

IIS UPDATE

April 2006

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Participants, faculty and staff with Prince Hussain Aga Khan at the 2005 IIS Summer Programme on Islam held in Cambridge, UK.

Message from the Director



Dear Donors and Friends of The Institute of Ismaili Studies,

In his recent address at the Signing Ceremony of the Protocol of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Portugal and the Ismaili Imam in Lisbon on 19th December 2005, Mawlana Hazar Imam remarked:

'I have no doubt that for you, whose historical roots are in the Christian world, it is as painful as it is for us Muslims, with our roots in the East, to watch an increasingly deep gulf growing between significant parts of our respective worlds. We cannot stand by as passive observers letting this gulf grow wider and wider, at the cost of future generations. If we have the will, which I am certain we share, we have the historical knowledge and the ethical foundations to move our world forward, to make it a better and more hopeful place and to put an end to the storm of hatred which appears to be building up around us.'

In part, it is in this broad context that the work of the IIS needs to be viewed. The gulf that divides is primarily one of mutual ignorance: in the Muslim world there is a near-total ignorance of Western societies, whilst in the West there is a complete lack of understanding of the historical complexity and present diversity and pluralism of the *Ummah*. The critical mass of publications of the IIS seeks to address this latter ignorance and to present a balanced view of Muslim history and traditions.

Increasingly, our work in Shi'a and Ismaili Studies, within the context of Islamic Studies, has established the Institute as a point of reference in this field. We are now asked by prominent academic institutions and international organisations to contribute to various publications, reference works, conferences and events, thereby allowing us to reinforce the core idea that Muslims are not monolithic nor homogeneous, and that this diversity enriches rather than diminishes.

As we also share this historical knowledge, generated by our research and publications, through various programmes for the world-wide *Jamat*, we sincerely hope that it enables the *Jamat* to see its own traditions through a wider embrace of the rich heritage of Shi'a and Ismaili history and thought. That heritage has developed across time and space over 1400 years and continues to enrich our ability to build bridges between various *Jamats* and the diverse worlds of which they are a part.



Since its creation in 1977, one of the primary mandates of the Institute has been to serve the global *Jamat* by providing academic and curricular materials for religious formation, as well as developing competent human resources for ITREBs and other *Jamati* institutions. The Department of Community Relations (DCR) contributes to this commitment through programmatic interventions, research initiatives as well as developing and disseminating resources that nurture the intellectual growth and moral outlook of the *Jamat* in a variety of ways. A summary of the main programmes held in 2005 is presented below.

Annual ITREB Chairperson's Meeting

In March, representatives from all eighteen ITREBs around the world met over three days at The Ismaili Centre in London to discuss ways in which the IIS and the ITREBs can foster a structured partnership which would facilitate the fulfilment of the mandate of both the institutions.

Wa'ezeen Workshop

In April, twenty-four *wa'ezeen* from seven countries were invited to London to participate in a workshop, introducing them to the Institute's vision and relevant intellectual perspectives. The workshop, in turn, created an environment within which participants could engage in discussion and think critically

Participants of the Alumni Workshop, July 2005.



about issues that are relevant to the *Jamat* and wider Muslim societies, both historically and in the contemporary context.

Alumni Workshop

The IIS has been offering human resource development programmes since 1980 and has, over the course of 25 years, developed a significant alumni resource. The Alumni Workshop that took place in July 2005 was aimed at the pre-1997 graduates to orient them to the current research and relevant intellectual perspectives of the Institute, and to provide them with a forum to explore some of the recent developments in the fields of Islamic and Ismaili studies.

Summer Programme on Islam

The annual Summer Programme was held in August at Cambridge University. Over 160 applications were received from across the globe and a total of 41 participants from 15 different countries were selected to attend the programme. The intensive nine-day residential programme consisted of lectures and workshops during the day, and a range of formal and informal evening activities. A complete syllabus for the Summer Programme on Islam 2005 is available via the IIS website at http://www.iis.ac.uk/summer_prog. Details on the 2006 programme, which is scheduled to be held at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, may be obtained by e-mailing outreach@iis.ac.uk.



Professor Mohammed Arkoun at the Summer Programme on Islam, August 2005.



Participants of the Summer Programme on Islam engaged in a group discussion, August 2005.

Leadership Orientation Programme

As part of the Institute's ongoing effort to provide intellectual support to the *Jamati* leadership, a session was held in September for approximately fifty members of the senior *Jamati* leadership in Dubai, UAE. In view of the upcoming Ismaili Centre in Dubai, this programme helped provide the leadership with resources and pertinent information to respond to commonly asked questions and to maximise use of the Centre.

Ismaili Centre Guides Workshop

A three-day workshop was held in London in October for delegates from the six countries where Ismaili Centres have been established or are in advanced stages of planning and development. The programme provided an intellectual framework and pragmatic tools for locating the Ismaili Centres within the broader canvas of spaces of worship and gathering in Muslim societies. It also created awareness among the participants of a network of Ismaili Centres. This was the first time a session of this nature had been undertaken.

Department of Education Secondary Teacher Education Programme



Members of the Department of Education working with researchers and teachers from around the world to evaluate the effectiveness of the Secondary Curriculum during a week-long workshop in Dubai.

It is fair to state that a successful educational environment is the product of many, varied, and effective resources. Among these, the quality and dedication of teachers stands out as vital to meeting the increasingly high standards we set for ourselves in schools and school systems today. This principle holds true both in the wider, secular school environment as well as in the education programmes of our own institutions at the grass roots level and across our communities. However, the need for a sustainable pool of quality teachers often remains a constraint.

At the IIS, we are currently working to turn this constraint into an opportunity. With the introduction of a new and advanced secondary curriculum, we will need a cohort of excellent professional teachers who are proficient curricularists, culturally sensitive and informed pedagogues, effective education leaders, and collaborative mentors and community partners. Fortunately, we have in our community a rich pool of skilled and practising secular teachers and others with backgrounds well-suited to becoming quality teachers from which to draw.

The Secondary Teacher Education Programme or STEP

(expected to be launched in 2007) is a two-year course of study for both practising and prospective teachers leading to a professional teaching qualification or a master's degree in Education and a further master's level qualification. We are currently in discussions with our partner academic institution – The Institute of Education, University of London - to create a specifically designed academic programme which, we hope, will be an exciting path of study that offers an integrated academic training in education, the humanities and social sciences. The programme is expected to prepare individuals for careers as teachers in various contexts, such as ITREBs, the AKES schools network and wider, secular school systems.

The heart of the programme lies in the unique confluence of academic rigour with practical training; the development of teachers who are able to make the multifaceted and exciting content of the secondary curriculum, and the subjects of Islamic civilizations, the humanities and social sciences understandable to young people.

The programme has four main goals: (1) to fill the need for professionally-qualified secondary teachers within the Ismaili Muslim community's religious education system; (2) to deliver the new

secondary Ta'lim curriculum that is being developed; (3) to build a cadre of leadership with expertise in curriculum development and educational management; and (4) to provide a viable career path in teaching for those members of the Ismaili community who wish to make a significant contribution to the education of young people.

The STEP is an ideal means for Ismaili educators who currently work in the wider, secular school environment to acquire a deeper, theoretical background in Islamic humanities and civilizations that will enhance their practice and enable them to make more meaningful contributions as educators in the wider community. It is also an ideal path for future teachers to develop professional teaching skills within a framework which integrates their personal and cultural heritage with present realities.

Planning for the launch of the STEP pilot programme is underway at the IIS. Course descriptions and detailed programme information are expected to be available mid-2006. For further information, please contact Dr Munir Vellani, Project Director (mvellani@iis.ac.uk) or Zamiha Virjee, Project Officer, Marketing and Recruitment (zvirjee@iis.ac.uk).

Since 1997, The Institute of Ismaili Studies has awarded twenty-one PhD scholarships to individuals to pursue doctoral research in the fields of anthropology, Islamic studies, education, law, media and religious studies. The PhD scholarship programme aims to develop individuals who can conduct and manage high quality research in Islamic and Ismaili studies, and critically examine challenges facing Muslim societies.

The majority of the scholarship recipients are alumni of the Institute's Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH). To date, five recipients of the scholarship programme have received their doctorates. The first three are Dr Zulfikar A Hirji, Dr Fahmida Suleman and Dr Omar Alí-de-Unzaga.

Dr Zulfikar A Hirji



Zulfikar Hirji conducting a kofia maker's workshop at the Stone Town Culture Centre, Zanzibar, 1999.

Dr Hirji was the first recipient of the IIS PhD scholarship. He obtained his BA (Joint Hons) in Anthropology and Religious Studies from McGill University in 1989 and then worked with international development agencies within Canada and the Ontario Government before joining the Institute's Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities in 1994. He subsequently read for an MPhil in Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge and went on to complete his DPhil at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Oxford in 2001. His doctoral research examined the issue of relatedness amongst three

generations of Swahili-speaking Muslim communities who moved between the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa.

Dr Hirji's research interests include the manner in which religious ideas work in society and culture, both historically and in contemporary times. For example, in his article on 'The Kofia Tradition of Zanzibar: The Implicit and Explicit Discourses of Male Head-Dress in an Indian Ocean Society', for *Textiles in the Indian Ocean* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), Dr Hirji uses male head-gear (i.e., a piece of material culture) to examine the multiple factors, including religion, which inform contemporary conceptions of Muslim male identity in coastal East Africa.

Dr. Hirji is currently a Research Associate in the Department of Academic Research and Publications at the IIS where he is engaged in a number of research and publications activities, while overseeing the academic fellowship and scholarship programmes. He is also a lecturer in the Institute's Graduate Programme and holds a Junior Research Fellowship at Wolfson College, University of Oxford.

Kofias (men's headdress) from Zanzibar.



Dr Fahmida Suleman

Dr Suleman obtained a BA in Islamic and Religious Studies from the University of Toronto in 1994. In 1997, she graduated from the Institute's Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities, having completed an MSc in Islamic Art & Archaeology at the University of Oxford. Dr Suleman then took on curatorial internships at both the British Museum and the IIS. Subsequently, she was awarded a PhD scholarship to undertake a DPhil at the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, in Islamic Art and Archaeology. Her doctoral research concentrated on the study of Fatimid art and the social messages it conveys about mediaeval Egyptian society, with a particular focus on painted images found on lustre pottery produced from 969-1171 CE.

In 2003, Dr Suleman accepted a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Qur'anic Studies with the IIS. During her fellowship she organised an

international colloquium, 'Word of God, Art of Man: The Qur'an and its Creative Expressions' which coincided with the IIS' 25th Anniversary. Mawlana Hazar Imam, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Institute's Board of Governors, delivered the keynote address at this conference.

Dr Fahmida Suleman is currently a Research Associate in the Department of Academic Research and Publications and the Administrative Co-ordinator of the Qur'anic Studies Project. She has recently completed editing a volume of selected proceedings of the above-mentioned colloquium, which is expected to be published by the IIS in 2006. Her other publications include: 'From Shards to Bards: Pottery Making in Historic Cairo' in, *Living with the Past: Historic Cairo* (eds. F. Daftary,

E. F. Fernea and A. Nanji, University of Texas Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, forthcoming).



Lustre bowl from Fatimid Egypt, 11th-12th C., from the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo. The image on the bowl is of a griffin, a fabled beast with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion.

A manuscript page of the Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'



Dr Omar Alí-de-Unzaga

Dr Omar Alí-de-Unzaga is currently a Research Associate in the Department of Academic Research and Publications and the Academic Coordinator of the Qur'anic Studies Project at the IIS.

He obtained a BA in English Philology from the Universities of Valladolid and Madrid in Spain. In 1997, he graduated from the Institute's Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities and received an MPhil from the University of Cambridge in Islamic Studies. Subsequently, the IIS awarded a PhD scholarship to him to undertake Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge. His doctoral work looked at the Qur'an in the *Epistles of the Pure Brethren (Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa')*,

particularly focussing on the classical sources that deal with the authorship, influence and criticism of the *Epistles* and their most quoted Qur'anic verses. His study also includes an annotated index of more than nine hundred Qur'anic quotations found in the *Epistles*.

Dr Alí-de-Unzaga is currently preparing his PhD thesis for publication and has published an article on 'The conversation between Moses and God (*munajat Musa*) in the *Epistles of the Pure Brethren (Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa')*,' in *Al-Kitab: La sacralité du texte dans le monde de l'Islam* (D. De Smet G. de Callatay, J. Van Reeth, eds., Acta Orientalia Belgica, Subsidia III, 2003).



Page from a manuscript of Nahj al-balagha.

Nahj al-balagha is considered a masterpiece of Arabic prose literature and, over centuries, has been the object of a corpus of commentaries, abridgements, selections, translations and studies.

The IIS Library, as part of its fundamental mandate, strives to identify and acquire significant manuscripts, early printed and rare books, as well as photographs and other audio-visual materials, in order to continue to serve as a resource and repository of international scope for Shi'a and Ismaili studies. Over the past year, the Library has made several important acquisitions which are now part of the Institute's collections of manuscripts and rare books.

Among the manuscripts purchased – and the first manuscript in Turkish to be acquired for the collection – was a copy of the *Sharaf al-insan* ('The Nobility of Man'), by the celebrated Ottoman Sufi writer and poet of the first half of the 16th century, Mahmud b. 'Uthman Lami'i. Lami'i took Jami, the great near-contemporary poet of Timurid Herat, as his literary model. Approximately thirty of his works are known, all marked by an originality and variety achieved by the fusion of new themes with traditional conventions. The *Sharaf al-insan*, perhaps Lami'i's best-known prose work, was written in 933/1526-27. Its theme, the contest of man with the animals, is taken from the well-known section of the *Rasa'il* of the Ikhwan al-Safa'. It has been suggested that this is a Turkish translation of the treatise from the *Rasa'il*.

Another acquisition, a manuscript in Persian, is a 19th-century copy of the *Siyasat-nama* by Nizam al-Mulk, the vizier and virtual ruler of the Saljuq dominions in the second half of the 11th century. Nizam al-Mulk, who was unsympathetic towards the Ismailis, devotes the forty-sixth chapter of his *Siyasat-nama* to the history of the Ismailis which, according to Dr Farhad Daftary, "provides an important source on the history of the early Ismaili movements' *da'wa* and *da'is* in Persia and Central Asia."

Two other acquisitions sharing a common element were also made in 2005. Both are works of the first Shi'a Imam, Hazrat 'Ali. The first is a beautiful Arabic manuscript, copied in 1291/1874, of the *Nahj al-balagha* ('The Way of Eloquence'). This text consists of the sermons, epistles, maxims and sayings attributed to Hazrat 'Ali. It is considered a masterpiece of Arabic prose literature and, over the centuries, has been the object of a corpus of commentaries, abridgements, selections, translations and studies. Commenting on the *Nahj al-balagha*, Moktar Djebli, a leading scholar of the *Nahj al-balagha*, states: "The powerful assonance of its prose, its sometimes studied rhetoric, its remarkable eloquence, its gripping images, its sober, unpolished and relatively obscure mode of expression, Bedouin wisdom and sensibility blended with Islamic delicacy and vision – all of these constitute the literary worth of the *Nahj*. This is supplemented by further values, moral and social. In fact, this book has a tireless appeal, full of

fervour and sincerity, on behalf of faith in God and in His Prophet, of piety, of integrity, of justice, and of rising above the vanities of this world." The manuscript acquired by the Institute, produced during the Qajar period, has a fine illuminated double page at the beginning, elegantly decorated in gold and various other colours.

The second acquisition is a rare printed edition – combining Latin, Arabic, Persian and Hebrew scripts – of selected sayings of Hazrat ‘Ali. Published in 1834, the *Sententiae Ali ben Abi Taleb* was prepared by Johann Stickel, a numismatist and palaeographer who was a pupil of Silvestre de Sacy, one of the foremost orientologists of the period.



5

مردمان در روز قیامت ایشان ^{۱۰} مانند هتر از ^{۱۱} آتشیان و بر تانیهم ^{۱۲} آتشیه
ایشان بیدبران ایشان *

d) Particip. praesent. a مانستن Wilk. p. 78. 40. n. 117. cum terminatione comparativi ibid. p. 22. 23. Poss. p. 47. —

bit id, in quo incrementum capitur, Tychs. gr. p. 208. n. 3.; pertinet igitur ad id genus, quod grammatici Arabum indigenae accuratiorum definitionem nuncupant. de Sacy gr. II. p. 79.

8) Ex vulgari usu nos quoque illud articuli vel ab initio sententiarum Veda adscriptissimas, de Sacy gr. I. p. 67. 68. — آتشیان est pluralis irregularis ab آتشی per sphaerensin illi initialis et آتشی, quod apud poetas existat, coortum, ut آتشی ab آتشی. Tychs. I. c. p. 151. n. 4. Ewald. gr. I. p. 294. 295.

9) آتشیان quatore Kamuso est plural. fractus formae qulitae a آتشی, deriv. a آتشی; omiserunt in censu suo et Tychs. I. c. p. 138. no. 5 et de Sacy gr. I. p. 351. hoc genus nominaum, attulit Ewaldus gr. I. p. 183. — آتشیان efficiunt perfectam propositionem, in qua, ut fit plerumque, verbum copulativum omissum est, sub-

lectum vero a praedicto nullo negotio distinguitur cum positione, qua solet illud huic antecedere, tum quod subiectam definitum, attributum autem indefinitum est. Vide de Sacy gr. II. p. 426. 102. Ewald. I. c. II. p. 146.

10) Pertinet haec sententia ad terrestrium rerum, scientiarum, negotiorum, in quibus nihil solidi, vanitatem et fallaciam, verum autem bonorum post mortem operandarum praedium et aeternitatem describendam; de quibus saepius scriptores orientis egregie agunt, ut in illo poemate, Ali carminibus, a Kuypersio editis, adiecto p. 192:

Das Leben — ein Traum, der Tod —
ein Erwachen,
Zwischen ihnen der Mensch, ein wandelndes Noththier.

Alia in hanc rem vide in Rosenmüller. Insult. ad fundam. ling. arab. p. 330. r. 40; Apophthegmat. Hebraeor. ac Arab. per J. Drusium p. 85. n. 244. et Job. 8. 9. 20. 8. Ps. 73. 20, a quibus parum Plaidar illud obbluditi: *evait' d'vay' ad'vay'at'.*

Top left:
Page from a manuscript of
Sharaf al-insan.

Top right:
Page from a manuscript of
Siyasat-nama.

Left:
Page from a copy of
Sententiae Ali ben Abi Taleb.

Department of Graduate Studies

Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities



Professor Azim Nanji, Dr Farhad Daftary and Dr Alnoor Dhanani with the newly admitted students of the Class of 2008.

In 2005, the Department of Graduate Studies welcomed twelve new students to the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH). The new cohort of students come from diverse backgrounds including Canada (2), France (1), Pakistan (2), Syria (1), Tajikistan (5) and the United States of America (1). Sixteen of the eighteen students of the GPISH Class of 2006 began their Masters' degree programmes while ten students from the Class of 2007 began their second year of the programme.

Curricular changes were made to the Graduate Programme in 2005. Arabic instruction is now offered entirely at the Institute by Ms Lucy Collard, Academic Coordinator, Professor Alan Jones, Mr Ibrahim Mohammad, and Dr Otared Haider (GPISH Class of 1998). Arabic immersion in the second year is offered through the Institut du Proche Orient in Damascus. Students of the Class of 2007 who participated in the Arabic immersion programme were enthusiastic about the programme and its location, which allowed them to visit Salamiyya and other Ismaili centres where they interacted with young Syrian Ismailis.

Curricular changes have also been made to other aspects of the programme. Students can take core and advanced courses in the first and second years, and are offered electives in their last two terms. Existing courses include: *Power, Authority, and the Body Politic*; *the History of the Ismailis*; and *Ismaili Devotional Literature in the South Asian Context*. New courses include: *Encountering Islam: Selves, Things, and the World*; *Approaches to the Study of Religion; Literature and Culture*; *Literature of Modern Muslim Societies*; *Qu'ran: History, Meaning and Text*; and *Gender and Representation*. Electives include: *Ismailism in Modern Times*; *Central Asia in Transition*; and *Human Rights and Civil Society in the Muslim world*. Student course evaluations indicate

that these courses have, on the whole, been well received.

The Department of Graduate Studies also runs the Khorog English Programme (KEP) in Tajikistan. Dr Alnoor Dhanani, Head of Graduate Studies, presented certificates to graduates in July 2005. A new curriculum for KEP, which includes courses in English, literature and political philosophy, is currently being developed by Dr Shantarane Arulanantham, English for Academic Purposes Coordinator. As a result, three KEP students were admitted into the GPISH Class of 2008. Plans are also underway to start a preparatory programme in Damascus in 2006.

One of the challenges faced by our graduates is identifying relevant career opportunities. To address this, the department hosted a *Careers for Tomorrow* seminar for GPISH students and alumni in October in partnership with the Institute's Alumni Relations Officer. Presentations by Shams Jaffer, Senior Manager of Staffing for the *Imamat/AKDN*, and Salim Bhatia, Director of the Aga Khan Academies Project, provided information to current students and alumni about possible career paths within the AKDN and, specifically, in the Aga Khan Academies. In addition, presentations by Aziz Batada, science teacher at the Academy of Excellence in Mombasa, and Louay Ismail (GPISH Class of 2005), intern at the British Broadcast Corporation (BBC), provided examples of real-world experience.

Dr Alnoor Dhanani (second from right) with administrators and teachers of the Khorog English Programme.



Alumni Relations

Alumni Association Chapter Groups

In 2005, the IIS formed an Alumni Association and established two regional chapter groups, one in North America and the other in Europe. Over the past two decades, in excess of 200 individuals have graduated from a range of human resource development initiatives of the IIS. These include: (a) Wa'ezeen and Teacher Education Programme (1983–1994); (b) the collaborative IIS-McGill programme (1983–1991); (c) a postgraduate diploma course in Curriculum Writing at the Institute of Education, University of London (1982–1983) and; (d) the current Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (1994–present).

The Institute's alumni are engaged in a wide range of exciting endeavours around the world. We have now taken the initiative to create formal structures to enable a sustained and mutually beneficial relationship with our alumni.

Following chapter group meetings held in Houston (for the North American group) and London (for the European group), elections were held to elect the office bearers for each group. The individuals below were nominated and elected by their peers to hold these positions for the term ending 31st December 2006.



HANIF VIRANI was elected the first President of the North American Chapter Group of the IIS Alumni Association. Hanif graduated from the first Wa'ezeen and Teacher Education Programme, class of 1983. His postgraduate studies have included an MED in Education in Developing Countries from the

University of London, Institute of Education (1982) and a Certificate in Applied Sciences in Administration, Planning and Social Policy from Harvard University (1988).

In his professional career, Hanif focused his efforts on the development, supervision and management of the Ismaili religious education programme in Canada. Subsequently, he spent time with the Aga Khan Foundation. He has served as the Regional Coordinator for the Madrasa Resource Centres Programme East Africa (1995-2000), briefly as the CEO for the Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan (2001-2002) and as Institutional Development Advisor for the Institute for Professional Development Tajikistan (2003 - 2005).



RUKSANAH PIRANI was elected the first Secretary of the North American Chapter Group of the IIS Alumni Association. She enrolled in the Wa'ezeen and Teacher Educator programme, class of 1991, and graduated with an MA in Islamic Societies and Cultures from the School of Oriental and African

Studies, University of London. In addition to her Masters degree, Ruksanah also completed her Postgraduate Certificate of Education at the University of London's Institute of Education.

In 1992, she joined ITREB USA as a Religious Education Coordinator. Her responsibilities at ITREB USA involved the creation and management of several projects, most noteworthy of which included her involvement in youth camps, teacher training and delivering *wa'z*.

Currently, Ruksanah is a professional in the field of Real Estate. She is still actively involved in a voluntary capacity in teacher training, delivering *wa'z* and the education of young children through the Ta'lim curriculum.



DR ZULFIKAR A HIRJI was elected the first President of the European Chapter Group of the IIS Alumni Association. Born in Nairobi, Kenya, and spending his early childhood in Kampala, Uganda, Zulfikar and his family immigrated to Canada in 1972.

Zulfikar studied classical western voice performance and jazz at Vancouver Community College and went on to complete a degree in Religious Studies and Anthropology at McGill University. Thereafter, he spent five years working in Toronto for various organizations in fundraising, communications and management.

In 1994, Zulfikar returned to academia as a student in the Graduate Programme at the IIS, going on to complete his MPhil at Cambridge in Islamic Studies and DPhil in Anthropology at Oxford. Dr Hirji currently holds a Junior Research Fellowship at Wolfson College (Oxford) and is a Research Associate at the IIS in the Department of Academic Research and Publications.



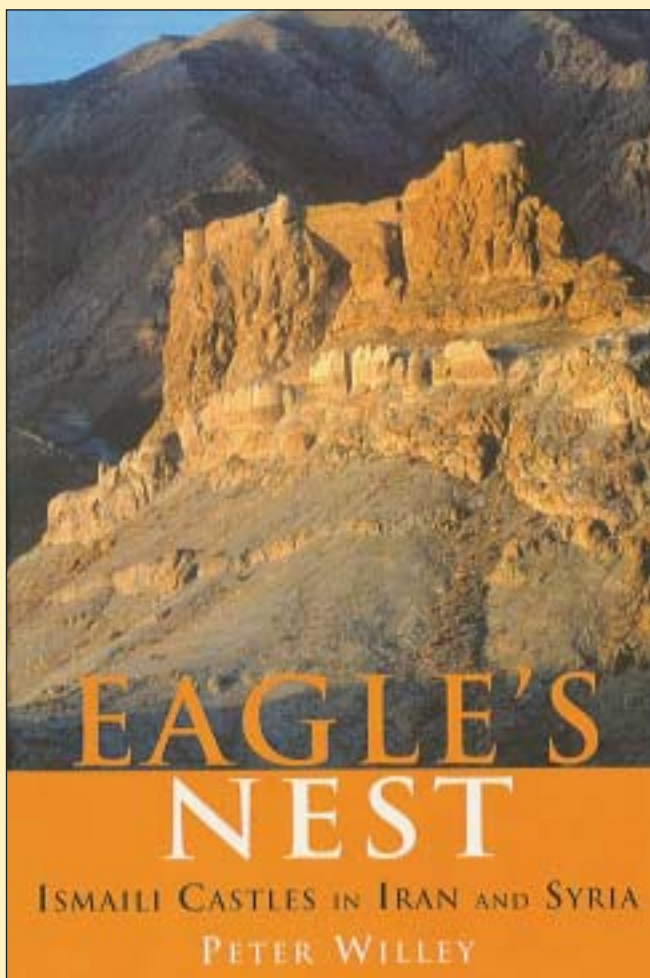
ARIFA SULTANI was elected the first Secretary of the European Chapter Group of the IIS Alumni Association. Born in Afghanistan and raised in Vancouver, Canada, Arifa obtained her BA from the University of British Columbia (UBC) in South Asian Studies and International Relations in 2002. She

was then accepted in the IIS Graduate Programme and received a Certificate in Islamic Studies and Humanities.

As part of her studies at the IIS, Arifa pursued her academic interests at the University of Cambridge where she completed her MPhil in Politics, Democracy and Education, from the Faculty of Education. At Cambridge, she focused on citizenship education, social capital, pluralism and civil society.

Until recently, Arifa was based in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, where she was a Humanities Visiting Fellow at the Aga Khan Humanities Project of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

The Institute is planning to establish a chapter group of its Alumni Association in Asia in 2006 which will bring together IIS graduates from India, Iran, Kenya, Pakistan, Syria, Tanzania, Tajikistan and UAE.



Eagle's Nest: Ismaili Castles in Iran and Syria

By Peter Willey

Between the late 11th and 13th centuries, magnificent castles and towering fortresses were built in remote, mountainous regions for refuge and defence by the Ismaili Muslims of Iran and Syria who were fleeing from religious persecution. Intrinsically bound up with these castles and the communities they supported are fascinating legends about the so-called Assassins who swept down from their craggy fastnesses to target their enemies in daring raids. Peter Willey, who has made these castles the subject of a lifetime's research, uncovers the truth about the people who built these mountain strongholds and defended them, often against overwhelming odds, for 166 years until they were conquered by the Mongols in 1256.

These castles and fortresses were built in the inaccessible mountainous regions of Iran and Syria for refuge by the Ismaili Muslims who were fleeing persecution by the *Saljuqs* and others during the early Middle Ages. Often superior in construction to those built by the Crusaders, these castles withstood numerous offensives for over two centuries until the middle of the thirteenth century when most were captured and demolished by the Mongols.

Charting the discoveries he made during the course of more than twenty expeditions to Iran and Syria over the past forty years, Willey shows that the Ismailis were in fact the very opposite of the 'assassins' and 'terrorists' of popular imagination. His detailed study of Ismaili castles demonstrates that they were a people of exceptional intelligence and determination. They had a remarkable knowledge of military architecture, administration and logistics, and were also brilliant agriculturists and water engineers in mostly arid and rocky terrain. Indeed, the author argues that their architectural and agricultural achievements in many respects surpass those of the Crusaders. In their remote mountain fortresses, the Ismailis were also able to cultivate a sophisticated intellectual and spiritual life. The book is exceptionally well illustrated with numerous photographs, maps and plans, as well as a number of appendices including contributions from experts on the pottery and coinage found on the Ismaili sites.

Forthcoming Publications

Between Revolution and State: The Path to Fatimid Statehood

By Sumaiya A Hamdani

Justice and Remembrance: Introducing the Spirituality of Imam 'Ali

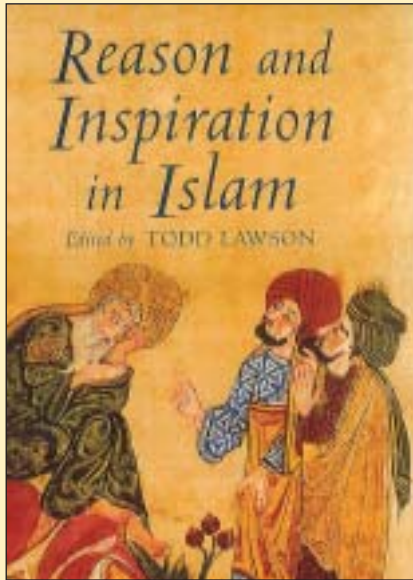
By Reza Shah-Kazemi

Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire

Translated by Hamid Haji

'Attar and the Persian Sufi Tradition: The Art of Spiritual Flight

By L Lewisohn and C Shackle



Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought

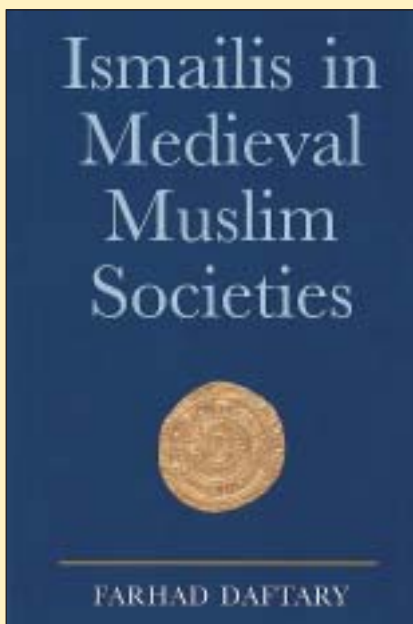
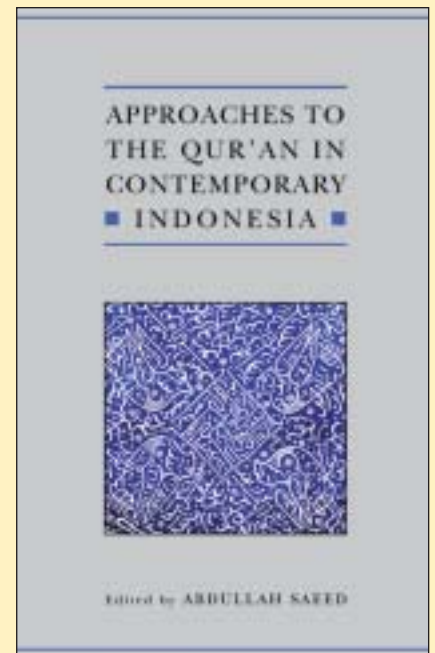
Edited by Todd Lawson

In all the current alienating discourse on Islam, which is so often depicted as a source of extremism and fanatic violence, this book takes a timely and refreshing look at the traditions of Islamic mysticism, philosophy and intellectual debate in a series of diverse and stimulating approaches. It presents the major figures in Islamic thought, such as Ibn 'Arabi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali, and sheds light on hitherto unconsidered aspects of Islam, utilising new source material. The contributors form an impressive list of scholars and experts. They include, amongst others: S. Alvi, M.A. Amir-Moezzi, L. Clarke, F. Daftary, D. DeWeese, B. Fragner, S. Kamada, W. Madelung, E. Ormsby, N. Pourjavady and J. W. Morris.

Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Indonesia

Edited by Abdullah Saeed

Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim country, but much of its scholarly work on Islam is not available to a wider readership. This volume brings together the contributions of a wide range of Muslim intellectuals, traditionalists and modernists, and makes their varied approaches to the Qur'an accessible to an English-speaking audience for the first time. Topics covered range from textual interpretation and religious pluralism to debates on polygamy within the Indonesian Muslim women's movement and the use of Qur'anic verses in contemporary Indonesian politics.



Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies

By Farhad Daftary

Discussing the different phases in Ismaili history, this book describes both the pre-Fatimid Ismailis as well as the contributions of the Ismailis to Islamic culture during the Fatimid, Alamut and post-Alamut periods of their history. A number of chapters deal with specific Ismaili figures, such as Hasan-i Sabbah and the Sulayhid queen of Yaman, al-Sayyida Hurra. Other chapters contextualise the Ismailis within the communities of interpretation in Islam, in addition to investigating the Ismaili-Crusader relations and the myths that emerged about the Ismailis of that era. During their long history, the Ismailis have been wrongly accused of various heretical teachings and practices and a multitude of myths and misconceptions have circulated about them. Over the course of the work, it becomes clear that Ismaili historiography and the perception of the Ismailis by others have had a fascinating evolution of their own.

With the completion of the *Worlds of Learning* campaign cycle, the IIS Resource Development and Communications Committees of North America met in Atlanta, USA, to discuss the final stages of the campaign as well as strategies and plans for the future.

In addition to the three representatives from the IIS, the meeting was attended by the national teams and regional conveners from Canada and the USA. Also in attendance was the National Resource Development Coordinator for the USA, Rai Saheba Gulshan Pirani. The President of the National Council for the USA, Huzur Mukhi Dr. Mahmoud Eboo, joined the meeting for the first session and shared his perspective on resource development activities within the *Jamat* in light of Mawlana Hazar Imam's guidance. The Head of Operations, Finance & Development at the IIS, Mr Shiraz Kabani, shared relevant Board guidance with the team and congratulated the North American committees for their hard work and commitment over the past five years. During the meeting, the committees discussed some of the key learning points from the campaign and suggested creative resource development and communication plans for the future. Plans for similar meetings with the IIS Resource Development Committees in France, Portugal and the United Kingdom are underway.

Beginning in the United States and Canada in 2000, the *Worlds of Learning* campaign was supported by more than 20,000 donors across North America and Europe. The Institute of Ismaili Studies would like to express its most sincere gratitude to all donor families for their generosity. Their contributions have and will continue to facilitate the Institute's efforts to establish itself on a sound financial foundation.

Members of the North American Resource Development Committees and representatives from the IIS meeting in Atlanta, USA, February 2006.



Professor Eric Ormsby was appointed Chief Librarian at The Institute of Ismaili Studies in August 2005. Prior to this, Professor Ormsby held positions with several university libraries and collections in North America including: Director of Libraries at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC from 1983-86; Director of Libraries at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and Associate Professor in McGill's Institute of Islamic Studies from 1983-86; and from 1996 to 2005, full Professor and Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University.

Professor Ormsby received his BA summa cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania where he majored in Oriental Studies (Arabic and Turkish). He received his MA and PhD degrees in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University with a specialisation in Islamic theology and philosophy. He also studied at the University of Tübingen, Germany. In 1978, he received a Masters of Library Science from Rutgers University while working at the Princeton University Library.

Professor Ormsby has published widely on the topic of Islamic thought and has also authored five collections of poems, as well as a book of essays on poetry and literature, including Arabic literature.

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