad. Other scholars think that they were based in Salamiyya during the *dawr al-safar*.

The Ikhwan called themselves *Akhwan al-safaa*, 'the Faithful Friends', a name connected to a hadith of the Prophet:

The faithful are like one person and one soul.

They also linked their name to the following Qur'anic verse:

Hold fast to Allah's rope all together, do not split into factions. Remember Allah's favour to you: you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers (Ikhwan) by His grace. (3:103)

The Ikhwan composed one of the best known works of science, philosophy and religion of this period. It is known as *Rasa'ul Ikhwan al-Safa* ('The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity'). This encyclopaedic work contains fifty-two essays dealing with subjects such as mathematics, music, logic, astronomy, and

the natural sciences, as well as the nature of the soul, ethics, revelation and spirituality.

The essays draw from Babylonian, Indian, Persian and Greek traditions. The Ikhwan held that there was 'truth in every religion' and that knowledge was the 'nourishment of the soul'. They also believed that religion had two aspects: the *zahir* (the exoteric, or outer, aspect) and the *batin* (the esoteric, or inner, aspect).

Along with ancient thinkers, the Ikhwan held that the human being was a small universe (*micro-cosmos*) and that the universe was a large human being (*macro-anthropos*). They also emphasised knowledge of oneself as a path towards knowledge of the Creator.

Some of the central ideas in the *Epistles* are the attaining of knowledge, unity, purification of the soul, and human salvation.

In their works, the *Ikhwan* pay respect to Hazrat Imam Ali, holding him in high regard. They also praise the *Ahl al-Bayt* (People of the Prophet's house), and mention the event of Ghadir Khumm.

In the last epistle, they make reference to Prophet Muhammad as the city of knowledge and Hazrat Imam Ali as its gate.

Commemorative postage stamps, Mali and Iraq, 20th century. The image of a scribe on both of these postage stamps is based on a famous illustration from a 13th-century Iraqi manuscript of the *Rasa'ul Ikhwan al-Safa*, housed at the Library of the Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey.



THE RISE OF NEW DYNASTIES

Page from the *Rasa'ul Ikhwan al-Safa* ('Epistles of the Brethren of Purity'), copied by al-Hasan ibn al-Nu'mani al-Basrawi, 1546. In this illustration, the Ikhwan show the various spheres surrounding the earth, as they were understood at the time. At the centre is earth, and surrounding it in expanding regions of space are the various spheres. The closest one is the sphere of the moon followed by the spheres of Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Beyond this is the sphere of the 'Stable Stars' followed by the 'Circumference Sphere'. In their descriptions the Ikhwan also quote from the Qur'an: 'each floats in [its own] orbit'. This quote is from Sura 36:40 which reads: 'The sun cannot overtake the moon, nor can the night outrun the day: each floats in [its own] orbit'.

How might you explain the idea that the human being was a small universe (*microcosm*)? Is this idea helpful in understanding the universe and the human mind?

On account of these and other remarks, and because some of their ideas are similar to those of Ismaili thinkers, some scholars claim that the Ikhwan may have been Ismaili. The Ikhwan are also thought to have influenced later thinkers such as Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, and Ibn Khaldun.

The *Epistles* are considered a great classic of Arabic literature because of the beauty and clarity of their language. They are still read and studied today.

This section introduces the work of an intellectual group (in this case Ikhwan al-Safa) and its legacy.

“The most fulfilling part of this endeavour is to come across STEP teachers and students who are inspired by aspects of the curriculum and see them discover new horizons of thought and experience. We find them engaging with the history of the Ismaili tariqah, exploring the nature of their relationship to a community of tradition, and expressing a keen desire to make a contribution to their community and humanity at large.”

Dr Shiraz Thobani, Head of Curriculum Studies

Building a Collection to Learn From

The library at The Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) has one of the largest collections of rare Ismaili and Shi'i manuscripts. At present, the library holds nearly 3,000 manuscripts in its collection.

"The scope of our manuscript collection is all encompassing. We collect material on all aspects of Shi'i Islam, with a particular emphasis on Ismaili thought and practice. We hold manuscripts on a variety of subjects such as jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, logic, grammar, medicine, astronomy and alchemy, as well as poetical and biographical works. These manuscripts are also in a variety of languages - Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Gujarati, which reflects the plural and diverse nature of Ismaili communities," says Professor Eric Ormsby, Acting Head of the Library at the IIS.

Working under Professor Ormsby, Shah Hussain, Librarian at the IIS, says that part of the mandate of the Institute is to seek out manuscripts that can contribute to building knowledge and understanding of the Ismaili tariqah and wider Muslim traditions. In addition to manuscripts, the IIS also holds rare artefacts that are usually donated by benefactors.

The mandate of the IIS library is to develop a unique collection of books, manuscripts, articles, recordings, films, images representative of Islamic culture in general and Ismaili heritage in particular.

Any item which is acquired for the library goes through a number of processes before it is made available for the reader and cataloguing is at the centre of this whole process. Cataloguing involves examination and classification of the item concerned. It provides a

basic introduction of the material to the reader or researcher.

"Our collection is rich in its variety. The Ismaili tariqah and Islam generally is culturally diverse, which means manuscripts on the subject are in many languages and from across all corners of the earth," said Shah Hussain.



"It's our objective to preserve the heritage of the community and our collection reflects this. We work with private collectors, auction houses and book sellers to find manuscripts and other items that have historical significance for the Ismaili and wider Muslim community."

Professor Eric Ormsby, Acting Head of the Institute's Library

In 2012, a number of new materials have been donated to the library, including the late Professor Arkoun's collection. The library is currently in the process of cataloguing this collection and other pieces it has acquired, so that they can be studied. It conducts this process for all manuscripts it acquires. Once the manuscripts have been numbered and paginated, a scholar is invited to study the manuscripts further.

Visiting scholar, Dr Francois De Blois, was one such scholar who worked on the Hamdani Collection in 2011, which led to the publication of the fifth book in the IIS Collections Catalogues series. This book was published in June 2011.

By publishing a book that catalogues a collection, scholars outside the IIS can contact the Institute if they would like to study some or all of the collection.

"We have students and scholars from across the world coming to look at our collections for their work. Some of the researchers and scholars who have recently used manuscripts from our collections are Professor Poonawala of UCLA, Dr Avraham Hakim of Tel-Aviv University and Dr Samer Traboulsi of Princeton University.

"Academics in various fields of study are interested in the collections we hold. At present a PhD student, Ms Monica Scotti from Universita L'Orientale is editing a medieval Ismaili text called *Mukhtasar al-Usul* as part of her PhD thesis using the manuscripts from our Zahid Ali collection of manuscripts," said Shah Hussain

Shah Hussain says the IIS library has established itself as one of the largest repositories of materials on Ismaili studies in a relatively short time frame. Donations by individuals have been crucial to achieving this. Donors entrust valuable manuscripts and artefacts to the Institute's library as it's a place where these pieces will not only be preserved, but shared for academic purposes.

Professor Ormsby elaborates on this by saying, "many donors decide to donate their collections or items to the Institute because they know that we ensure that the manuscripts stay alive, through academic study of them. At the IIS we see our job not just as preserving manuscripts and other materials that give an insight into the Ismaili tradition but also to support the study and exploration of these items."

Professor Poonawala, an expert in Ismaili Studies with a particular interest in manuscripts is currently visiting the Institute to examine some of the manuscripts in the Hamdani collection.

"I am currently updating my book that catalogues all existing manuscripts related to Ismaili history, philosophy, thought and practices in one place. For the first edition I was unable to examine all the manuscripts as thoroughly as I would like, so I have come to the IIS for a few months to work my way through various collections, including the Zahid Ali collection and the Hamdani collection."

Professor Poonawala goes on to say that he himself encouraged the son of the late Zahid Ali, Abid Ali, to donate his father's collection to the IIS because of the fact that it facilitates access to all scholars who are interested in Ismaili manuscripts.

"The preservation and protection of these manuscripts should be of utmost priority. But without offering access to researchers interested in the subject the benefit of the things of scholars past would be lost. This is where the IIS has been instrumental in giving access to researchers like myself to books and manuscripts that aren't available elsewhere."

In this way, the manuscripts continue to be studied and continue to contribute to the understanding of Islam and its many traditions.

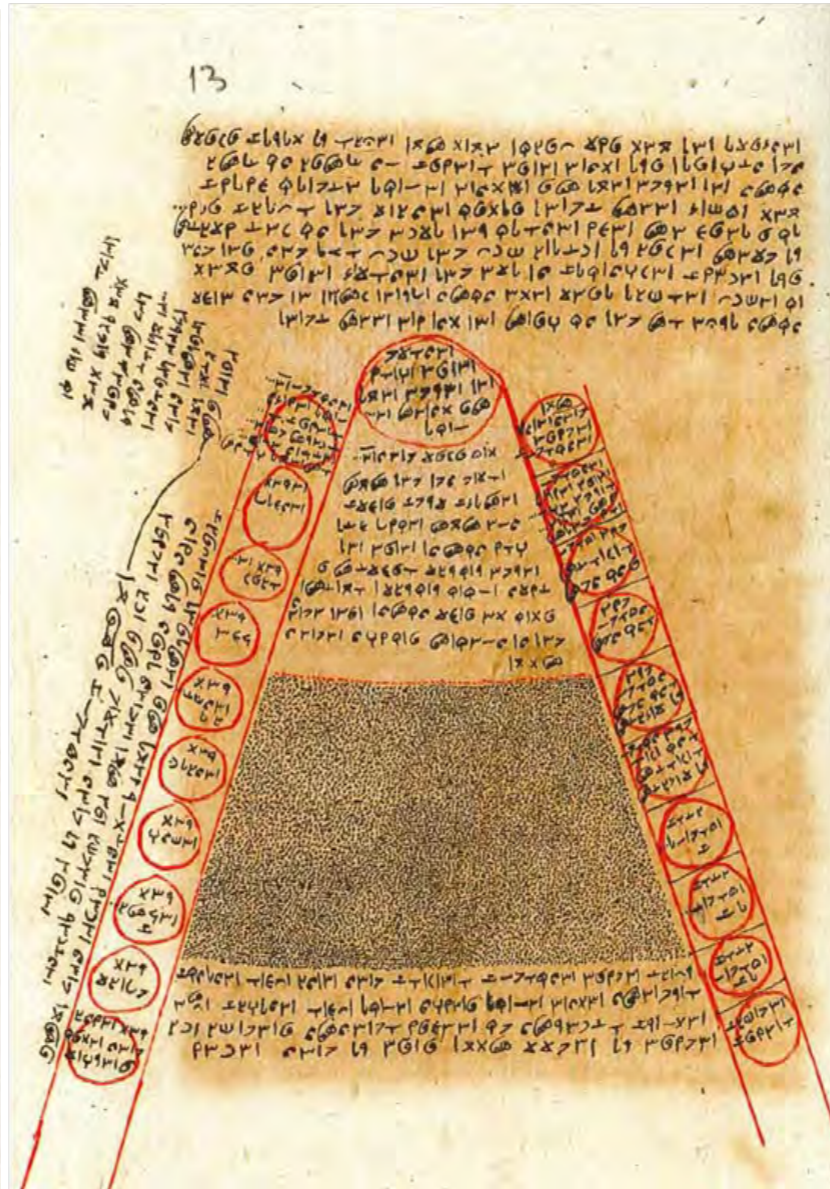
The library is engaged in a continuing and a long term programme of preservation and conservation of manuscripts. It keeps manuscripts in special acid-free boxes which are stored in a controlled and secure environment.

Another way in which the library ensures that manuscripts and Ismaili heritage is preserved is by microfilming the manuscripts. At present, the library is in the process of microfilming the Hamdani collection – around a quarter of the collection has already been processed, and the rest should be completed by the end of 2013. Due to the age and rarity of the manuscripts, microfilming is a long and painstaking process, but is an essential part of protecting the collection. In addition to this, the IIS is looking at digitising parts of the collection so that anyone interested in looking at manuscripts can access them via the IIS website. A pilot on this will begin in 2013.

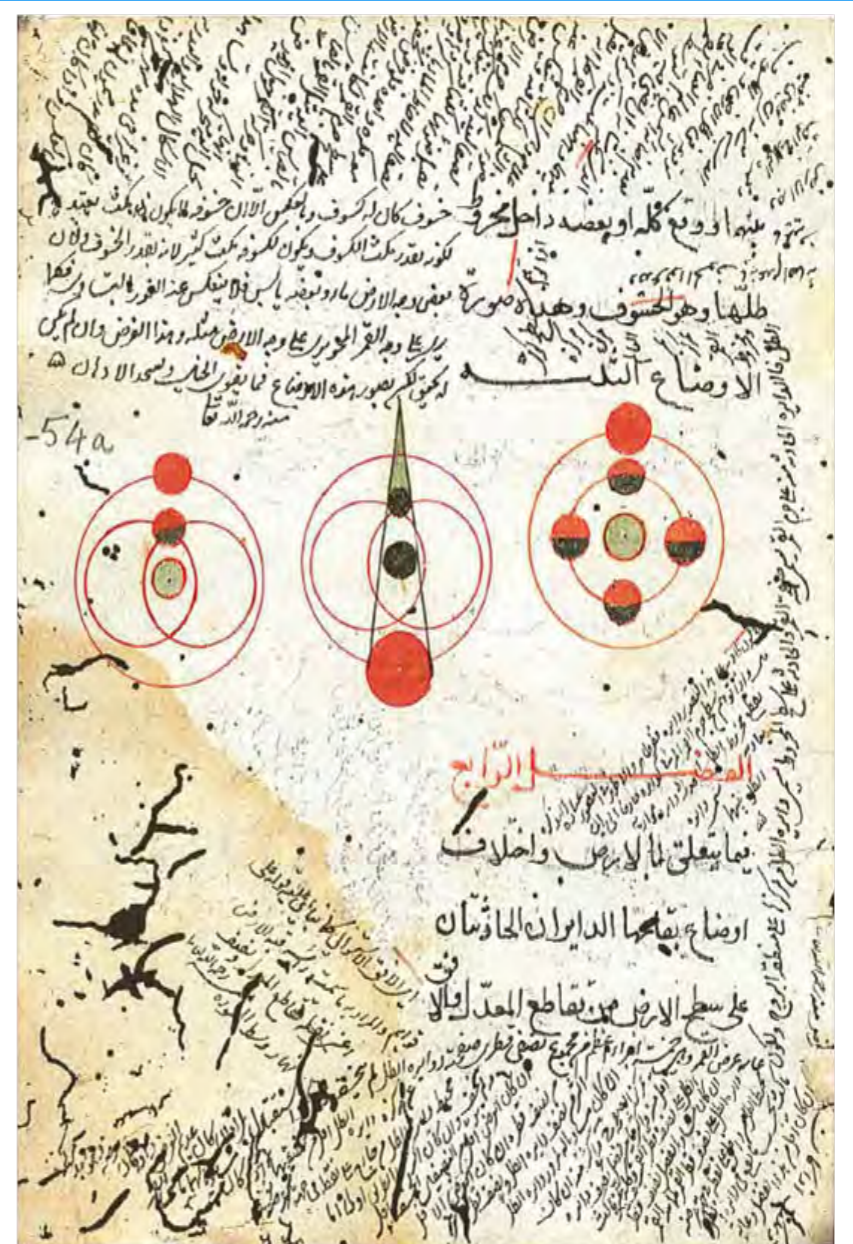
Pages from manuscripts in the Hamdani collection, preserved at the Institute's library



Da'a'im al-Islam, al-Qadi al-Nu'man (Ms.1412/p.43)

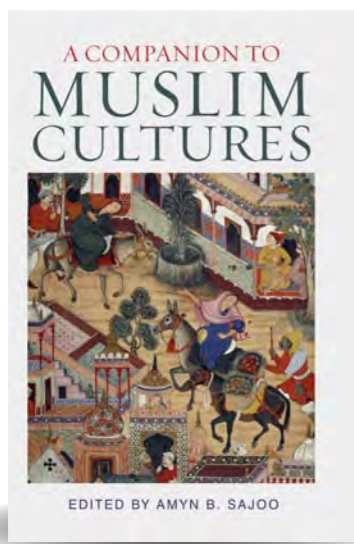


Kanz al-walad, Ibrahim b. al-Husayn al-Hamidi (Ms.1499/fol.13a)



Treatise on mathematics and astronomy, Baha' al-Din al' Amili (Ms. 1649/fol.54s).

New Publications since the Last Update



A Companion to Muslim Cultures

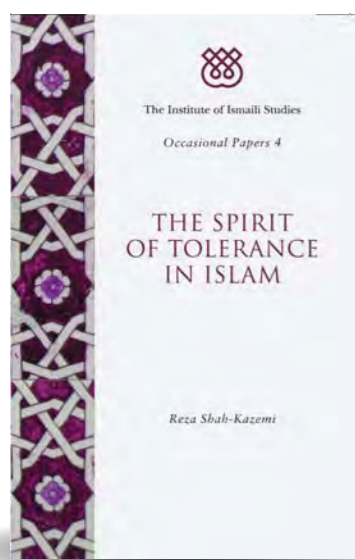
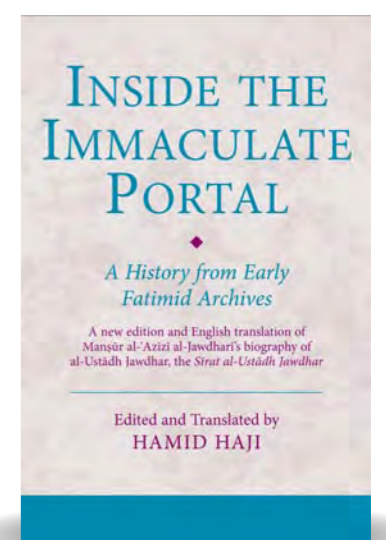
Edited by Dr Aymyn B. Sajoo

Culture shapes every aspect of the relationship between God and the believer in Islam- as well as between believers, and with those beyond the fold. Fasts, prayers and pilgrimages are attuned to social rhythms old and new, no less than the designs of mosques and public gardens, the making of 'religious' music, and ways of thinking about technology and wellbeing. Muslims have never been content with a passive separation of faith from their daily lives, whether public or private. What are the implications of this holistic view in a diverse world of Muslims and non-Muslims? How do core ethical values interface with the particulars of local cultures in all their complexity, especially when it comes to matters like the status of women and the scope of individual religious freedom? The answers- at a time when secular and Muslim identities appear to be locked in conflict- are explored in this Companion by some of today's finest scholars.

Inside the Immaculate Portal: A History from Early Fatimid Archives

Edited and Translated by Hamid Haji

The author of this work, Abu 'Ali Mansur al-Azizi al-Jawdhari, was a private secretary of Jawdhar, a confidant of the first four Fatimid caliph-imams who ruled in North Africa (from 297/910 to 362/973). Mansur had easy access to archives held by Jawdhar, including letters he had received from the imams, and was also privy to secrets that Jawdhar confided to him. After Jawdhar's death in 362/973, the Fatimid caliph-imam al-Mu'izz appointed Mansur to succeed him. The author cherished the memory of his mentor and wished to commemorate him. With this end in view, he compiled the *Sirat al-Ustādh Jawdhar*, edited and translated here as *Inside the Immaculate Portal*. The work presents not only a biographical account of one of the most prominent statesmen of the early Fatimid period, but, more importantly, it brings together oral statements, correspondence and other archival material from the period spanning over sixty years of Fatimid rule.



The Spirit of Tolerance in Islam

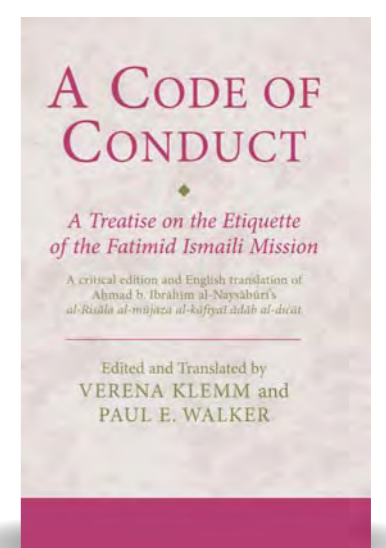
By Dr Reza Shah-Kazemi

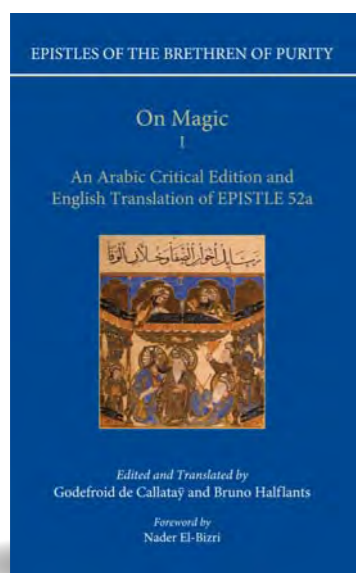
When asked which religion was most loved by God, the Prophet of Islam refrained from naming a specific religion, and instead referred to a quality which should infuse the faith of all believers: 'The primordial, generously tolerant faith (*al-hanifiyya al-samha*)'. Through compelling historical illustration and careful theological exposition, this monograph mounts a concise but irrefutable argument that the Islamic faith is inherently and emphatically tolerant by nature and disposition. Though aimed at a general readership, this work will be especially valuable to students and teachers in the areas of Islamic history, ethics and spirituality, as well as those interested in the role of Islam within the fields of comparative religion, interfaith dialogue and contemporary international relations.

A Code of Conduct: A Treatise on the Etiquette of the Ismaili Mission

Edited and translated by Professor Verena Klemm & Professor Paul E. Walker

The *Risala al-mujaza al-kafiya fi adab al-du'at* (A Brief and Concise Treatise on the Code of Conduct for the Da'is) constitutes the only extant work in Ismaili literature that deals with specific practical aspects of the Ismaili da'wa, an appeal and encouragement to the faith. Written by the Fatimid author Ahmad b. Ibrahim al-Naysaburi (5th/11th century), it represents a normative guide for the Ismaili da'is, who functioned as the religious agents and 'summoners' responsible for the leadership, instruction as well as spiritual and social welfare of the Ismaili community. The present work constitutes a critical edition and translation of the *Risala al-mujaza al-kafiya fi adab al-du'at*. Al-Naysaburi's treatise is a fascinating testimony to the wide network of a class of individuals charged with proclaiming the *da'wat al-haqq* ('call to truth') over various frames of time and space. It is thus a valuable resource for students and scholars interested in medieval Islamic literature more generally and the structure and workings of the Fatimid da'wa in particular.





Epistles of the Brethren of Purity

Epistle 52a: On Magic

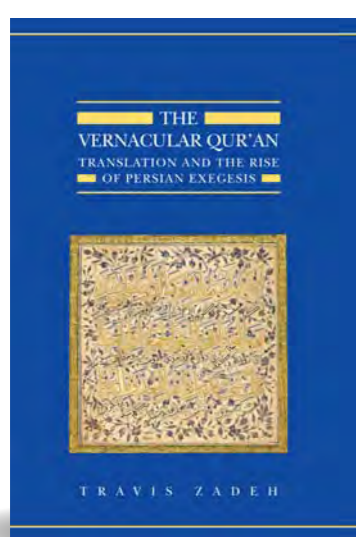
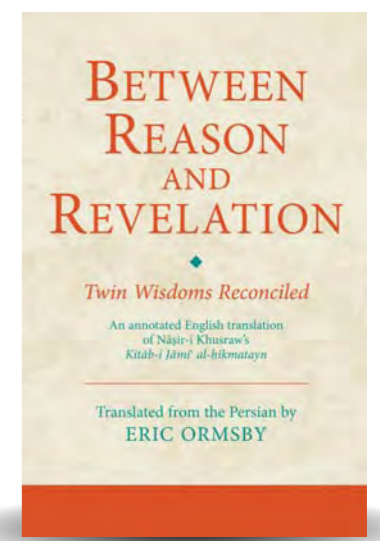
Edited and Translated by Dr Godefroid De Callatey & Bruno Halflants

The *Ikhwan al-Safa'* (Brethren of Purity), the anonymous adepts of a tenth-century esoteric fraternity based in Basra and Baghdad, hold an eminent position in the history of science and philosophy in Islam due to the wide reception and assimilation of their monumental encyclopaedia, the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* (Epistles of the Brethren of Purity). This compendium contains fifty-two epistles offering synoptic accounts of the classical sciences and philosophies of the age. Divided into four classificatory parts, it treats themes in mathematics, logic, natural philosophy, psychology, metaphysics, and theology, in addition to didactic fables. Epistle 52a consists of the shorter of two versions circulating as the final epistle of the corpus, 'On Magic'. The present edition is accompanied by comprehensive footnotes and a substantial introduction, which argues for the authenticity of this treatise and offers a glimpse of the significant impact it exerted on later works in this field.

Between Reason & Revelation: Twin Wisdoms Reconciled

Translated by Professor Eric Ormsby

This is the first English translation of the final philosophical work of the great eleventh-century Ismaili thinker, poet, and Fatimid emissary, Nasir-i Khusraw. Appointed from Cairo by command of the Fatimid Imam-caliph al-Munstansir to serve first as a da'i, and then as the hujjat, for the entire region of Khurasan, he maintained his allegiance both to his mission and his Imam-caliph. Written during his exile in Badakhshan in the year 1070, Nasir-i Khusraw here develops a powerful presentation of both Aristotelian philosophy and Ismaili exegesis, or ta'wil, and strives to show that they are ultimately in harmony. *Between Reason and Revelation: Twin Wisdoms Reconciled* is an annotated translation of the Persian text prepared by Henry Corbin and Mohammed Mu'in based on the single surviving manuscript of the work, now in the Suleymaniye Mosque Library in Istanbul. It is a pioneering attempt to tackle difficult intellectual problems in the Persian language; it is at once lucid and lyrical, precise and speculative. Nasir's influence has been immense as both a poet and a thinker, and the *Kitab-i Jāmi' al-hikmatayn* is his crowning work.



The Vernacular Qur'an:

Translation and the Rise of Persian Exegesis

By Dr Travis Zadeh

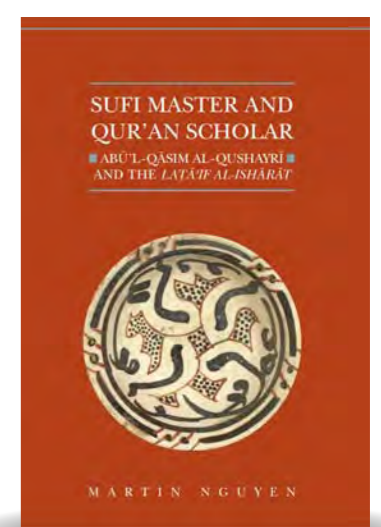
The Vernacular Qur'an explores the history behind the juridical resistance to translating the Qur'an, the theological debates concerning the nature of divine speech and the rise of Persian exegetical translations. These early translations retained the original Arabic text of the Qur'an through the interlinear and marginal presentation of the vernacular, thereby preserving the sacred script while making it accessible to a wider audience. Through a series of detailed case studies, this book explores the relationship between Qur'anic hermeneutics and vernacular cultures, the religious elite, institutions of education and dynastic authority. It presents for the first time to an English readership a broad array of archival material, drawn from the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia, covering several centuries of Islamic history.

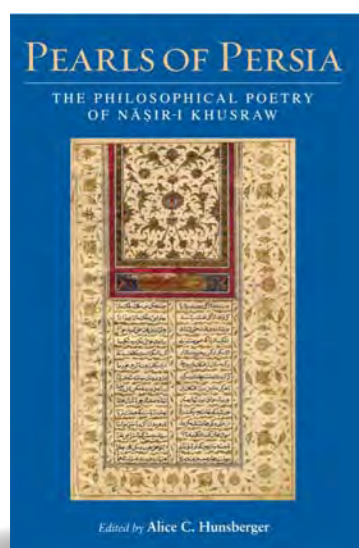
Sufi Master and Qur'an Scholar:

Abu'l-Qasim al-Qushayri and the Lata'if al-isharat

By Dr Martin Nguyen

This book is the first extensive examination of the medieval Qur'an commentary known as *Lata'if al-isharat* (The Subtleties of the Signs), and the first critical biography of its author, the famous spiritual master Abu'l-Qasim al-Qushayri. Written in fifth/eleventh-century Nishapur, an intellectual and cultural crossroads of the Muslim world, the *Lata'if al-isharat* commentary exhibits an important confluence of different traditions that are interwoven into Qushayri's overarching mystical exegesis. Martin Nguyen investigates these various traditions of exegesis, together with Qushayri's life and historical horizon, and the hermeneutics of the commentary. The resulting study demonstrates how we can better appreciate Qushayri and his work within a wider Sunni historical heritage, in addition to the developing Sufi tradition.



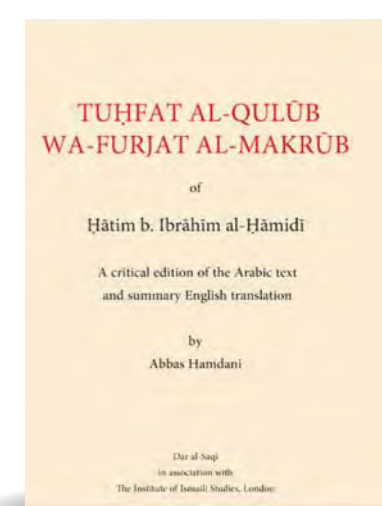


Pearls of Persia
The Philosophical Poetry of Nasir-i Khusraw
Edited by Dr Alice Hunsberger

Written by authorities on Nasir-i Khusraw and Persian literature, and originally presented as papers at a conference at SOAS, University of London, the chapters here cover topics ranging from metaphysics, cosmology and ontology, to prophecy, rhythm and structure, the analysis of individual poems and the matter of authorship. Rigorous literary analysis of several complete major poems advances the field of Persian Studies beyond investigating what a poem means to how it is constructed and how poetic technique and philosophy can be combined to create masterpieces. This volume therefore represents the initiation of important studies in the genre as the first Western study of Persian philosophical poetry.

Tuhfat al-qulub wa-Furjat al-Makrüb: The Precious Gift of the Hearts and Good Cheer for Those in Distress
On the Organisation and History of the Yamani Fatimid Da'wa
Edited by Professor Abbas Hamdani

Risalat Tuhfat al-qulub of the Yamani third da'i al-mutlaq, Hatim b. Ibrahim al-Hamidi, was written at a time after the collapse of Fatimid rule in Egypt, Sulayhid rule in Yaman and the Ayyubid conquest of both countries. It was written in the contexts of the Crusades and the survival of the Tayyibi Ismaili community in the midst of a great upheaval in Middle Eastern politics. The text of the *Risalat Tuhfat al-qulub* acts in the manner of a manifesto for the future conduct of the Tayyibi da'wa providing a history of its beginning, its structure and doctrines and, perhaps most notably, highlighting the fact that its religion was of more importance than Yamani ethnicity.



Upcoming Publications

Epistles of the Brethren of Purity
On Arithmetic and Geometry: An Arabic
Critical Edition and English Translation
of Epistles 1 & 2

Edited and Translated by Dr Nader El-Bizri

The Early History of Ismaili Jurisprudence
Law under the Fatimids

Ismaili Texts and Translation Series

Edited and Translated by Professor Agostino Cilardo

An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia, Volume 4
From the School of Illumination to Philosophical Mysticism

Edited by Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Dr Mehdi Aminrazavi

The Founder of Cairo: The Reign of the
Fatimid Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz
An English translation of the section on al-Mu'izz
from Idris Imad al-Din's 'Uyun al-akhbar

Ismaili Texts and Translations Series

Translated by Dr Shainool Jiwa

The Study of Shi'i Islam: The State of the Field
and Issues of Methodology

Shi'i Heritage Series

Edited by Dr Farhad Daftary & Dr Gurdofarid Miskinzoda

Encyclopaedia Islamica, Volume 4

Bab al-Hawa'ij to Buzurgmihir

Edited by Professor Wilferd Madelung & Dr Farhad Daftary

Tathbit al-imama: The Confirmation of Imamate attributed
to Abu Zahir Isma'il al-Mansur bi'llah

Ismaili Texts and Translations Series

Edited and translated by Professor Sami Makarem

Epistles of the Brethren of Purity
On the Sciences of Nature: An Arabic Critical Edition and
English Translation of Epistles 15-21

Edited and translated by Professor Carmela Baffioni

Epistles of the Brethren of Purity
On Astronomy and Geography: An Arabic Critical Edition and
English Translation of Epistles 3-4

Edited and translated by Jamil Ragep, Taro Mimura, and Ignacio Sanchez with James Montgomery

New Appointments

Meet **Salah Mirza** the new Head of the Department of Finance & Administration

Where were you before you joined The Institute of Ismaili Studies?

I was with Cancer Research Technology as Head of Finance & IT which was a broad role. It had similar features to my role here in that I had overall responsibility for the financial side of things-looking at opportunities to generate positive economic contributions to the organisation, saving money for the organisation by working more cost-competitively. I also helped to develop people within the team I worked with as well as the broader team, through mentoring and coaching so that they could understand financial language in negotiating deals.



What do you do at The Institute of Ismaili Studies?

I am heading up the Department of Finance & Administration which is responsible for overseeing all aspects of financial affairs and a broad remit of administration from health and safety to staff welfare management, travel and more. I have been applying my existing skills in many ways, including working to make the organisation more cost-efficient. The IIS has a very broad remit and our entire budget comes from grants and donations. So we need to make the most of the resources we have and my role is to help my team and the IIS as an organisation deliver on its aims using the resources we have available to us.

How has this past year been for you?

The IIS has been an eye-opener as I had not heard of it previously. I have been bowled over by the solid community which the IIS represents as well as its openness to other communities. I have been enjoying the many challenges that come with working at a not-for-profit organisation such as the IIS. I am lucky to have a wonderful team in Finance and Administration who are bright, hardworking and receptive to new ideas. The key asset we have at the IIS is staff – their skills and abilities help us achieve everything from putting on a great event to publishing a book – staff are, ultimately the most valuable resource any organisation has. People at the IIS, from top to bottom, want to do the best for the organisation. There is a good team spirit throughout the IIS and a willingness to make a difference.

What is the focus for your department going forward?

We have our workload cut out. I would like to keep thinking of new initiatives for working with other organisations in this building, including cost-sharing activities. I also want to leverage technology in a smarter way, rather than following manual mechanisms. I also hope to continue making positive changes that help improve the way we work for the benefit of the IIS and the communities it serves.

Other Appointments:

Joaquin Aguirre

*Facilities & Maintenance Assistant
Department of Finance &
Administration*

Shola Ajilore

*Project Manager
Department of Curriculum Studies*

Dr Mushegh Asatryan

*Research Associate
Department of Academic Research &
Publications*

Dr Al-Karim Dato

*Research Coordinator
Constituency Studies Unit,
Co-Directors' Office*

Hussain Jasani

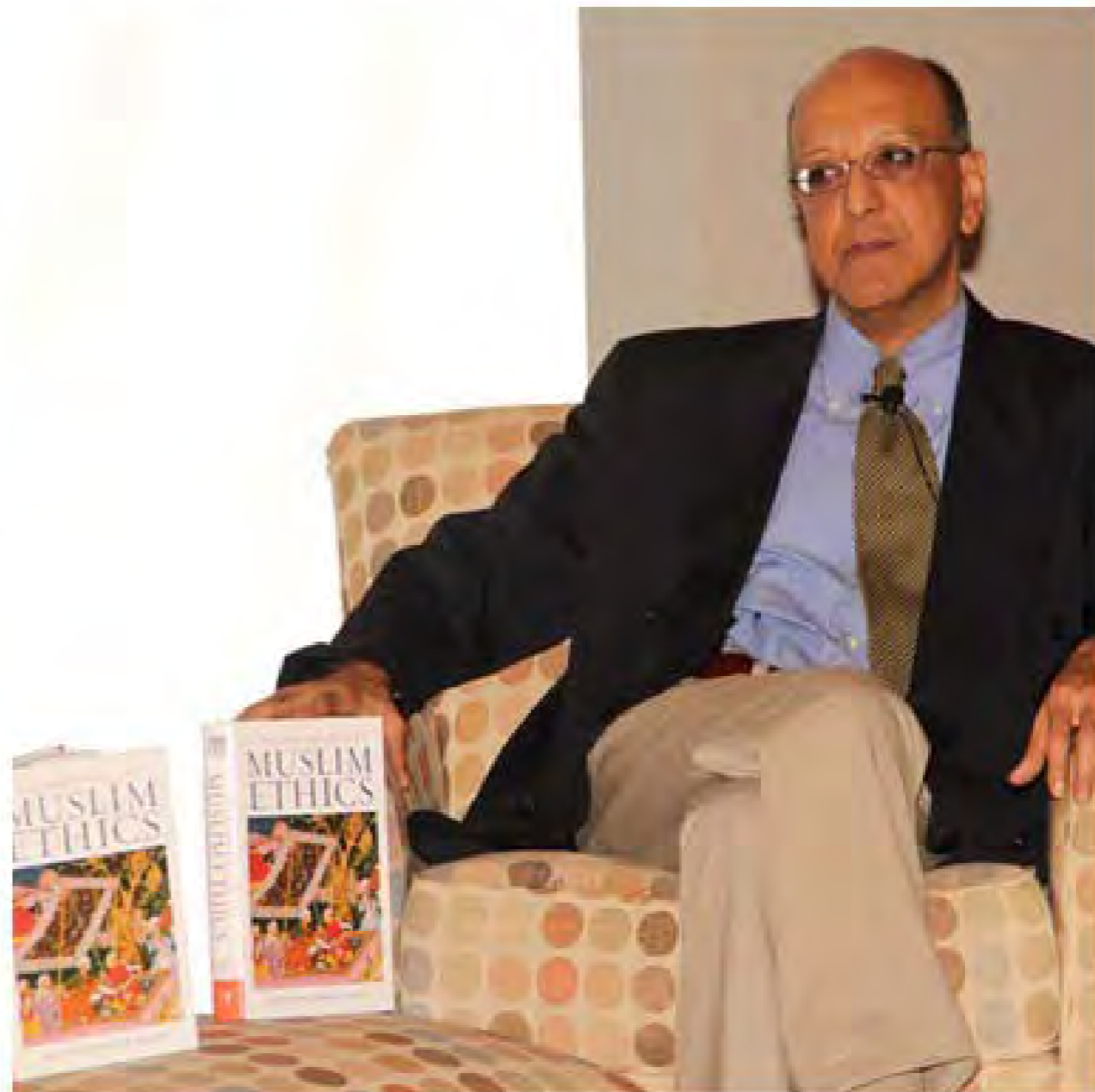
*Manager, Educational Programmes
Department of Community Relations*

Hanif Virani

*STEP International Liaison Manager
Department of Community Relations*

Shaheena Ormerod-Sachedina

*Communications & Resource Development
Manager
Department of Communications &
Development*



Back cover images (a snapshot of IIS activities in 2012) - clockwise from top left: Dr Aziz Esmail giving closing remarks at a book launch at the Ismaili Centre, London, UK; Dr Reza Shah-Kazemi, signing books at launch in Pakistan; Hakim Elnazarov speaking at an IIS conference in St Petersburg, Russia; Faculty members of the Summer Programme on Islam; Dr Aryn B. Sajoo at a book launch in Houston, USA; GPISH class of 2015 arrive at IIS; Dr Farhad Daftary and Dr Omar Ali-de-Unzaga participating in a discussion at a book launch at the Ismaili Centre, London, UK.

Front cover image: Ismaili Centre, Dubai, where the IIS hosted a book launch and an ITREB board members' training programme was held.

If you have any feedback or would like to update your contact details, please email us at rdc@iis.ac.uk

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