

IIS Update

January 2000

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The Institute of Ismaili Studies



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Message from the Director



Dear Donors
and Friends
of the Institute of
Ismaili Studies,

I would like to convey, on behalf of all the governors, management, faculty, staff and students at the Institute, our warmest good wishes and sincere appreciation for your tremendous support and commitment in the past.

Several developments have taken place at the Institute during the six months since we sent our last letter to you in July of 1999. This illustrated update will inform you about various events and activities that have happened at the Institute since July. In addition to what we have highlighted, all our departments continue to actively pursue new areas of work and consolidate ongoing programmes. His Highness' significant support and guidance, and his inspiring vision for this important Imamat institution, will enable us to chart the Institute's future direction. The Institute is making steady progress in achieving several important goals: establishing itself

as a leading institution for Ismaili studies; becoming an international centre for the promotion of scholarship and learning on Islam; and, being recognised as a model for the development of academic and educational materials and human resources on Islam.

Many new faculty and staff have joined the Institute's team since July, and they bring diverse skills, talents and experiences with them, which adds considerable strength to a growing IIS team. We are confident that the Institute will be able to meet His Highness' expectations and serve the needs of the Jamat and our other constituencies, with competence and wisdom.

Once again, please accept our immense gratitude for your generosity and encouragement for the work of the Institute - with the efforts of everyone at the Institute and your support, together we can build an institution that will influence the wider conversation between faith, community and society as we enter the 21st century.

Director

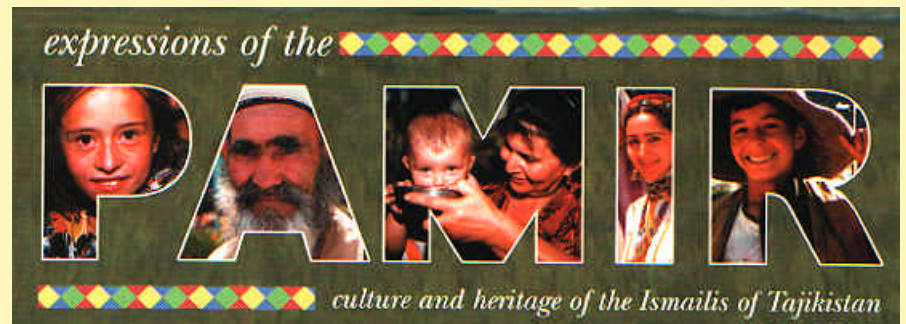


Canadian Tour of “Expressions of the Pamir” - a major success

After its successful US debut, “Expressions of the Pamir: Culture and Heritage of the Ismaili Muslims of Tajikistan” toured five cities in Canada (Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver) during autumn 1999.

This multi-dimensional programme presented the rich culture and heritage of the region and was attended by thousands of Jamati members and their friends in Canada and the United States.

The programme, developed by the Institute’s Project Tajikistan Department, consisted of five self-contained, inter-related multimedia components illustrating different facets of Tajik Ismaili culture. These included an exhibition of historical and



cultural artefacts, musical and dance performances, a colourful sixty- page brochure and an activity book (which includes quizzes and games) for the younger members of the Jamat. The programme enabled the audience to develop a better appreciation of the culture and heritage of the Jamat in Tajikistan, and in particular Gorno-Badakhshan, as well as the diversity of the Muslim Ummah.

Speaking at the Vancouver event, Ruth Phillips, Director of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia praised the concept of using this

multi-dimensional approach. She added that the event enabled viewers to experience the culture and heritage of this particular community, and commended “Expressions of the Pamir” as a role model for other museums to emulate.

“Expressions of the Pamir” is an excellent example of inter-institutional partnership. The Institute would like to sincerely thank the US and Canadian National and Regional Councils, ITREBs, sponsors of the event, the Institute’s national and regional convenors, and the thousands of volunteers whose hard work and dedication made this an event for all to remember.

The brochure and the children’s activity book were produced and designed, as a result of the collaboration between the Institute’s Department of Education and the Department of Academic Research and Publications. The Institute continues to be actively involved in research on the societies of Tajikistan and its intellectual and cultural traditions.

The programme will be touring the United Kingdom in the latter half of this year.



IIS Welcomes New Students

Class of 2002 students were introduced to the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities and the Institute of Ismaili Studies during Orientation Week at the end of September 1999.

The Institute welcomed a class of thirteen students of which six students are from Tajikistan and two are from Iran in addition to students from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Kenya and Canada. Six of these graduate students are amongst the first to have been trained in English through the Institute's one year intensive English Language programmes in Khorog and Tehran. A total of twenty-six students are currently enrolled in the Graduate Programme.

At the "Welcome Lunch", Professor Azim Nanji (Director) and Dr Aziz Esmail (Governor) welcomed students and described



Faculty and Students at the Welcome Lunch organised for new students at the Institute of Ismaili Studies.

the unique character of the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities which covers a broad range of subjects such as history, anthropology, political science and philosophy.

Miriam Ali De Unzaga, a third year student from Spain commented on the lunch as

"a very good opportunity for staff of the Institute to share the purpose of the Graduate Programme and its relevance for the future of Islamic Studies."

Visiting Fellowship Programme

The Department of Academic Research and Publications inaugurated the Visiting Fellowship Programme in 1998. Visiting fellows are selected each year by the Institute to undertake work on specific projects and to publish their findings in book form. In addition to their contribution to research activity, they bring to the Institute a wealth of new ideas and perspectives.

The four visiting fellows during the academic year 1999-2000 are:

Dr Suha Taji-Farouki (Ph.D in Middle Eastern Politics & Modern Islamic Studies) currently a lecturer at the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Durham. Her experience over the past five years includes her role as Advisor to British Law firms on UK Asylum cases, European Court of Human rights cases (UK) and her current

role as Senior Associate for Hebrew & Jewish Studies (UK). Suha is currently working on a project on the Qu'ran and contemporary methods of Islamic thought for the Institute.

Dr Alice C Hunsberger, (Ph.D in Persian, Arabic and Islamic Studies, Columbia University) was previously Adjunct Assistant Professor in Religion and Philosophy at Hunter College, New York where she twice received the College President's award for excellence in teaching. She has presented papers at numerous academic conferences. In addition to her academic career, Alice has worked as a promoter of non-profit organisations, including Amnesty International for the past ten years. Currently, Alice is working on Nasir Khusraw's biography; "Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan", which will be published by the Institute this year.

Dr Arzina R Lalani, (Ph.D in Islamic Studies, University of Edinburgh) has lectured at both

the Institute and Cambridge University. Her special areas of interest include Hadith and Qu'ran as well as the genesis of Shi' thought and the role of Imam Muhammad al Baqir in early Islam. Currently, she is working on a critical edition and translation of a text from the Fatimid times: Ithbat al-Imama of Ahmad b.Ibrahim al Naysaburi - a study on Imam Muhammad al Baqir's role in the development of Shi'i thought.

Dr Shainool Jiwa, (Ph.D in Islamic Studies, University of Edinburgh) is a graduate of the Institute of Ismaili Studies and has served on ITREB-UK for six years. She is a professional counsellor, a commissioner for the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland and an examiner for the International Baccalaureate on the History of the Muslim World. During her fellowship, she will be writing a book on the life and times of the Fatimid Imam al- 'Aziz billah and will also provide a counselling service to the Institute's Graduate students.

International Workshop for Waezeen at the Institute

In November 1999, the IIS-ITREB Liaison Department organised a seven-day workshop in London for Waezeen from around the world. The diversity of the Jamat was reflected in the composition of the group, which included Waezeen from Australia, Canada, India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The main objective was to familiarise Waezeen with IIS perspectives and to stimulate a thinking process about issues being addressed by the Institute. The proceedings included a number of lectures and presentations on subjects given by eminent scholars

and specialists from both within and outside the Institute such as Professors Mohamed Arkoun, Ali Asani, Azim Nanji, and Annemarie Schimmel, and Dr. Farhad Daftary. Aitmadi Shafik Sachedina, the Head of the Department of Jamati Institutions at Aiglemont, Dr. Karim Janmohamed, Head of the IIS-ITREB Liaison Department at the IIS, and Rai Mohamed Keshavjee, the ITREB Co-ordinator also addressed the delegates.

Subjects included His Highness' vision for the IIS and ITREBs; the historiography of Ismailis, with particular reference to misconceptions about the community; early Shi'i thought; the history of the Fatimids; perception of modernity in Islamic contexts; Sufism; Hazrat Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah's thought; devotional literature

of South Asia; Islamic law; vernacular Islam; Ismaili poetry; the writings of Nasir Khusraw; Ismailis of Tajikistan; and the concepts of *din* and *duniya*.

Azim Jamal, a delegate from Vancouver, described the organisation of the programme as "exceptionally good..." and said the workshop would inspire him to give even more to the Jamat, due to the tools of thinking and knowledge that he had gained from the programme. He also spoke about the interaction between Waezeen from across the world which, he believed, resulted in a "powerful learning experience" for all. Ms. Savree Ilnazarova of Tajikistan commented: "...this was an opportunity for me to learn about traditions of Jamats from different parts of the world!"



Delegates with Rai Mohamed Keshavjee (seated, third from the left), Professor Azim Nanji and Dr. Karim Janmohamed.

Department for Resource Development & Communications

The recently established Department for Resource Development & Communications is developing and implementing the Institute's global communications strategy and fundraising plan. The Department is also responsible for all aspects of donor relations and establishing an effective donor records system.

The Head of Department, Zahir Janmohamed, has over twenty-five years of public and private sector management experience. His previous role before joining the Institute was Director of Human Resources at Clearnet Communications in Canada. Zahir was also the Director of Human Resources at the Aga Khan University / Aga Khan University Hospital for six years. Recently, Zahir was President of the Council for Ontario and previously a Jamati Mukhi, National Council and Ontario

Council member for youth and sports, and a board member for AKES in Pakistan.

Shahira Karmali-Kassam, Communications Officer, is a marketing and promotions specialist. She has a BA (Hons) Economics and a Postgraduate CIM (Chartered Institute of Marketing) Diploma in Marketing. Previously, she worked in direct mail and business-to-business marketing for a management information systems company, and has been involved in a number of voluntary roles in the UK Jamat.

The Department of Education's latest Ta'lim Translations

Ta'lim, the Institute's international curriculum in religious and cultural education for Ismaili children, is designed to meet the needs of students, parents and teachers living in different countries and cultures. The curriculum is being produced in eight languages: Arabic, English, French, Gujarati, Persian, Portugese, Tajiki and Urdu. During 1999, translations of the following levels were printed:

- Primary Three in Gujarati and Urdu - Primary Four in these languages will be printed in early 2000
- Primary Five in French
- Primary Six in Tajiki

Translations into Tajiki for the full set of Ta'lim primary materials were completed last year (English being the other complete set of primary materials). Thousands of children in Tajikistan have had access to the full Ta'lim curriculum. In the valleys of Gorno Badakshan, Ta'lim materials are being used by Institute-trained teachers to educate pupils in the faith, history and cultures of Muslim peoples including the worldwide Ismaili community.



Gujarati and Urdu translations of Primary Three just printed

New IIS Publications

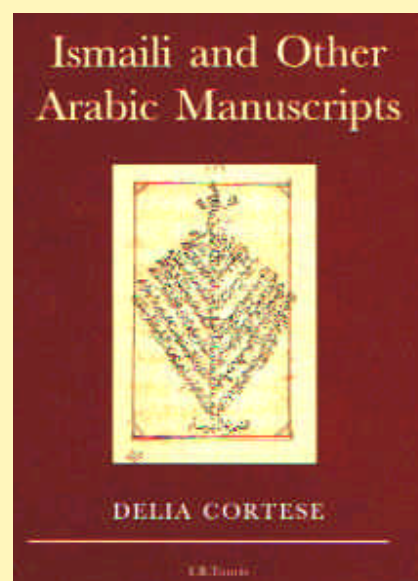
Ismaili and Other Arabic Manuscripts: A descriptive catalogue of manuscripts in the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies by Delia Cortese.

The Institute has been a main point of reference for those interested in carrying out research on all aspects of Ismaili history and thought. This work is a third volume supplement to Adam Gacek's two volume Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, published in 1984-1985. Over the years, the Institute Library has continued to expand its manuscript collections through individual and institutional donations.

The Institute's worldwide recognition, as a specialised centre of learning, is in part due to primary and secondary source materials in the library. This catalogue includes 188

Arabic manuscripts divided into Ismaili and non-Ismaili categories.

The IIS collection is remarkable because of the breadth of subjects and geographic spread of its collections, including manuscripts from Central Asia. The Institute is particularly proud to own a small number of previously unknown Ismaili works from Syria, which it is hoped will encourage study and understanding of the heritage of Syrian Ismailism. Among noteworthy manuscripts in this catalogue are an illuminated sixteenth century copy of the Rasa'il of the Ikhwan al Safa', the Kitab al-Tawarikh wa'l-milal by Muhammad b. Muhammad al Ghazzali and a fourteenth century copy of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's Sharh al-Isharat.



Front cover jacket illustration: a page from the Diwan of al-Mu'ayyad fi'd-Din al-Shirazi, the renowned Ismaili da'i and scholar, from the manuscript collections of the Institute's Library.

Intellectual Traditions In Islam, edited by Dr Farhad Daftary, Head of the Department of Academic Research and Publications

Intellectual Traditions in Islam is a collection of papers which originated from an international seminar organised by The Institute of Ismaili Studies in 1994 at Churchill College, University of Cambridge. The essays in this volume explore the pivotal role of the intellect in the legal, theological, philosophical and mystical traditions of Islam and its continuing relevance in the efforts of the contemporary Muslim world to address the challenges of modernity.

This volume represents a collaboration undertaken by leading scholars, including Mohammed Arkoun (Sorbonne and IIS), the late Norman Calder (University of Manchester), the late John Cooper (University of Cambridge), Farhad Daftary (IIS), Aziz Esmail (IIS Governor), Alice Hunsberger (visiting fellow at IIS), Hugh Kennedy (University of St Andrews), Oliver Leaman (Liverpool John Moores University), Muhsin Mahdi (Harvard University), Abdulaziz Sachedina (University of Virginia) and Annemarie Schimmel (Harvard University and Honorary Professor at the University of Bonn).

By demonstrating the extent to which intellectual enquiries have played a key role in the formation of Islamic civilizations, it is hoped that this book will make a major contribution towards a better understanding of the world of Islam.

Since July, when we last wrote to you, several people have joined the IIS team. Our new team members bring diverse skills and backgrounds to the Institute:

Shiraz Kabani - Executive Officer

Shiraz's role is to support the Director and Board of Governors with the overall management of the Institute's operations, which includes overseeing the development of the Institute's website. Shiraz's academic background is in engineering and management and he brings eleven years of professional experience as the Executive Officer for ITREB USA, where he was involved in the conceptualisation of various international projects for the Jamat. Shiraz was recently the Managing Director of an IT Consultancy firm in Houston.

Dev Ravindraa - Finance Manager

Dev has a financial accounts background and is an Associate Chartered Management Accountant. He worked for a manufacturing company before joining the Institute.

Salma Baig

Education Officer

Marie Birch

Book Keeper

Catherine Dove

PA to the Director

Arif A Jamal

Research Fellow

Shabnam Khan-Ali

Programme Officer

Francesca Piralla

Administrative Officer

Iffat Salaam

Intern, Project Tajikistan

Suzanne Young

Research Assistant

The Institute's faculty members and students have attended and presented papers at a number of conferences and made presentations to Jamats around the world, during the last six months of 1999. Here are just a few examples of the Institute's presence in the field of scholarship in Islamic Studies and Humanities:

Professor Azim Nanji attended the American Academy of Religion's annual meeting in Boston, where he had been invited to attend Board Meetings of the American Society for the Study of Religion and the Journal for Religious and Theological Education. He also lectured at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies), University of London and Oxford University.

Dr Farhad Daftary visited Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Zanzibar in October and made presentations on "Ismailis and their Intellectual Contributions" and "Ismaili History: Myths and Realities" to several Jamati audiences.

Dr Karim Janmohamed visited Western Canada during September 1999 and made presentations in English and Gujarati on "Hazrat Imam Sultan Muhammed Shah: An Eminent Muslim Thinker."

Dr Sergei Andreyev attended the "International Conference on Iranian Studies" in Paris in September 1999.

Rizwan Mawani, Institute student; Papers Presented at International Conferences: "Refiguring the Jinn in Yemeni Mythologies" at the EURAMES conference in Ghent (European Association for Middle Eastern Studies, September 1999) and "From Oral Culture to Digital Culture: Virtualising Yemeni Space" at the MESA Conference in Washington DC. (Middle Eastern Studies Association of North America, November 1999)

Miriam Ali de Unzaga, Institute student; her field project "The Language of Silence in the Moroccan Tribal Carpets" was showcased at a seminar entitled "The Arts, Religion and the Shaping of Cultures" at the Salzburg Seminar Centre.

The Mulla Sadra World Congress, Tehran, was organized by the Sadra Philosophy Research Institute, an initiative of the Iranian government. The conference was attended by over one hundred and fifty academics from around the world. **Professor Wilfred Madelung**, **Dr Faqir Muhammad Hunzai** and **Toby Mayer**, presented papers.

In December 1999, **Professor Nanji**, **Dr Daftary** and **Dr Haldane** were invited to the book launch of "**L'Egypte Fatimide son art et son histoire**" (a collaboration between the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, AKTC and Presses de l'Universite de Paris- Sorbonne) at the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris. **His Highness, Prince Ameen** (Director of AKTC) and **Prince Hussain** (who has specific responsibilities for AKTC's programmes at His Highness' Secretariat) were present at the launch.

His Highness expressed the hope that more initiatives such as well researched publications, exhibitions and scholarly exchanges by academic and cultural institutions in the West "could deepen public understanding of Islam and its intellectual and artistic heritage."