



# Devotional Expressions of South Asian Muslims

An International Conference

The Ismaili Centre, London, 16-18 November 2006

The confluence between Muslim and Indic traditions in South Asia has given rise to a rich variety of devotional, artistic and literary forms of expression from medieval times to the present day. The aim of this conference is to draw together an international array of scholars to present new research on South Asian Muslims from historical and contemporary perspectives. Speakers will explore links between devotional forms and reflect on the relationship between religious traditions and their lived expression.

The conference will bring out the plurality in the expression of Muslim belief in the Indian subcontinent and the role of this diversity in the lives of Muslims. It will foreground new approaches to the study of texts and traditions from South Asia. Finally, it will place Muslim expressions from South Asia in the wider contexts of the Muslim world.

The conference will include an evening reception on 16 November, academic discussions, an exhibition of select materials from the Institute of Ismaili Studies' Library and a tour of the Ismaili Centre. All events are to be held at the Ismaili Centre, South Kensington, London

## Programme

### Thursday, 16 November Inaugural event

8.00 pm Evening reception and welcome address by **Prof. Azim Nanji**, Director, Institute of Ismaili Studies, followed by a cultural programme

### Friday, 17 November

#### **9.30 Registration and welcome**

#### Session I: Texts in Indian Islam – interpretations and comparisons

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| 9.45-10.15         | Hussain Jasani (ITREB India) 'Issues and Prospects of Patronage of Ginanic Literature: A Fieldwork Report of a Recent Attempt in India'          |
| 10.15-10.45        | Françoise Mallison (Paris) 'Socio-religious context of the Gujarātī devotional songs of the Chiṣṭī Sampradāy of Kāyamuddīn Bāwā (eighteenth c.)' |
| 10.45-11.15        | Discussion   |
| <b>11.15-11.30</b> | <b>Tea/coffee</b>  |
| 11.30-12.00        | Zawahir Moir (London) 'Gujari Ginans of Nur Muhammad Shah, a 15 <sup>th</sup> /16 <sup>th</sup> century Saint of Gujarat'                        |
| 12.00-12.30        | Derryl Maclean (Simon Fraser University) 'Writing the Mahdi: The Devotional Literature of the Mahdaviyah Community of South Asia'                |
| 12.30-1.00         | Discussion   |
| <b>1.00-2.15</b>   | <b>Lunch at the Ismaili Centre for all speakers and registered guests</b>  |

#### Session II: Living Islam – genres of devotion in Muslim South Asia

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| 2.15-2.45         | Ali Asani (Harvard) 'Sufi Rock in Pakistan: Salman Ahmad and Junoon'                                     |
| 2.45-3.15         | Denis Matringe (Paris) 'Pakistani Resistance Poetry in Sufi Style: Kafiām (1965), by Najm Husain Sayyid' |
| 3.15-3.45         | Discussion   |
| <b>3.45 -4.00</b> | <b>Tea/coffee</b>  |



- 4.00-4.30 Nile Green (Manchester) 'Ministers, Masons and Madmen: The Cosmopolitan Process in Princely Hyderabad'
- 4.30-5.00 Syed Akbar Hyder (University of Texas, Austin) 'Josh Malihabadi and the invention of the new Urdu marsiya'
- 7.30 Dinner** at a restaurant for speakers and organisers

Saturday, 18 November

**9.30 Start of session**

*Session III: Immanent frontiers: Muslim expressions in a hybrid world*

- 9.45- 10.15 Bazat-Saifiyah Qutbuddin (Mumbai) 'Fatimid Reflections in Tayyibi Bohra Religious Culture'
- 10.15-10.45 Pyarali Keshwani (New York) 'Si Harfi and Alif Nama: Texts and Contexts'
- 10.45-11.15 Discussion
- 11.15-11.30 Tea/coffee**
- 11.30-12.00 Tony Stewart (North Carolina State University, Raleigh) 'Vaisnava Dhikr: the Tale of the Muslim Who Practiced Vaiṣṇavism in 16th century Bengal.'
- 12.00-12.30 Michel Boivin (Paris) 'The Paths of Devotion in the Sufi Centre of Jhok Sharif (Sindh)'
- 12.30-1.00 Discussion
- 1.00-1.45 **Lunch**
- 1.45-2.15 Tour of the Ismaili Centre**
- 2.45-3.30 Mehrdad Shokoohy (University of Greenwich) 'Islam in Somnath and some of the early mosques in the town' (Illustrated talk)
- 3.30-4.00 Keynote address + thanks**
- 4.00 Tea/coffee and farewell**