

# IIS Update

March 2004

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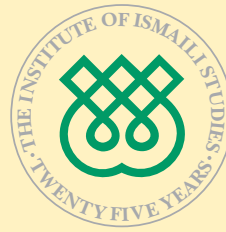
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## Message from the Director



Dear Donors  
and Friends  
of The Institute of  
Ismaili Studies,

The moving and inspiring events of 19th October 2003 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Institute will long remain etched in the memory of the hundreds of people who were fortunate to participate in the events in London and the many more who participated and contributed, not by their presence, but through their commitment and remembrance.

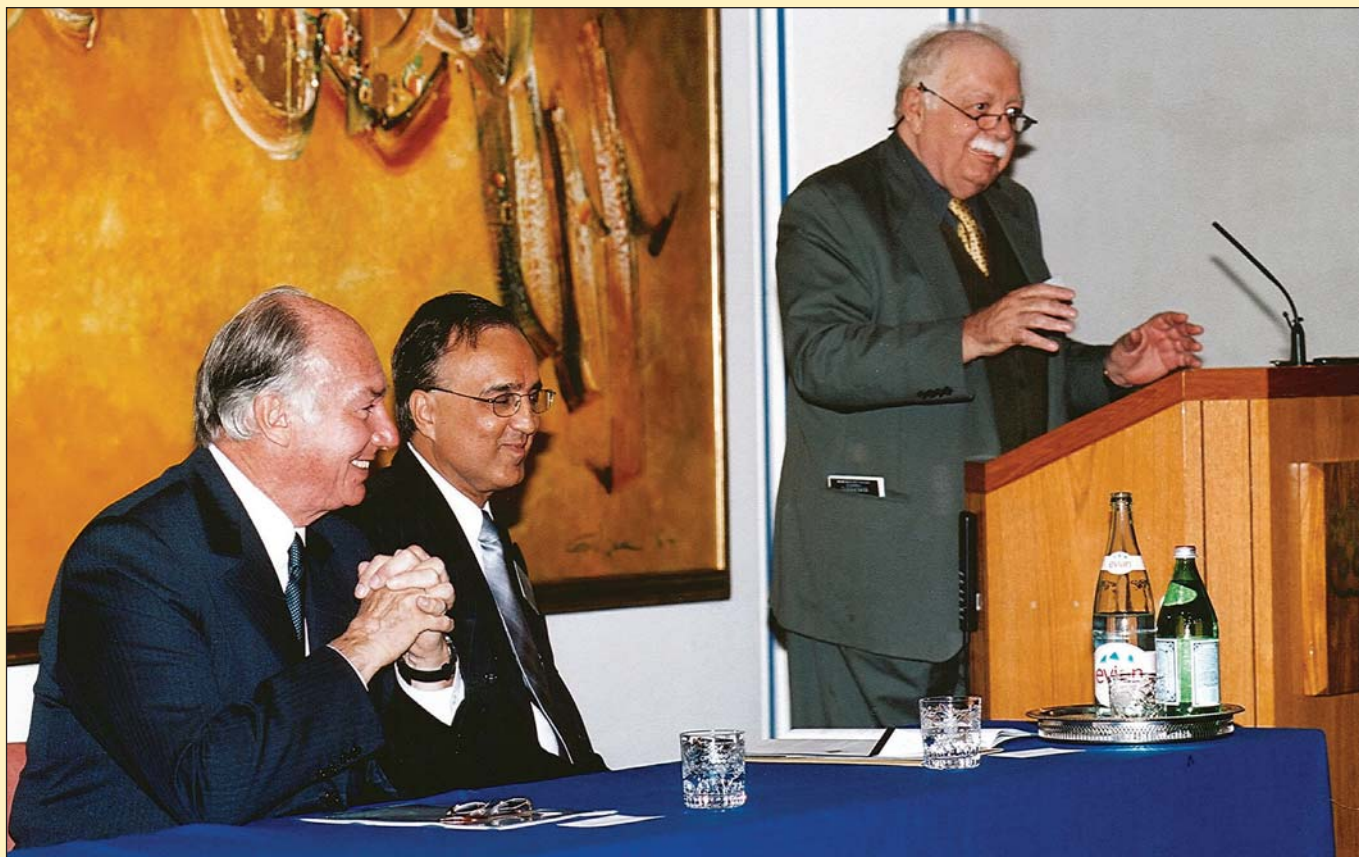
In the life of an institution, few events rise to a sense of a history-making occasion as 19th October did. In his address at the Graduation Ceremony, Mawlana Hazar Imam spoke of 'a continuation of the historic Ismaili tradition to promote knowledge and learning, in line with the great ideals of Islam.' Earlier, the Colloquium on the Qur'an, which illustrated the convergence between artistic expression and Muslim cultures and identities, underlined the important role that the Institute

has come to play as a global centre for Islamic Studies, and as an institution that has drawn inspiration from its historic heritage and built itself into a confident, assured and cohesive academic and educational institution, with wide embrace of the past and the present.

The alumni, students and faculty represent the breadth and diversity of the Institute's scope and achievement and its critical link with the Ismaili community whose heritage and support is intertwined with the Institute's mission and its future. The recognition by Mawlana Hazar Imam of the generosity of time and resources of the many donors underlines this link.

It remains for me to acknowledge and thank everyone who contributed to the success of the events and to also remind ourselves of what has also been otherwise a full and eventful academic year. In the years to come, the 25th anniversary of the Institute will be remembered as an important milestone as well as a promise of the challenges and opportunities that still lie ahead.

## *'Word of God, Art of Man: The Qur'an and its Creative Expressions' An International Colloquium*



*Mawlana Hazar Imam and Professor Azim Nanji listening to Professor Oleg Grabar at the Opening Session of the Colloquium*

*'Whatever its vernacular forms, the language of art,  
more so when it is spiritually inspired, can be a  
positive barrier-transcending medium of discourse.'*

*Mawlana Hazar Imam*

*Opening Session of the Colloquium, 19th October 2003*

The Holy Qur'an has played a vital role in Muslim civilisations as the inspiration for several art forms. As part of its 25th anniversary celebrations, The Institute of Ismaili Studies organised a three-day international colloquium entitled 'Word of God, Art of Man: The Qur'an and its Creative Expressions' held from 18th-21st October 2003 at the Ismaili Centre in London. The colloquium was coordinated by Fahmida Suleman, a Postdoctoral Fellow in Qur'anic Studies and an IIS alumna,

with direction and support from Dr Shainool Jiwa, Coordinator of the Qur'anic Studies Unit at the IIS. Attended by more than 250 scholars, students and artists, the colloquium focused on the Sacred Word as a source for creative and artistic inspiration, rather than approaching the Noble Qur'an from a theological perspective. From its influence on the built environment to metalwork, woodwork, coins, textiles and the art of manuscript illumination, the conference

examined how the discourse of the Holy Qur'an has provided the motivation and impetus for many Muslims to adorn the spaces they inhabit and the objects they cherish.

In his opening address on the morning of 19th October 2003, Mawlana Hazar Imam reflected on the message of the Qur'an and how it has inspired artistic expressions and traditions of interpretations amongst Muslims and scholars: 'Does not the Qur'an challenge the artist, as much as the mystic, to go beyond the physical - the outward?' In addition to speaking about the Qur'an and the artistic plurality which it has inspired, Mawlana Hazar Imam also spoke about the pluralism of interpretation that it has engendered. 'Freedom of interpretation is a generosity which the Qur'an confers upon all believers,' he said. 'Happily, as a result the Holy Book continues to guide and illuminate the thought and conduct of Muslims belonging



to different communities of interpretation and spiritual affiliation, from century to century, in diverse cultural environments.’

The prominent speakers invited included, Gülru Necipoglu, Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Art at Harvard University, who delivered the plenary lecture of the colloquium on ‘Qur’anic Inscriptions on Ottoman Mosques: Changes in Form and Content.’ In his presentation, Oleg Grabar, Professor Emeritus at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University, New Jersey, raised several theoretical questions on how revelation, more generally, and the Holy Qur’an in particular, has interfaced with the arts in providing countless visual expressions of the Sacred Word. Ismaheel Jimoh, a scholar from the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, presented outstanding examples of Qur’anic calligraphy and manuscript illumination produced by Muslim scholars from southwestern Nigeria, while Huism Tan, Curator at the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore, presented a paper on the use and significance of Qur’anic inscriptions on Malay domestic architecture in the form of beautifully carved woodwork. Altogether, 32 scholars made presentations at the Colloquium.

The eight panels held over two-and-a-half days addressed a diverse

range of subjects including Qur’anic calligraphy and illumination, talismans and magic, coinage, textiles, woodwork and contemporary arts. The diversity of the conference was enhanced by both the speakers and their topics which covered a wide geographical distribution from east to west. The areas of the globe represented included West and North Africa, Turkey, Egypt and other Arabic speaking lands, the Subcontinent, Southeast and Central Asia, the Persian world, North America and Europe.

Several key themes emerged from the various papers and discussions, three of which are outlined here. First, the encounter between Qur’anic discourse and local cultures and traditions with which it interacted, produced a myriad of indigenous expressions, each with its own history, context and meaning. The creative imagination of the artisans allowed the ‘text’ to transcend the written page onto a variety of materials and surfaces reflecting the interpretations and cultural nuances of time and place.

Second, many of the papers implicitly addressed the notion of ‘intertextuality’ or the Holy Qur’an’s ability to produce a number of literary and artistic associations within and outside of its own content. In other words,

the viewer of an artefact or building with a Qur’anic inscription is potentially responding to it through multiple layers of meaning. At first, there may be an instantaneous recognition of the passage. This may prompt recollections of narratives, such as the story of the Seven Sleepers (*ashab al-kahf*), theological concepts, such as the nature of God through His Beautiful Names (*al-asma’ al-husna*), eschatological concepts such as Paradise, or evoke the potency of specific passages as formulae when repeated at a given time or place.

Finally, the ability of the Word to sanctify, beautify, politicise or bestow talismanic properties to created objects, highlights the multiple interpretations and uses of the Holy Qur’an in informing particular Muslim worldviews, practices and beliefs.

Select proceedings of the Colloquium will be published by the IIS through the Qur’anic Studies Unit in 2005. An Academic Advisory Committee has been appointed comprising, among others, Professor Robert Hillenbrand, Professor of Islamic Art at Edinburgh University, and Dr Sheila Canby, Curator of the Islamic Collections at the British Museum, who will provide their expertise to the publication of this work.

*Professor Gülru Necipoglu,  
Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Art,  
Harvard University*



*Dr Shainool Jiwa, Coordinator,  
Qur’anic Studies Unit, IIS*



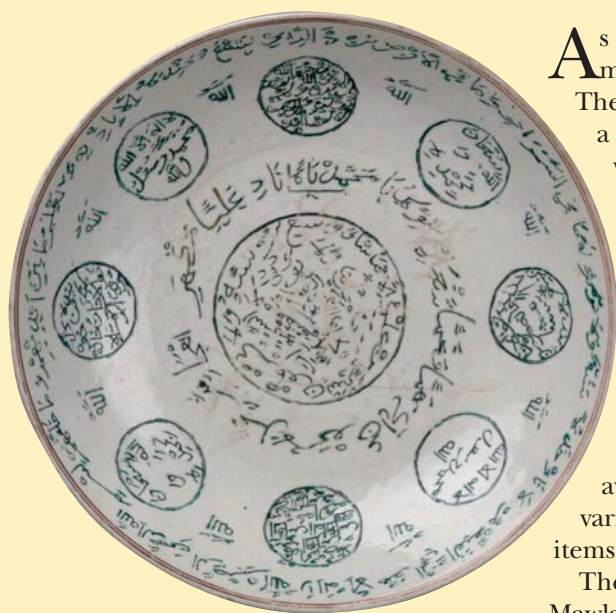
*Fahmida Suleman, Postdoctoral Fellow  
in Qur’anic Studies, IIS*



## *‘Illuminating Beauty, Illustrating Harmony’ – Intellectual and Artistic Heritage in Islam*



*Dr Duncan Haldane showing a manuscript to Mawlana Hazar Imam*



*Above - Swatow porcelain dish painted in green and black, 17th century China, inscribed with Qur'anic verses and prayers*

*Below - Qur'an scroll, mid-19th century Persia, Qajar, ghubari script in black ink on paper*

As part of the celebrations to mark the 25th anniversary of The Institute of Ismaili Studies, a major one-week exhibition was held at the Ismaili Centre in South Kensington.

Entitled 'Illuminating Beauty, Illustrating Harmony' this exhibition aimed both to inform the *jamat* and wider community of the intellectual and artistic heritage of Muslim cultures and to create an awareness of the scope and variety of some of the significant items in the Institute's collections.

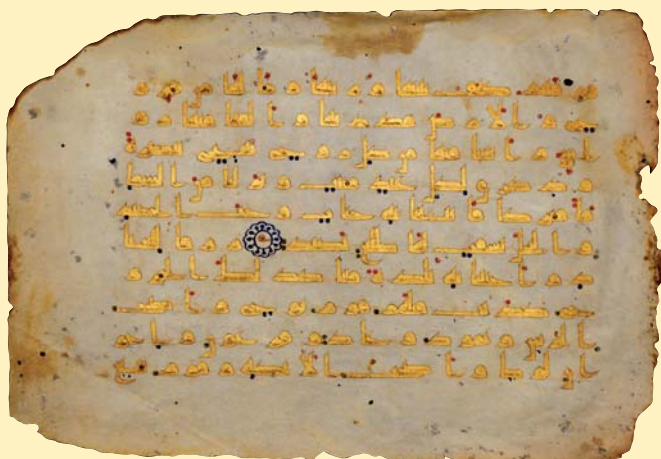
The exhibition was opened by Mawlana Hazar Imam on 19th October in the presence of many distinguished guests, including academics and members of the diplomatic community.

The exhibition provided a valuable and pertinent backdrop to the proceedings of the international conference 'Word of God, Art of Man: the Qur'an and its Creative Expressions' and was also open to the *jamat*. The interest and responses the exhibition roused – both among the conference participants and within the *jamat* – were very encouraging, indicating a genuine thirst for an opportunity to admire so many beautiful works of art and literature that have a resonance for Muslim and Ismaili history.

'Illuminating' and 'Illustrating' are appropriate from within the perspective of the arts of the book and are also linked to notions of knowledge and learning in Islam. A significant number of items in the exhibition were, accordingly, related to the arts of the book,







**Above** - Folio from a copy of the Holy Qur'an, 9th-10th century, North Africa or Near East, kufic script in gold ink on parchment

**Right** - Carved wood panel, 16th century Safavid, stellar interlace design enclosing floral star-shaped panel with naskh inscriptions above and below

**Below** - Ruby-mounted agate talismanic pendant, 19th century Persia, oval form with a calligraphic design of Qur'anic inscriptions and prayers, punctuated with floral bands

in particular the Holy Qur'an. 'Beauty' (suggestive of the concept of wonder) and 'harmony' (suggestive of the concept of resonance) have a plurality of meanings in Islam's intellectual and artistic heritage, yet also reflect a continuum within the context of its vast historical span and geographical space. As such, the items on display ranged in date from the 9th to the 19th century and were produced in lands as far westward as Tunisia and as far eastward as China and India, reflecting the enormous diversity and range of distinctive visual cultures, each with its own unique artistic language.

Various styles of script were on display, along with inscriptions on artefacts as diverse as a Fatimid tiraz textile, a Swatow porcelain dish from China and a Safavid wood panel. Copies of the Holy Qur'an shown included early 10th century leaves written on

parchment, 16th century Persian examples on paper and an 18th century complete Qur'an on cloth from Mughal India. Various devotional prayers were shown in manuscript form and also on a gold Qur'an case, a lacquer pen box and a ruby-mounted agate pendant. The scientific tradition was included in the form of two extremely important manuscripts, the *Qanun fi'l-tibb* (The Medical Canon) of Ibn Sina and the *Tawqim al-Sihha* (The Maintenance of Health) by Ibn Butlan. This section also included a brass astrolabe from 14th century Muslim Spain which, with inscriptions in Arabic, Hebrew and Latin, reflects the multi-cultural and multi-faith society that existed in Western Europe over six centuries ago.

The exhibition was curated by Dr Duncan Haldane, Mr Alnoor Merchant and Ms Shellina Karmali of the Institute's Library.



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**T**he *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* (The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity) constituted an encyclopaedic compendium that was composed by the anonymous members of a coterie based in Basra and Baghdad during the 10th century CE. This voluminous work grouped 52 epistles that treated a myriad of subjects, ranging from mathematics, music, logic, astronomy, physical sciences, ethics and aesthetics, to deliberations on the nature of the soul, on revelation and spirituality. Whilst being oriented by the teachings of Islam, the authors of the *Epistles* integrated within their corpus many themes that were derived from a variety of earlier intellectual traditions. Impacted by the legacies of the Ancient Greeks, the Indians and Persians, the Brethren were also inspired by Jewish and Christian scriptures.

The dating and authorship of the *Epistles* are still matters of scholarly debate in the field of Islamic Studies. Although this

assert that the *Epistles* originated from early Fatimid sources, others maintain that this work, which aims at transcending sectarian divisions, ought to be situated within a less confined context in the intellectual history of Islam.

The scholarly significance of the *Epistles* is mainly due to their exceptional encyclopaedic reception of the sciences of the age and to the rich insights they provide regarding popularised interpretations of knowledge by the cultured urbanites of the medieval Islamic civilisations. Written in an eloquent classical Arabic style, the *Epistles* do also contain parables, dialogues and poetic verses that carry a rich literary value. From a cultural standpoint, the authors of the *Epistles* gave a commendable expression to the liberal and pluralistic spirits in Islam.

For, in seeking justice, the Ikhwan did not hesitate to resist oppressive political regimes or to question exploitative figures of authority. Moreover, their tolerance allowed them to celebrate diversity and to recognise that 'truth is found in every religion' and that the acquisition of knowledge is a genuine 'nourishment for the soul' and a wise pathway to happiness and salvation.

Given the wide reception of the *Epistles* within a variety of traditions in the history of ideas in Islam, and based on their unique scholarly, literary and intellectual merits for the fields of Islamic Studies in general and Shi'i and Ismaili Studies in particular, The Institute of Ismaili Studies recently established The *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* Series. This major project, which complements the Institute's Ismaili Texts and Translations Series, was launched in December 2003, and is coordinated by the Department of Academic Research and Publications, with Dr Nader El-Bizri as its Managing Editor.

Although several Arabic editions of the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* and

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corpus has been described as being Sufi, Sunni or Mu'tazilite, it is more widely accepted that it belonged to the Shi'i intellectual tradition with links to the Ismaili legacy. A detailed account of the nature of the affiliation of the Ikhwan is still closely connected with a scholarly dispute over the identity of the authors and the chronology of the composition of their *Epistles*. Whilst some scholars





The heading in the illuminated panel begins the 'epistle on music', from a manuscript dated 1546CE



Page from the section devoted to mathematics, from a 17th century manuscript copied in Persia

related works are already available in print, none of these are critical in character, nor do they sufficiently note the subtle variants in the content of their consulted manuscripts. Furthermore, in spite of being partially translated into a variety of languages, like French, Italian and Urdu, no complete annotated English translation of this corpus is yet available.

In view of these shortcomings, The Institute of Ismaili Studies has taken the initiative to publish a complete critical edition of the Arabic text, together with an annotated English translation of the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* based on 12 manuscripts acquired from libraries in France, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom. Scheduled to begin publication in 2006, the series will provide the first comprehensive study in English of this unique encyclopaedic work and its authors. This endeavour will eventually assist many scholars in furthering their academic research in the field of Ikhwan studies, and provide a general learned readership with vital access to this classic textual legacy.

The first phase of this series will consist of 14 volumes, covering the 52 epistles of the Ikhwan al-Safa', that treat themes in mathematics, logic, natural science, philosophy and theology. These volumes will be published during the years 2006-2008, and they will be supplemented by additional publications that encompass critical studies, analytical commentaries and indices, along with Arabic critical editions and annotated English translations of the summaries of the *Epistles* entitled *al-Risala al-Jami'a* (The Comprehensive Epistle) and the *Jami'at al-Jami'a* (The Condensed Comprehensive).

The *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* Series will be supported by an Advisory Board that consists of the following scholars, in alphabetical order: Carmela Baffioni (Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli), Patricia Crone (Princeton University), Farhad Daftary (IIS), Nader El-Bizri (IIS), Lenn E. Goodman (Vanderbilt University), Abbas Hamdani (University of Wisconsin), Wilferd Madelung (IIS), Yves Marquet (Sorbonne), James Montgomery (University of

*This endeavour will eventually assist many scholars in furthering their academic research in the field of Ikhwan studies, and provide a general learned readership with vital access to this classic textual legacy.*

Cambridge), Azim Nanji (IIS), Ian Richard Netton (University of Leeds), Ismail K. Poonawala (UCLA), and Roshdi Rashed (CNRS, Paris).

The following scholars, will also be involved in the first phase of the series as editors, translators and annotators: Omar Ali-de Unzaga (IIS), Carmela Baffioni (Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli), Godefroid de Callatay (Université Catholique de Louvain), Nader El-Bizri (IIS), Nina Garbutt (Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation), Lenn E. Goodman (Vanderbilt University; assisted by Richard McGregor and Ebrahim Moosa), Duncan Haldane (IIS), Abbas Hamdani (University of Wisconsin), Muhammad Reza Jozi (IIS), Nouha Khalifa (IIS), Arzina Lalani (IIS), James Montgomery (University of Cambridge), Ian R. Netton (University of Leeds), Ismail K. Poonawala (UCLA), F. Jamil Ragep (University of Oklahoma), David Simonowitz (UCLA), Reza Shah-Kazemi (IIS), and Samer Traboulsi (Princeton University).





*Mawlana Hazar Imam meeting with Cllr Christopher Buckmaster, Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, at the Ismaili Centre*



*Mawlana Hazar Imam meeting with His Excellency Mr Morteza Sarmadi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Kingdom, at the Ismaili Centre*



*Mawlana Hazar Imam making informal remarks at the Donor Dinner held at The Natural History Museum, London*



*Mawlana Hazar Imam addressing the audience at the Graduation Ceremony.*



*Gift presented to Mawlana Hazar Imam on the occasion of the IIS' 25th Anniversary*



*Mawlana Hazar Imam meeting with IIS Alumni from Central Asia after the Graduation Ceremony*

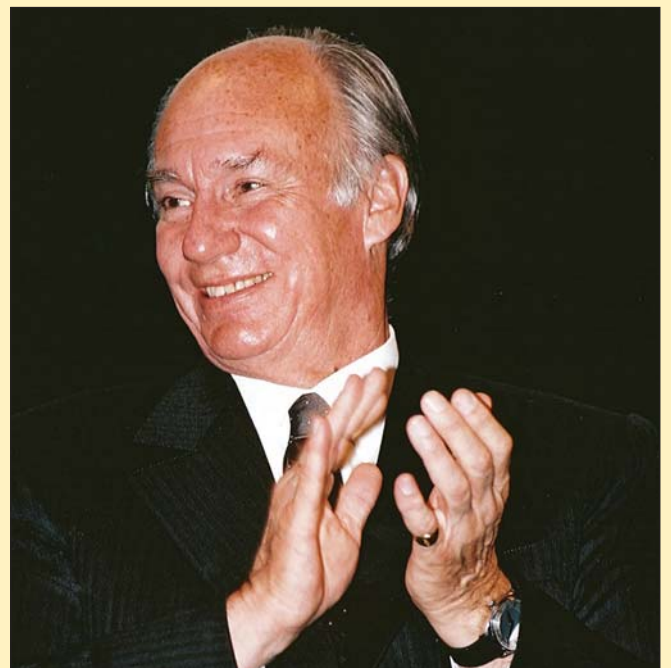




*Mawlana Hazar Imam being welcomed to the Grosvenor House Hotel by Dr Farhad Daftary, Professor Afzal Ahmed, and Professor Azim Nanji*



*Mawlana Hazar Imam and the Board of Governors entering the Great Hall for the Graduation Ceremony.*



*Mawlana Hazar Imam at the Graduation Ceremony*



*Mawlana Hazar Imam meeting with IIS Alumni from Syria after the Graduation Ceremony*



*Mawlana Hazar Imam awarding a certificate to Shah Hussain, a graduate of the Institute's Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities*

The Institute of Ismaili Studies has, over the past two decades, been involved in educating and preparing individuals as a global resource in a variety of fields. To date, the Institute has almost 200 alumni. Many amongst them have continued their research



Faranaz Keshavjee has, in the past several years, focused on the conciliation of her personal and academic development with the work she carries out with the Portuguese Ismaili *jamat*. She completed her BA in Social Anthropology before joining the Institute's Graduate Programme in 1994 and then read for her MA

### *Faranaz Keshavjee*

in Social and Organisational Psychology.

While continuing her doctoral work in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Cambridge, Faranaz also lectures at two Portuguese universities. She teaches a course on the Science of Religions at the undergraduate level and a post-graduate course on Islamic Studies. She has taken an active role in the Portuguese media by participating in interviews for daily newspapers and on television, whenever topics concerning Muslims and Islam are discussed. Faranaz also sits on the Board of Directors of Universos, a non-profit association concerned with promoting and developing interfaith dialogue.

Faranaz has served in both a voluntary and professional capacity with ITREB Portugal. Serving first as a board member, Faranaz's role included designing and implementing a number of projects under the five-year plan for the *jamat* in Portugal and its constituencies. Her goal is to make a meaningful contribution to an enlightened understanding and thinking about Islam, Muslims, women and education in Portuguese society.

Alongside all of this, Faranaz is a proud mother of two children, Hannah and David Aly. Her devotion to their upbringing and education does not stop her from speaking at conferences, writing papers, and generally working towards her vision of a more balanced and enlightened thinking about Islam.

and studies in their respective fields, while others have pursued professional careers in various institutions and organisations, within and beyond the *jamat*. Below are the profiles of a few graduates who are making their mark in their chosen fields of study.



Upon completion of his MA at the University of London, Farouk joined the IIS as a Research Associate and Assistant Programme Coordinator for the current Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities. His MA thesis was published by the IIS under the title *Al-Ghazali and the Ismailis: A Debate on Reason and*

### *Farouk Mitha*

*Authority in Medieval Islam.*

This publication

has been hailed as a 'significant contribution to the study of the variegated paths of medieval Muslim thinking' and is the culmination of years of hard work and dedication. Currently, Farouk is a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Education, University of Victoria, British Columbia.

Beyond his academic work, Farouk also serves as the Project Manager for the Core Curriculum Project and as a lecturer for the International Vector Programmes which fall under the auspices of ITREBs, the IIS, and the International ITREB Coordinator's office. He coordinated the design and writing of curriculum modules in Muslim and Ismaili history, thought, literature and societies. Subsequently, he has been involved in teaching these modules in training programmes conducted in America, Canada, England, Kenya and Portugal.

Farouk is a full-time lecturer, teaching several courses at the Faculty of Education. He is also Chair of the Advisory Council for the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University. He has published academic articles on Language Arts Education and contemporary Canadian literature. Beyond this, Farouk is writing his doctoral thesis which is entitled 'Anxieties about Cultural Identity in Secondary Language Arts Education: The Case of *Othello* as a School Text.'





Dr Karim H. Karim is an Associate Professor at Carleton University's School of Journalism and Communication in Ottawa. He is internationally regarded as a leading communication studies scholar on Islam, and is consulted by high levels of government and the media.

Dr Karim has published extensively, receiving a major prize in 2001 for his critically-

### Karim H. Karim

acclaimed book, *Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence*. His current publication project is *The Media of Diaspora: Mapping the Globe*. He received a major research grant in 2003 to study communication between Muslim intellectuals and their communities.

Dr Karim's academic study of Islam began in 1975 when he travelled from his home in Kenya to New York's Columbia University as an undergraduate. Upon graduation, he served as Religious Education Co-ordinator for the Prairies for Canada's Ismailia Association. He resumed his education in 1982 in the newly-launched graduate programme in Islamic studies collaboratively offered by McGill University and the IIS. After receiving his MA, he worked as a journalist for Inter-Press Service and Compass News Features, specialising in news about developing countries.

In 1989, he joined the Canadian government's multiculturalism program as a Policy Analyst, where he co-ordinated the establishment of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. He also facilitated collaboration between Muslim, Jewish and other religious communities, which was recognised with a government award in 1991. He was promoted to the post of Senior Researcher in the Department of Canadian Heritage, and went on to chair the Accessibility Group of the Federal Digitization Task Force. During this period, he pursued part-time doctoral studies in McGill's Communication Studies programme and received his PhD in 1997.



Nacim Pak's admission into the Institute's graduate programme in 1999 provided her the intellectual space to study and scrutinise her own history and identity as an Iranian Ismaili woman, in diaspora. While at the Institute, Nacim conducted an anthropological study for her field project in summer 2001 which

### Nacim Pac

documented the lives of Iranian asylum seekers in

Van, Turkey. Completed as part of her MA in the Anthropology of Media at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 2002, the resulting film, *The Dream of Flight*, has been shown to numerous audiences as well as at the Zanzibar International Film Festival in July 2003.

Between November 2002 and September 2003, Nacim translated sections of *The Great Islamic Encyclopaedia* for the IIS. In July 2003, she presented a paper entitled 'Representations of Women in Iranian Cinema' at the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) Conference in Exeter. Her paper 'Women and Boundaries in Iranian Cinema', presented at the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) Conference, Alaska, in November 2003, will be published in a forthcoming volume edited by Richard Tapper and Laura Mulvey entitled, *Beyond the Veil, Behind the Lens: Women in Iranian Cinema* (I.B. Tauris).

Nacim was awarded a scholarship from the IIS to embark upon her doctorate in Film and Media Studies at SOAS in 2003. Her research focuses on religion and spirituality in Iranian cinema, sections of which she will be presenting in Washington, DC at the Society of Iranian Studies conference in May 2004, and in London at the BRISMES Conference in July 2004.



*Dr Alice Hunsberger and Dr Sarfarozi Niyozov at the conference in Dushanbe*

*Celebrated for poetry  
that combines art with  
philosophy, and revered  
for his theological texts,  
Hakeem Nasir Khusraw  
remains one of the most  
fascinating figures in  
Islamic history and  
literature.*

The Institute of Ismaili Studies organised a series of events to commemorate the 1,000th birth anniversary of the poet, philosopher and traveller, Hakeem Nasir Khusraw, in early September 2003 in Tajikistan.

One of the foremost poets of the Persian language and a major contributor to Ismaili thought, Hakeem Nasir Khusraw has attracted passionate attention for nearly a thousand years from admirers and critics alike. Celebrated for poetry that combines art with philosophy, and revered for his theological texts, he remains one of the most fascinating figures in Islamic history and literature.

As part of the celebrations to commemorate his birth anniversary, the Institute organised a series of events promoting intellectual and artistic dialogue on this 11th century figure. The most significant of these was a three-day international conference, held from 2nd to 4th September, entitled, 'Nasir Khusraw: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.' The event, one of the largest academic conferences held in Badakhshan, attracted 75 international presenters and drew

an audience of more than 400 participants. The conference was organised in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Aga Khan Development Network and Khorog State University, and focussed on three main themes:

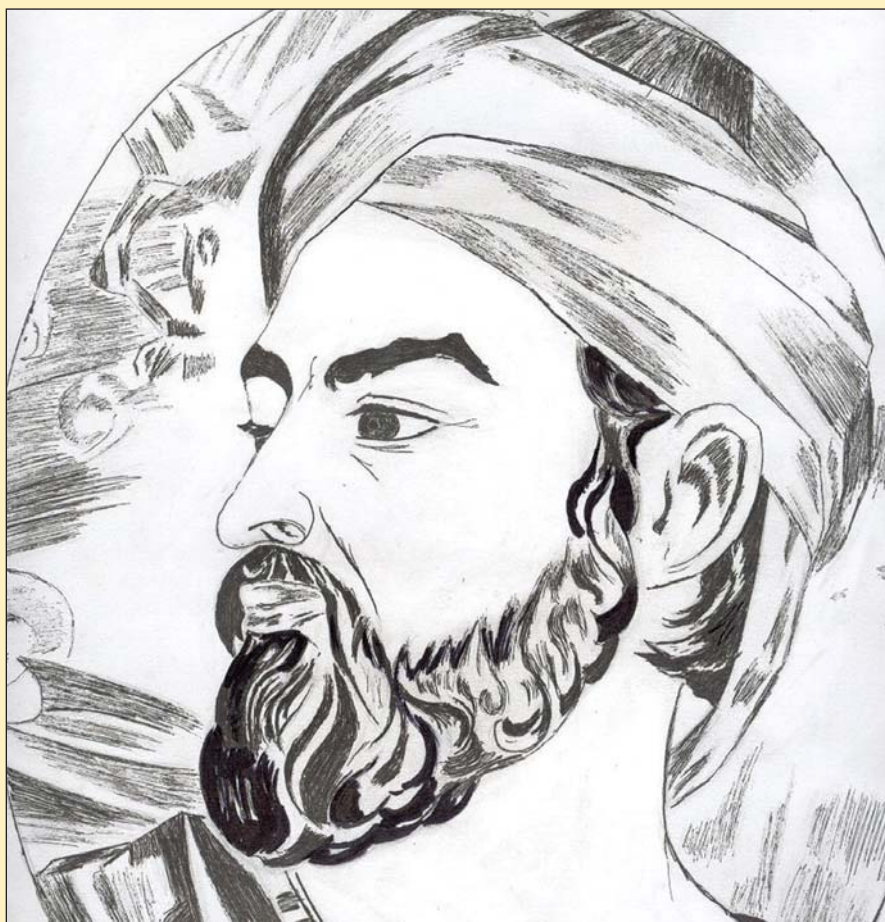
(a) the significance of Hakeem Nasir Khusraw's life, thought and work; (b) the tradition of belief, folklore, oral or written poetry, music and ritual attributed to Hakeem Nasir Khusraw as he is represented in the living tradition of Persian-speaking communities; and (c) the socio-political, cultural, religious and ethical issues arising from the contact of this tradition with the forces of modernity in the contemporary post-communist world.

In addition to the conference, the Institute also supported the publication of three works in Tajik-Cyrillic: Nozir Arabzoda's *The World of Ideas and Reflections of Nasir Khusraw*, the third volume of a series of Hakeem Nasir Khusraw's philosophical essays; and Alice Hunsberger's *Nasir Khusraw, The Ruby of Badakhshan*. Beyond this, the Institute was also



involved in the production of an ethnographic concert, showcasing the artistic and cultural expressions of Badakhshani life and a play produced by the Khorog State Theatre. An award ceremony recognising the winners of an artistic and academic competition among the high school students of Badakhshan, commemorating the larger vision and ethics of Hakeem Nasir Khusraw, was also sponsored by the Institute.

The IIS-sponsored scholars, who represented 13 countries, also presented at an international conference in Dushanbe and were actively involved in other government-sponsored events, which included the unveiling of two white-marble statues of Hakeem Nasir Khusraw at Porshinev and Qobadiyan and the opening of a Nasir Khusraw Museum at Porshinev. A complete set of IIS publications were presented by the Institute to the newly-opened museum.



*Kyrgyz born Nurmuhammed Abdalimov from Murgab won first prize for this drawing*

*Participants at the conference in Dushanbe*





It is entirely appropriate that the Centre for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia (CGIE) should be situated at the foothills of the majestic Alburz mountain range, north of Tehran: for the task in hand is indeed colossal. The Persian encyclopaedia of Islam, *Da'irat al-Ma'arif-i Buzurg-i Islami*, is an ambitious work in progress. It is about to publish its 12th volume - and it has only just reached the letter 'B' (*ba*). This project - which was initiated two decades ago - is scheduled for completion in approximately 15 years; a total of 40 volumes are planned. The unique nature of this encyclopaedia does not lie only in its sheer size, however, but also in its comprehensiveness in respect of the Islamic tradition as a whole. Unlike existing encyclopaedias of Islam in the West - which are often written on the basis of persisting Orientalist premises, adopting in large part an Arabo-Sunni view of Islam, and thus neglecting various dimensions of Shi'i Islam, to a greater or lesser extent - the present encyclopaedia is written to present a more balanced view of Islam.

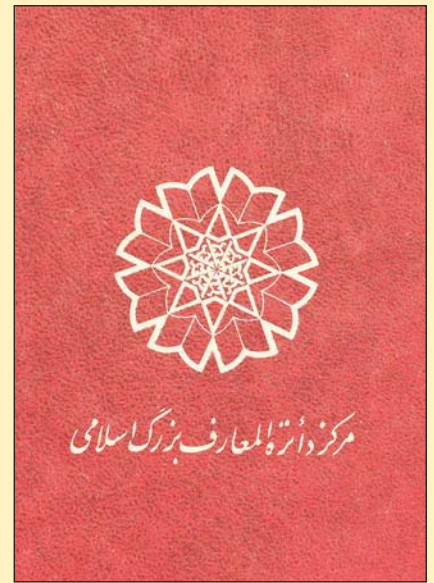
The driving force behind this enterprise is Mr Kazem Musawi Bojnurdi, the Director of the CGIE and also Director of the Iranian National Library. Mr Bojnurdi has stressed academic excellence, combined with respect for Islam and the need to give proper coverage to themes and personalities from within both its Sunni and Shi'i interpretations. Academic

impartiality is strictly upheld, and the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia cannot be dismissed as merely a 'Shi'i/Persian' publication; Shi'ism is presented, but not propagated.

This encyclopaedia is set to become the single most comprehensive source on Islam. It is thus a privilege that The Institute of Ismaili Studies was invited to collaborate with the CGIE in the project underway: the production of an English edition of the encyclopaedia. This new edition will be an abridged version of the original, focusing upon the most important entries, adding entries deemed necessary for the English version, editing existing entries, and updating bibliographies.

In London, the project is under the overall supervision of Dr Farhad Daftary. The new unit has a team of translators and editors, coordinated academically by Dr Reza Shah-Kazemi and administratively by Dr Jalal Badakhchani. In addition, an IIS office has been established in the CGIE in Tehran, with Mr Shahram Khodaverdian acting as Liaison Officer, under the supervision of Dr Ahmad Paketchy, the Head of the English Translation Unit at CGIE.

At present, work has begun on the first volume, which will constitute a selection of edited entries from the Persian volumes produced under the Arabic letters *alif* and *'ayn*, as these will appear under the English letter 'A'. The first volume is scheduled for publication in 2005, with one volume per year being published thereafter; altogether, there may be approximately 15 volumes in the English edition. After evaluating the first set of translations of the entries, it has become clear that the most challenging task for this project lies in the editing of the translations, which is much more demanding than in the case of a conventional encyclopaedia project, where the editor simply tidies up the entry which is



*The Great Islamic Encyclopaedia*

otherwise completely reliable, being written by an expert on the subject in question. The editors have the task of ensuring that concepts and terms are translated according to the terminology appropriate to the discipline in question, a formidable task when one takes into account that these disciplines cover the entire spectrum of Islamic thought and civilisation, from theology to history, mysticism to science, art to philosophy.

The accomplishment of this task will obviously require the collaboration of a set of experts drawn from a range of disciplines, who will be consulted at different stages of the editing process. At the initial stages of this process, the excellent literary and human resources at the CGIE in Tehran are of immense value.

This is an ambitious project and is set to be one of the most important for the IIS in the coming years. The challenge is formidable, but the fruits of the labour should be both sweet and enduring: the most reliable, comprehensive and balanced encyclopaedia of Islam in the English language.

*Encyclopaedia Unit, Department of Academic Research and Publications*





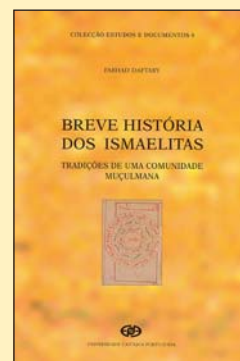
## IIS launches the Qur'anic Studies Series of Publications

The Holy Qur'an is central to all Muslim discourse. Historically, its dissemination has included both recording the text in writing and the art of recitation, as well as a rich tradition of scholarship in all fields of enquiry, theological, legal, philosophical and mystical. This series, published by Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, explores the genesis of different approaches to the Holy Qur'an and the resulting plurality of interpretations and meanings, both historically and in the contemporary world. It also investigates the influence of the Holy Qur'an on the everyday lives of Muslims today, both individually

and as part of a wider society. In this way, the books in this series seek to combine traditional scholarship with innovative approaches, providing a focus for the field and contributing towards its development. The first three titles in this series are expected to be published this year:

- ***Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'an***  
Edited by Suha Taji-Farouki
- ***Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Indonesia***  
by Abdullah Saeed
- ***An Anthology of Qur'anic Commentaries, Volume 1: On the Nature of the Divine***  
Edited by Feras Hamza and Sajjad Rizvi

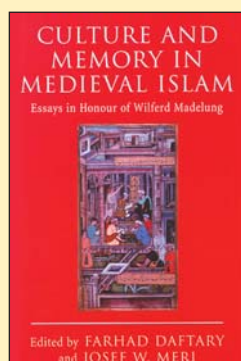
## 'A Short History of the Ismailis' now available in ten languages



As part of the Institute's efforts to provide an accessible resource for Ismaili history, particularly for the Ismaili *jamat*, translations and transcriptions

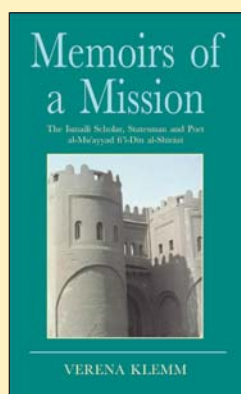
of Farhad Daftary's *A Short History of the Ismailis* are now available in ten languages including Arabic, English, French, German, Hungarian, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Tajik Cyrillic and Urdu. The Gujarati translation is scheduled to be published later this year.

## New Publications



### ***Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung*** Edited by Farhad Daftary and Josef W. Meri

This collection of essays on the theme of culture and memory in medieval Islam is in honour of the eminent scholar of Islamic studies, Wilferd Madelung, who was, for twenty years, Laudian Professor of Arabic at the University of Oxford and is currently affiliated with The Institute of Ismaili Studies. Contributions address broad-ranging themes relating to memory, memorisation, memorialising or commemorating in a variety of historical, legal, literary and architectural contexts, including lists and maps as memory aids; the transmission of knowledge and traditions from medieval to early modern times; the application of medieval notions of law and statecraft; and the commemoration of individuals, civilisations and dynasties in historical and literary works, on coinage and in monumental forms. A number of contributions specifically address aspects of Shi'i and Ismaili thought and Fatimid history.



### ***Memoirs of a Mission: The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet, al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Din al-Shirazi*** By Verena Klemm

Al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Din al-Shirazi was one of the most distinguished and gifted personalities of the Ismaili *da'wa* under the Fatimids. In the apex of Fatimid power during the 5th/11th century, he spent most of his life serving the caliph-*imam* al-Mustansir bi'llah as a *da'i* in various capacities. The aim of this work is not to investigate the theological and intellectual dimensions of al-Mu'ayyad's writings, nor to delve deeply into his poetry. Rather, the intention is to offer what is known about him, as well as the circumstances surrounding his eventful and active life, to a broader public interested in the history of the Ismailis and in the organisation, strategies and ideals of the Fatimid *da'wa*.

## Forthcoming Publications

The Institute continues to promote original, informative and mature thought, scholarship and analysis of relevant issues through its publications. The following are anticipated to be published in the near future:

- ***Ismaili Literature: A Bibliography of Sources and Studies***  
by Farhad Daftary
- ***Muslim Ethics: Emerging Vistas***  
by Aryn B. Sajoo
- ***Crossing the Threshold: Understanding Religious Identities in South Asia***  
by Dominique-Sila Khan
- ***The Paradise of Submission***  
A new Persian edition and English translation of Nasir al-Din Tusi's *Rawda-yi Taslim* by S. J. Badakhchani
- ***The Eagle's Nest: Ismaili Castles in Iran and Syria***  
by Peter Willey

Further information and synopses of these publications will be posted on our website ([www.iis.ac.uk](http://www.iis.ac.uk)) closer to the publication date.



*Dr Zaki Badawi, Founder-Principal of the Muslim College in London, and Professor Azim Nanji at the Summer Programme on Islam*



*Leadership Orientation Programme, Toronto, Canada*



*Professor Ali Asani of Harvard University with participants at the Summer Programme on Islam*

*Summer Programme participants and IIS staff*



Since its creation, the Institute has been involved with a number of activities that have a direct bearing on the needs of the Ismaili *jamats* worldwide. In 2003, the IIS organised two Leadership Orientation Programmes in North America and the IIS Summer Programme on Islam in the United Kingdom.

The Leadership Orientation Programme is a two-day programme which seeks to explore topics relevant to the senior leadership of the *jamat*. In 2003, sessions were held in Toronto (Canada) in May and in Houston (USA) in October. Subjects covered included an orientation to Islam and the Qur'an, and contemporary challenges facing the Ismaili *jamat*. Each session highlighted specific issues and subjects of relevance to the North American *jamati* leadership, and efforts were made to provide an enabling methodology for addressing emerging issues. Plans are underway to hold Leadership Orientation Programmes in other parts of the world as well.

Following the success of the 2002 Summer Programme held at Emory University (USA), a similar programme was held in August 2003 at Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge (United Kingdom). This time the

programme was aimed at the global *jamat* and for a relatively more mature audience, with participants required to have a minimum of a first degree and a good command of the English language. The course attracted over a hundred applications of which 32, from ten different countries, were accepted.

The content of the programme was based around three modules: a social, cultural and civilisational introduction to Islam; situating the Ismaili *tariqah* within the context of Muslim history, thought and development; and exploring Islam and modernity, including contemporary themes and issues. Each module was taught by eminent instructors from across the world, and participants were exposed to a combination of lectures, films, discussions as well as practical exercises during the intensive week-long residential programme.

The closing date for applications for The Summer Programme on Islam 2004 is Sunday 18th April 2004. Further details are available by e-mailing [outreach@iis.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@iis.ac.uk).

### *New Appointments*

**Rahim Gholami**

*Translator, Department of Academic Research and Publications*

**Helga Haack**

*Personal Assistant to the Director*

**Nancy Hynes**

*Editor, Qur'anic Studies Unit*

**Dr Toby Mayer**

*Research Associate, Qur'anic Studies Unit*

**Dr Isabel Miller**

*Editor, Department of Academic Research and Publications*

**Maryam Rezaee**

*Translator, Department of Academic Research and Publications*

**Dr Suha Taji-Farouki**

*Research Associate, Department of Academic Research and Publications*

*If you have feedback or would like to update your contact details, please email us at [rdc@iis.ac.uk](mailto:rdc@iis.ac.uk).*

*Photo credits: Aliya Allibhai, Shahed Karim, Rizwan Mawani, Gary Otte, Selina K. Ramji, Zahurali Ramji, and Alan Tabor. Published by the Department of Operations, Finance and Development. Designed by the Design and Production Unit.*