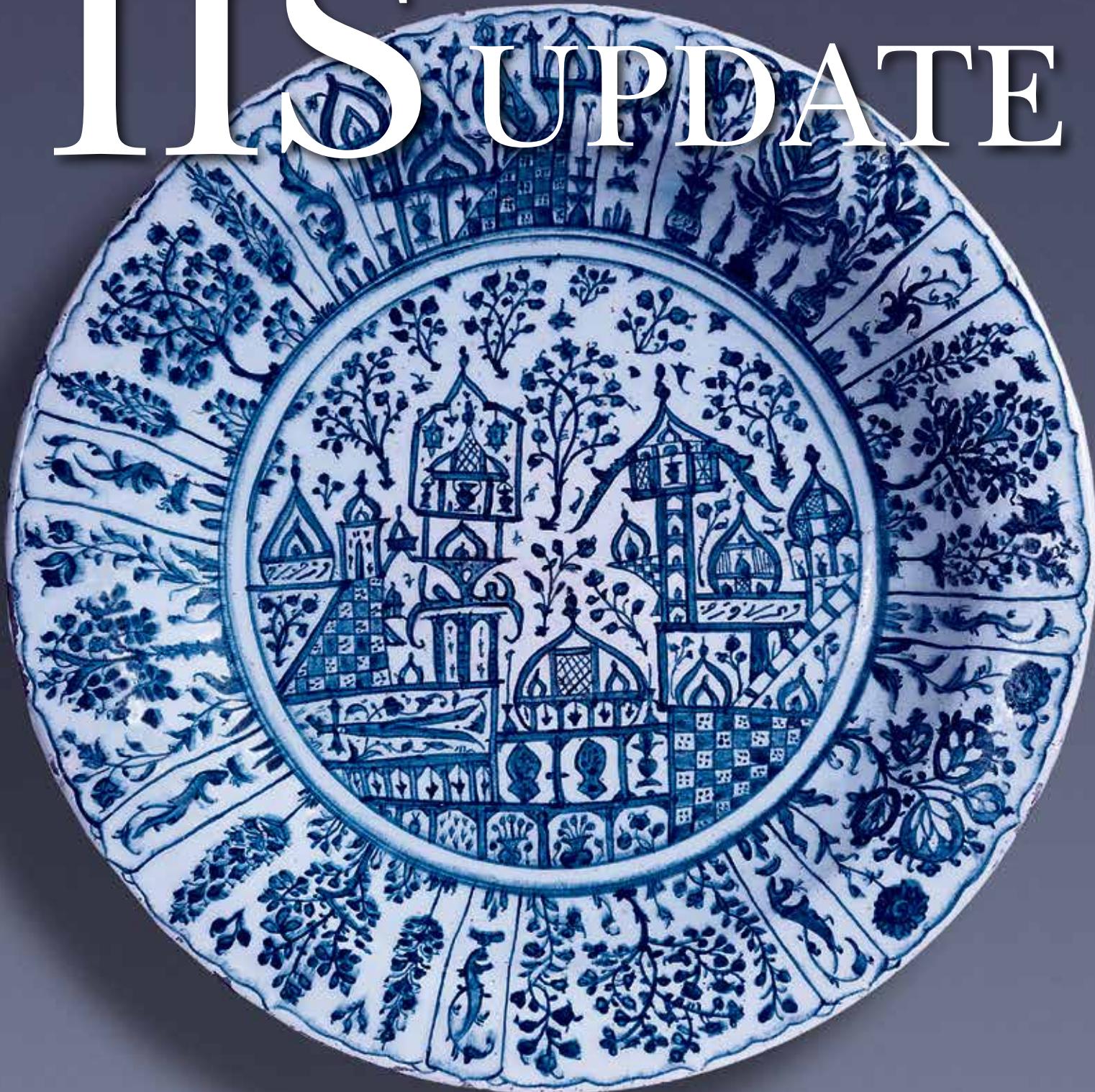




# IIS UPDATE



Learn about  
The Plurality of  
Shi'i Traditions

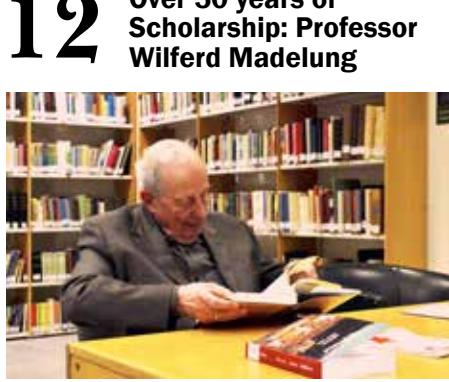
Celebrating  
Over 50 Years  
of Scholarship -  
Professor Madelung

Read about  
The Secondary  
Curriculum

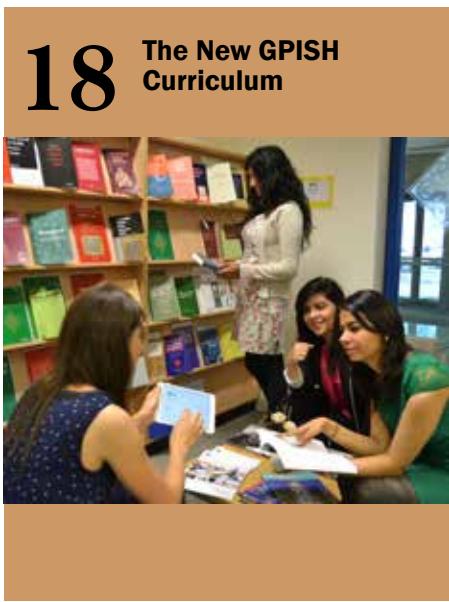
# Contents



**3**  
Message from the  
Co-Director



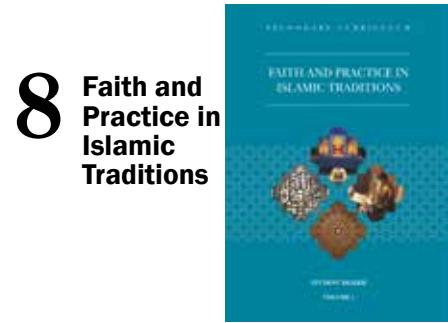
**12** Over 50 years of  
Scholarship: Professor  
Wilferd Madelung



**18** The New GPISH  
Curriculum



**4**  
The Shi'i World: Pathways in  
Tradition and Modernity



**8** Faith and  
Practice in  
Islamic  
Traditions



**22** New Publications



## Cover

### Charger Ceramic Plate - Egypt or Syria, 1600s, Fritware, underglaze-painted.

This plate owes its shape, range of colour and general organisation to Chinese ceramics, with the central iconography belonging to the Islamic world. The plate contains two religious symbols: the stylised representation of Prophet Muhammad's two sandals (*na'lāyīn*) and the representation of *Dhu al-faqar*, the legendary two-pointed sword that belonged to the Prophet and was later given to Imam 'Ali, after the Battle of Uhud. A minbar is also recognisable above the representation of *Dhu al-faqar*. Two standards and a number of suspended lamps also confirm the sacred nature of the place.  
© The Aga Khan Museum.

To share your feedback or to update your contact details, please email [communications@iis.ac.uk](mailto:communications@iis.ac.uk)

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Pernille Klemp, Mindaugas Orlauskas, Shaheena Ormerod-Sachedina, Shamim Salaam, The Aga Khan Museum and The David Collection, Copenhagen.

## CREDITS

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Dr Omar Ali-de-Unzaga, Dr Farhad Daftary, Dr Elizabeth Key Fowden, Caroline Gomez, Nazmin Halani, Dr Laila Halani, Russell Harris, Sarah Ismail, Dr Shainool Jiwa, Shiraz Kabani, Shahira Karmali-Kassam, Julia Kolb, Zehra Lalji, Aliya Lavji, Dr Tullio Lobetti, Professor Wilferd Madelung, Dr Gurdonfarid Miskinzoda, Alnoor Nathani, Mindaugas Orlauskas, Shaheena Ormerod-Sachedina, Dr Amyn B. Sajoo, Naushin Shariff, Dr Shiraz Thobani and Tara Woolnough.

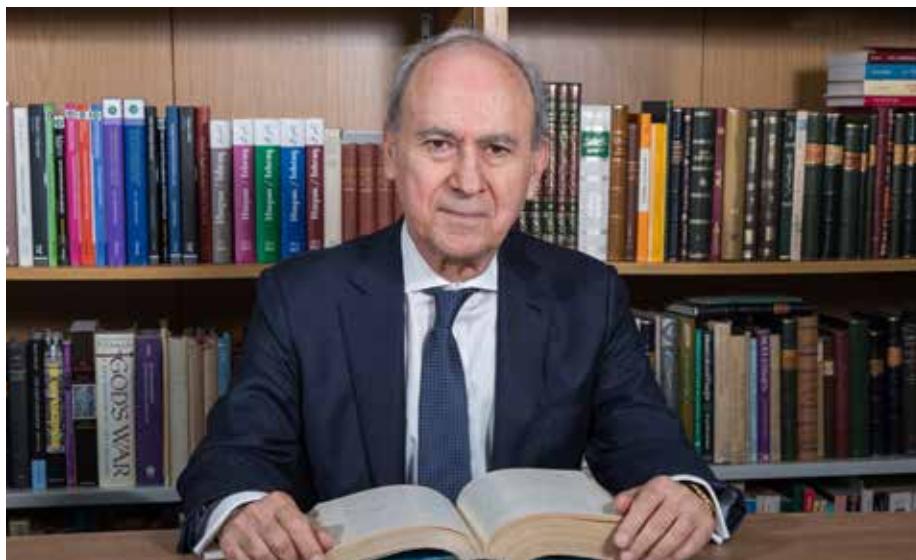
Designed by: Mindaugas Orlauskas | Published by: Department of Communications and Development, The Institute of Ismaili Studies.

The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 210 Euston Road, London NW1 2DA, United Kingdom | ☎ 020 7756 2700 | ✉ [communications@iis.ac.uk](mailto:communications@iis.ac.uk) | [www.iis.ac.uk](http://www.iis.ac.uk)

The contents of this newsletter are fully protected by copyright and may not be reproduced without permission.

© The Institute of Ismaili Studies

# Message from the Co-Director



*Dr Farhad Daftary*

In 2015, the Institute continued to build on its scholarship and made good progress in developing educational materials and learning programmes for the global Ismaili community. Some of these endeavours included the launch of the first International Training Programme in Farsi, with a cohort of twenty-two individuals from Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan. To promote further learning, the IIS website was re-launched with its brand new learning centre that makes educational and accessible resources available, particularly for non-specialist users who want to learn more about Islam as a civilisation, and Shi'a and Ismaili traditions in particular. At the end of the year, we also published the Secondary Curriculum module entitled *Faith and Practice in Islamic Traditions – Volume 1*, which seeks to examine the role of faith and religious practices in a faith community, in relation to the individual believer's

search for ultimate meaning. These are just some of the distinctive ways in which the Institute has been working to further its reach and help build local capacity and educational resources for the community globally, whilst working closely with ITREBs. Further endeavours that showcase the *Geographical Reach of the IIS in 2015* can also be viewed on pp.16-17 of this newsletter.

We have continued to strengthen and develop our existing postgraduate programmes, STEP and GPISH. In embracing today's evolving ideas and ways of learning, a new GPISH curriculum was launched, seeking to retain its characteristic of encouraging a broad-based approach in a cutting-edge and innovative manner.

I also had the privilege to meet with members of the Ismaili and broader Muslim communities as well as eminent scholars in the field

when we launched the Shi'i Heritage Series of publications in North America. It was heartening to see such a great level of interest in the Shi'i Heritage Series and in the wider academic work of the Institute. I am also delighted to announce the publication of the fourth volume in the Muslim Heritage Series – *The Shi'i World: Pathways in Tradition and Modernity*. In keeping with the Institute's approach, this publication is informed by the plurality of communities of interpretations in Islam, as well as their roots in both modernity and tradition.

I am very pleased that in this issue of the *IIS Update*, we have a special feature on a dear friend, Professor Wilferd Madelung, whose scholarship spans over half a century and continues to impact the field by bringing to light otherwise overlooked primary sources from medieval Muslim communities including, Twelver Shi'is, Zaydis and Ismailis.

In 2015, we also received a number of generous donations, including legacy bequests. In these exciting times, I am honoured to express my heartfelt gratitude to friends and supporters of the IIS for their generosity, continuous support and commitment to the Institute. I invite you to remain engaged with us, as we continue to journey on the path of academic excellence and service to the global Jamat.

*Farhad Daftary*

# The Shi'i World: Pathways in Tradition and Modernity

“Constituting over 15 per cent of the global Muslim population, the Shi‘i communities include Twelver Shi‘is (Ithna‘asharis), Ismailis, Zaydis and Alawis, not counting others who have Shi‘i origins, such as the Druze, and the Turkish Alevis. In addition to their significant numbers (around 200 million), Shi‘i Muslims have, both historically and in contemporary times, played a crucial role in furthering the intellectual and cultural efflorescence of the Muslim world, adding to its richness and diversity.”

## From the introduction to *The Shi'i World*

The fourth volume in the Muslim Heritage Series, *The Shi'i World: Pathways in Tradition and Modernity* brings together contributions by distinguished and younger scholars in the field, examining the plurality of Shi‘i traditions from their early history to contemporary times. This edited volume of essays includes chapters on subjects ranging from history, intellectual and legal traditions to Iranian cinema, as well as law, literature, art and architecture, music and gender. The origins and early development of the various Shi‘i communities is explained in the chapters focusing on Prophet Muhammad, and the Imams ‘Ali and Ja‘far al-Sadiq, as well as “Governance and Pluralism under the Fatimids” and “Moral authority in the Safawid State.”

Here we interview the Managing Editor of the Muslim Heritage Series, Dr Amyn B. Sajoo, and his co-editors for this volume, Dr Farhad Daftary (Co-Director, IIS) and Dr Shainool Jiwa (Head, Constituency Studies, IIS) to learn more about the aims of the Muslim Heritage Series, as well as the hopes and aspirations for this volume.

### What is the mandate and purpose behind the Muslim Heritage Series?

**Dr Amyn B. Sajoo:** Since its launch in 2009 by the IIS, this

Series has engaged with vital themes in the civilisations of Islam — from faith and identity to ethics, spirituality, law, gender, and artistic expressions. What distinguishes our venture is not only the range of topics that it surveys, but also its accessibility to a wider audience. To recall the epigraph from Goethe in our inaugural publication, *A Companion to the Muslim World*, ‘What you have as heritage, take now as task; for thus you will make it your own’. We treat ‘tradition’ and ‘heritage’ not just as being about the past, but as an ongoing conversation

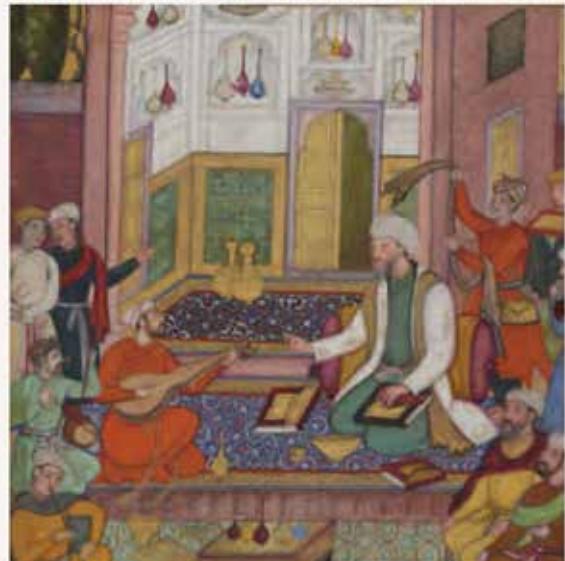
in which historical memory is part and parcel of a dynamic present.

### How does this book fit into the Muslim Heritage Series?

**Dr Farhad Daftary:** It is our aspiration that this Series of publications will provide fresh insights for scholars and students alike in the field of Islamic Studies more generally. This book - and the Series as a whole - seeks to pave the way for a more considered and informed debate beyond the academic circles.

# THE SHI'I WORLD

PATHWAYS IN TRADITION AND MODERNITY



EDITED BY FARHAD DAFTARY,  
AMYN B. SAJOO AND SHAINOOL JIWA

**Dr Amyn B. Sajoo:** As our fourth publication, *The Shi'i World* weaves together the various themes that we explored earlier in the ‘Companions’ — of ethics, culture, faith — with specific regard to Shi‘a Muslims. Why? Because mainstream writing both in the West as well as in the Middle East and Asia has tended to narrow the study of ‘Islam’ to Sunni communities of interpretation. This is rather like treating the study of Christianity as being limited only to Catholicism. *The Shi'i World* revisits the pluralist richness and diversity of interpretations that has always been the reality of what Islam is about.

**Who are the contributors to the volume and how did you select them?**

**Dr Amyn B. Sajoo:** Our contributors reflect the diversity which is the hallmark of this Series. There are male and female scholars whose expertise in matters of history, philosophy, culture, theology and sociology, with special reference to Shi‘i Islam, qualifies them to be part of this volume. And they write very well indeed for an inclusive audience.

**The volume covers a diversity of themes. How were the topics**

**selected for this volume and what is the common linking thread?**

**Dr Amyn B. Sajoo:** Well, being Shi‘a is hardly about theology alone. Yes, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib and his unique relationship with Prophet Muhammad is a defining matter, and it receives recognition as such in our opening chapters. But this legacy plays out for a whole range of different Shi‘i communities in everyday life, which includes literature, the arts, and the built environment. This is experienced variously by communities who live not only in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and South Asia, but also in Britain, Europe, Australia and North America. The Shi‘a are as diverse as Muslims at large, ranging from the

Medallion, tapestry, silk and gilded lamella of animal substrate spun around cotton; Iraq or western Iran; first half of 14th century.

This tapestry textile technique was primarily used in Mongol China in the period, where it was called *kesi*. In the centre there is an enthroned prince flanked by a Mongol prince or general and an Arab or Persian vizier. These figures, in turn, are surrounded by lotuses, animal friezes and Mongol warriors in roundels. The textile was probably made by or under the supervision of Chinese weavers in Il-Khanid Iran or Iraq.

Courtesy of The David Collection, Copenhagen/Pernille Klemp.



Twelvers and Ismailis to Zaydis and Alevis, each with a long history of how they articulated the pivotal legacy of Hazrat ‘Ali. All this social, intellectual and spiritual wealth is captured here — with some quite stunning illustrations in the bargain.

**Dr Shainool Jiwa:** The book aims to provide an insight into the multi-faceted world of Shi‘i Islam, so accordingly it showcases various aspects of Shi‘i belief, practice and tradition, including its art and architecture, music, film and literature, its laws and doctrines, as well as its history and intellectual traditions. An important aspect of the book is in the title “pathways to modernity” — and so we also see an exploration of the rich diversity of lived expressions among the

# The Shi'i World: Pathways in Tradition and Modernity

"Mainstream writing...has tended to narrow the study of 'Islam' to Sunni communities of interpretation. This is rather like treating the study of Christianity as being about Catholicism. *The Shi'i World* revisits the pluralist richness that has always been the reality of what Islam is about."

Dr Amyn B. Sajoo



Cover, silk embroidery on cotton  
Iran, Caucasus; first half of 18th century.

18th-century Caucasian embroideries were frequently dominated by a central polygon, as in this magnificent example. It was accompanied by stylised vegetal ornamentation, trees, and animals, and in fairly rare cases human figures.

Courtesy of The David Collection, Copenhagen/Pernille Klemp.

various contemporary Shi'i communities, reflecting the textured cultural rooting which they inhabit across various parts of the globe.

What other learning resources would you recommend to a non-academic interested reader

which might complement or extend their knowledge further?

**Dr Shainool Jiwa:** There is a growing interest in understanding Shi'i Islam, and a number of publications are emerging to respond to

this need. For those who are looking for an introductory article on Shi'a Islam, I would recommend the article by Professor Azim Nanji and Dr Farhad Daftary titled, "*What is Shi'a Islam?*" (available on the IIS Website), which provides a readable overview of the origins and the development of the various Shi'i communities of interpretation.

The work by Lesley Hazleton titled, *After the Prophet* (2010), offers a lucid rendering of the origins of Shi'i Islam. Looking at Shi'i Islam as a lived experience, the recently published, *People of the Prophet's House* (2015) edited by Dr Fahmida Suleman, offers a rich array of articles on its artistic and ritual expressions. For those who wish to deepen their understanding of the subject, the recently launched IIS Shi'i Heritage Series provides a growing pool of research in the field.

How do you hope this volume will contribute to a better understanding of the Shi'a world and to scholarship in the field?

**Dr Shainool Jiwa:** The necessity for developing an informed understanding of the Shi'a world is critical in our times, to offset the spectre of sectarian violence that is corrosively consuming Muslim societies across many parts of the globe. It is hoped that the range of themes covered in this accessible volume will enable



Plaque, openwork steel surrounded by a frame of six smaller, partial-gilt plaques mounted on a gilded copper plate  
Iran; mid-16th to end of 17th century.

"And of his brother, the lion of God, called Ali," reads the inscription in majestic *thuluth* calligraphy over the filigree-like tendrils. The phrase is part of an Arabic poem praising the Prophet, his daughter - Fatima, and the twelve imams who are revered by the Twelver Shiites. The plaque had embellished the door of a Shiite shrine.

Courtesy of The David Collection, Copenhagen/Pernille Klemp.

the readers to develop a more rounded understanding of the diverse expressions of Shi'a Islam, and an appreciation of their commonalities with other branches of Islam, as well as their distinctions.

#### What other areas of research will be featured in the Muslim Heritage Series in the future?

**Amyn B. Sajoo:** Our next publication will focus on the complexity of the *shari'a*—as a body of ethics, customs, and laws, with a potent spiritual dimension that is much neglected.

The *shari'a* as a journey through history and into modernity, with implications for how Muslims navigate their identity - secular and religious.

**Dr Farhad Daftary:** We will continue to publish on a range of topics of interest to general readers and scholars, especially on the origins and early history of Shi'i Islam and

its late manifestations in terms of the diversifying communities of interpretation. The Institute also intends to make the Series available in Arabic and Persian.

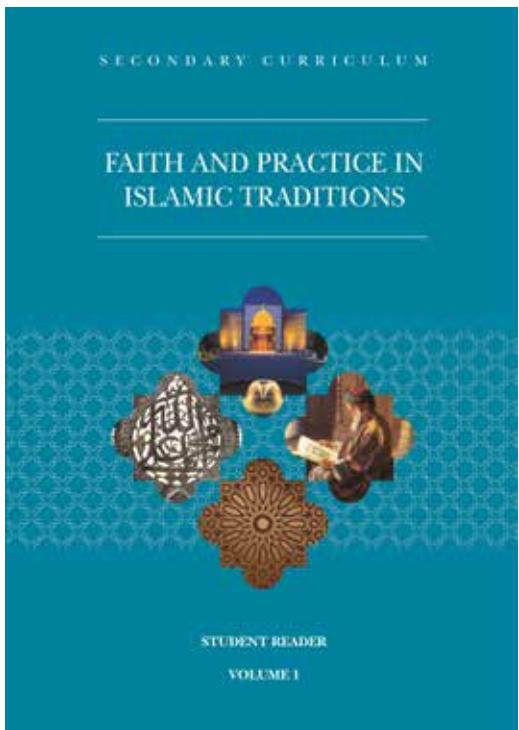


Earthenware bowl with calligraphic decoration  
Eastern Iran or Central Asia; 10th century.

The text on this bowl reads: "Verily, the heart of the generous one remains noble even though his condition might change." The Arabic script is used as a decorative element, and in combination with ornamentation, selected passages from the Qur'an, popular sayings, and similar texts became the preferred decoration on building facades, coins, and utility ware.

Courtesy of The David Collection, Copenhagen/Pernille Klemp.

# Secondary Curriculum: Faith and Practice in Islamic T



The module on *Faith and Practice in Islamic Traditions* examines the dimensions of religious meaning and practical expressions in a community of faith. These aspects are approached from a variety of perspectives by exploring the significance of faith, worship, devotion, ethics, religious practices, prayer, and spaces of worship and gathering in Muslim communities. Students are guided to reflect on these themes in the context of the Shia Ismaili Tariqah and with reference to other esoteric traditions. The module seeks, as a whole, to develop insights into the role of faith and religious practice in a faith community, and in relation to the individual believer's search for ultimate meaning.

facets of faith, including *ibadat*, divine love, and the concepts of *zahir* and *batin* in esoteric traditions of Islam.

Volume Two extends the study by focusing on the practice of the faith in Islamic traditions. Among the topics covered are the origins and development of selected rites and practices in Muslim history and their diverse forms. Also discussed in this volume are the different forms of prayer in Islam and the diversity of spaces of worship and gathering to be found in Islamic contexts.

The following is a summary of the three units presented in the first volume of the module:

## Unit 1: Understandings of faith

The unit begins by introducing the subject of faith in human culture generally, before considering its specific characteristics in religious traditions. The monotheistic beliefs of the Abrahamic communities lead into an examination of the relation between faith and the concepts of the One God and Prophethood. Students are familiarised with Qur'anic portrayals of the Prophets



Image from the Ismaili Centre, Toronto.

Taken from the *Faith and Practice* module and designed by Minaz Nanji, this complex piece is made of semi-precious stones, inlaid in a marble base. This medallion is centred on the word "Allah" in a stylised Kufic calligraphy and is accompanied by similar renderings of the names of "Muhammad" and "Ali".

©Aga Khan Development Network/Gary Otte.

# Traditions, Volume One

of God as ideal paradigms of faith, exemplifying the virtues of piety, conviction and commitment. The unit concludes with a discussion of how, in succeeding periods of Muslim history, Qur'anic notions of faith became interpreted in different ways by Muslim groups, linked to issues of religious authority and legitimacy. Foregrounded here is the relation between the concepts of *iman* and *wilaya* which received prominence in Shia thought.

## Unit 2: Principles and beliefs

Students are guided to study the fundamental principles and beliefs of *tawhid* and *nubuwwa*, common to all Muslims, and the principle of *imama* which has special significance for the Shia. Students are helped to develop a deeper understanding of beliefs related to monotheism, prophethood and divine revelation in general Islam, and the belief in the continuity of divine guidance through the institution of the Imamat in Shi'ism. Each principle is approached with reference to the Qur'an, the traditions of the Prophet and Imams, and in the context of diverse interpretations in Islamic traditions. Also explored are examples of how these principles feature in the faith and worship of Muslim communities through ethical, spiritual and devotional expressions.



*Hilya* (devotional description of Prophet Muhammad) with some relics of the Prophet. This *hilya* is written in *thuluth*, *naskh* and *ghubar* calligraphy in black ink and gold pigment. It is composed of the *basmala*, the words Allah and Muhammad, and epithets of the Prophet. Various objects that refer to the Prophet's personal effects (such as the slippers he wore) are illustrated. Also depicted are verses from the Qur'an, a poem entitled the *Qasidat al-Hilya*, and the names of the Prophet's grandsons, Hazrat Hasan and Hazrat Husayn.

©The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, Nour Foundation. Courtesy of the Khalili Family Trust.

# Secondary Curriculum: Faith and Practice in Islamic T

## Unit 3: Facets of faith

The third unit emphasises the point that faith is not an abstract concept in religious traditions, but expressed actively and practically by believers. Students learn that the performing of faith ranges from pious acts in everyday life to the whole way of living in the presence of the divine. Since *iman* takes practical forms, one of the most important ways in which believers express their faith is through the acts of worship and service embodied in the ideal of *ibadat*.

### Key themes

The following are some key themes which are reflected in both volumes of this module.

#### Faith and historical interpretations

Students are made aware that notions of faith and worship in the Qur'an, *hadiths* and other sources became subject to interpretation, historically and culturally, by different *madhhabs*, *tariqahs* and other schools of thought, depending on their particular understandings of Islam.

#### Faith and transcendence

In religious traditions, faith is generally viewed to be linked with questions of ultimate significance. Believers find meaning and purpose in their lives by situating the present in the context of the hereafter or the transcendent. What is of ultimate worth gains its value by being related to that which is eternal and absolute. Notions of faith point to the abiding hope in the possibility that ideals in human life can ultimately be realised.

#### Faith and ethics

Through an analysis of relevant passages from the Qur'an, *hadiths*, and teachings of the

Imams, students are made aware of the integral link between belief and practical action in Islam. The Qur'anic notion of living one's faith through ethical engagement with the world is explored through the life of the Prophet, the Imams, and other figures of inspiration.

#### Faith and the intellect

Students learn that the notion of personal search is an important principle in the Shia Ismaili understanding of faith. Responding to the Qur'anic invitation for believers to reflect on the signs of God, a central place is given in esoteric traditions to the exercise of the intellect as a means to discover the mysteries of creation. Faith and intellect are not viewed as opposed; rather, the use of the intellect is perceived as an act of faith itself.

#### Form and spirit

Students are made aware of the significance of both the outer (*zahiri*) and inner (*batini*) aspects of faith. They are led to understand that the observance of both is upheld as being essential to the practice of the faith in the Shia Ismaili tradition. Students also learn of the tendency towards formalism in certain Muslim contexts,

elevating the form of rituals and religious practices over their spirit.

#### Sources of inspiration

The content of the two volumes draws upon many sources to illustrate expressions of faith and practice across various historical, cultural and denominational contexts. Students are familiarised with relevant passages from the principal sources, including the Qur'an, *hadiths*, as well as teachings and speeches of the Imams, past and present. They are also acquainted with the writings and poetry of Ismaili *da'is* and *pirs*, together with related material reflecting esoteric views of other Islamic traditions.

#### Expressions of faith

The visual component of the two volumes presents expressions of faith and worship through a range of examples. Students explore the creative and devotional spirit through which Muslim architects, craftworkers, calligraphers, artists, poets and musicians expressed their ideas and experiences of faith. The visual images include exteriors and interiors of diverse spaces

# traditions, Volume One

Divine love in Islamic traditions

## Poetry on divine love

Many Sufi figures conveyed their thought in a poetic form, in which the theme of divine love featured prominently. Rabi'a al-Adawiyya and Mansur al-Hallaj composed poems which expressed their passionate love for God as the divine Beloved.

The expression of divine love in poetry reached new heights with later Sufi masters such as Ibn al-Arabi, Farid al-Din Attar, and Jalal al-Din Rumi.

These Sufi masters and many others who followed composed significant works of poetry.

They became widely popular, inspiring many generations of Muslims.

In the Shia tradition, too, poetry centred on the love of the Imams became an important part of the devotional literature, as did the religious poetry of Ismaili *da'is*, *pirs* and poets.

In this section, we will explore a few examples of themes which feature in the poetry of



divine love. These themes on the relationship between the divine and the human so captured the poets that they were moved to give creative expressions to them through their poems.

**Symbols of love**  
This image of a bird and flowers is painted on the back of a nineteenth-century Iranian mirror case.

On the left is a sculpture of a moth being drawn to the flame of a candle.

*In mystical poetry, we find frequent references to the nightingale and the rose, or the moth and the flame. Why do you think the poets were fond of using them as symbols?*

18

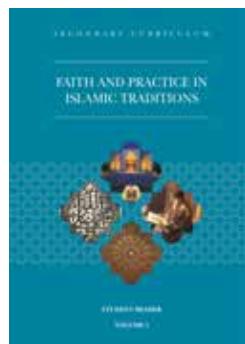
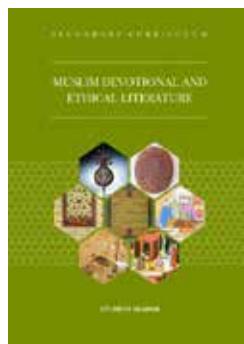
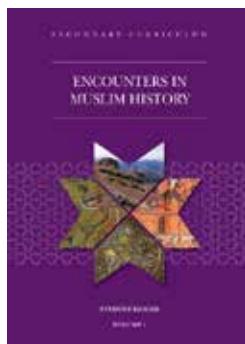
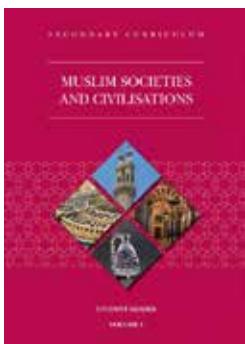
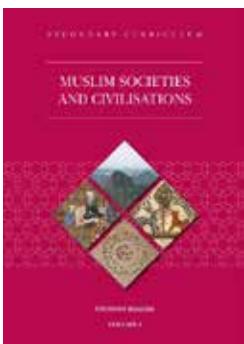
of worship, Qur'anic manuscripts, calligraphic inscriptions, miniature paintings, devotional poetry, and objects linked to the lived faith and practice.

## An educational approach

Students are guided to study the subject of faith and practice from multiple perspectives. They learn of the understandings arising from the application of various disciplines to the study of religion. They are also helped to appreciate the insights issuing from the personal experience of faith and its practice by believers across the centuries, as part of their religious tradition. Students are guided to understand what it means to belong to a community of faith, and how, within the Ismaili tradition, the community provides a facilitative space for the individual's personal quest for ultimate significance. Overall, students are encouraged to develop an informed understanding of their own beliefs and those of other individuals and communities.

An extract of Unit 3.2 - Divine love in Islamic traditions - from the *Faith and Practice* module, Volume One. © The Institute of Ismaili Studies.

The range of modules available as part of the IIS' Secondary Curriculum include:



# Over 50 years of Scholarship: Professor Wilferd Madelung



"I constantly find new meanings. So much of the early work, the texts, are still unpublished."

**Professor Wilferd Madelung**

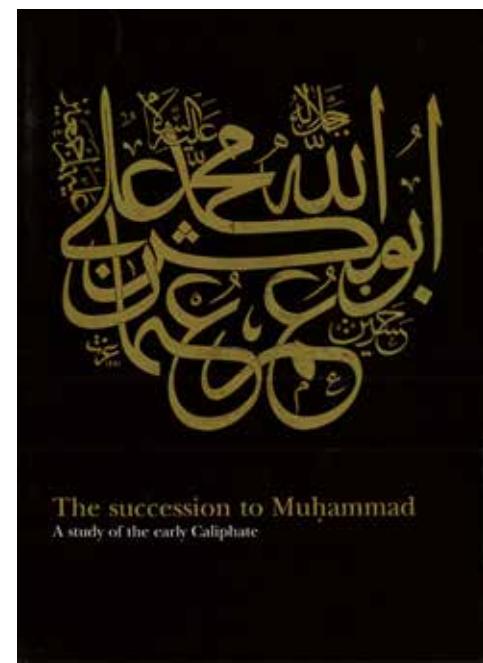
Professor Wilferd Madelung, IIS Senior Research Fellow, shares his experiences as an eminent scholar of Shi'i Muslim communities.

Professor Wilferd Madelung is a leading contemporary Islamicist. His studies, based on a vast array of primary sources, have enriched the discipline's understanding of almost every major Muslim movement and community – from early Imami Shi'ism and the later developments of Twelver, Ismaili and Zaydi Islam, to the lesser known aspects of the Sunni, Kharaji and Mu'tazili schools of theology and philosophy.

He has been associated with the Institute since its inception. When he began teaching and lecturing at the IIS, he held the distinguished position of Laudian Professor of Arabic at the University of Oxford. Over the years, a strong relationship developed with him and, on his retirement from Oxford in 1998, he was invited to take up a Senior Research Fellowship with the IIS.

As a pioneer in the field of Shi'i and Ismaili Studies, Professor Madelung's academic career spans more than half a century.

In this interview, he describes how his early experience of studying at the University of Cairo influenced his decision to study the history of the Shi'i communities of Islam, including the Ismailis. He also provides an insight into how his own thinking and analysis of the early period of Islam has developed since the publication of his seminal work, *The Succession to Muhammad* in 1997.



## What first attracted you to the field?

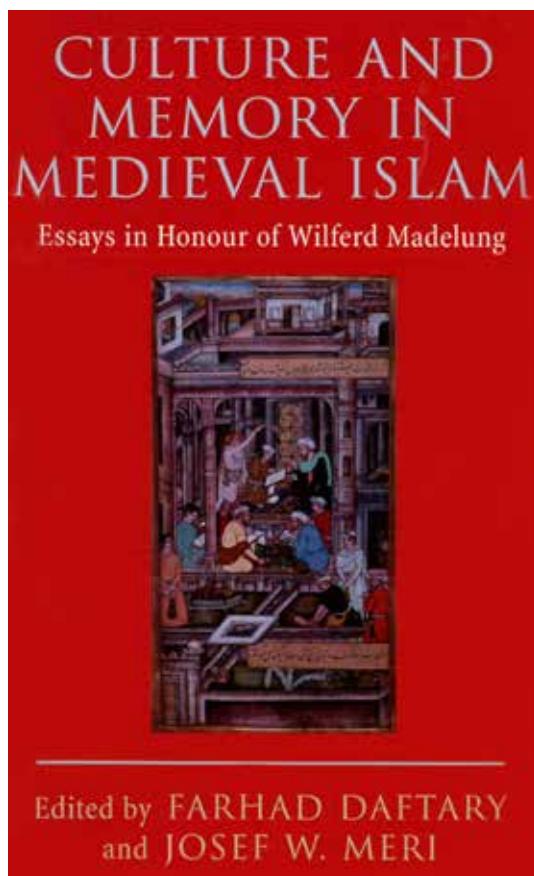
Born in Germany, Professor Madelung completed his high-school education in the USA, where his family settled after World War II. He then went on to read Middle Eastern Studies at Georgetown University. At the time, Georgetown University in Washington, D.C was well known for its School of Languages and Linguistics, which trained interpreters for a range of institutions, including the State Department and the United Nations. As he explains:

*"People today forget, because Islamic Studies is now so widespread and nearly every university teaches Islamic Studies, that this was not always the case. Certainly, when I started [my degree] in the US there were maybe six universities of note that one could choose from. And in terms of Shi'i Studies, there was no such thing, and people didn't know about Shia Muslims – much less the Ismailis."*

His initial interest in Islamic Studies came from a love of learning modern languages, which in turn led to an interest in classical Arabic, and then to a study of Islamic history and literature:

*"With respect to Arabic, what I found was that I had to learn classical Arabic before I could really*

*understand the culture and history of the Middle East. I knew that Arabic, of course, has a special connection with Islam and also with the Qur'an, but when I went to Egypt, I could see the connection was even stronger [than I had thought]. I was admitted to the Section for Arabic Literature but that involved quite a bit of Islamic Studies – Islamic history and also Islamic literature."*



*"I found Arabic a difficult language – I could learn European languages easily but Arabic was of course a totally different language. I spent a lot of time just working on Arabic."*

It was while studying in Egypt, that Professor Madelung was introduced to Egyptian history and specifically Fatimid history:

*"I was a student of the Egyptian scholar Muhammad Kamil Husayn, [Editor of the well-known *Silsilat Makhtutat al-Fatimiyyin* series of publications], who introduced me to Ismaili texts and literature. I got to know Husayn al-Hamdani, who was an old man at that time – he had a rare collection of Ismaili manuscripts and he was very kind to let me see them."*

Professor Madelung's time in Egypt sparked a deep interest in Fatimid history and Ismaili studies, and provided him with the subject of his doctoral thesis at the University of Hamburg, where he received his PhD. Professor Madelung's initial publications, dealing with early Ismaili doctrines and relations between the Fatimids and the Qarmatians, were based on his doctoral thesis. These two long articles in German, published in *Der Islam* in 1959 and 1961 respectively, represented original contributions to modern Ismaili studies, and are today considered classic works in the field.

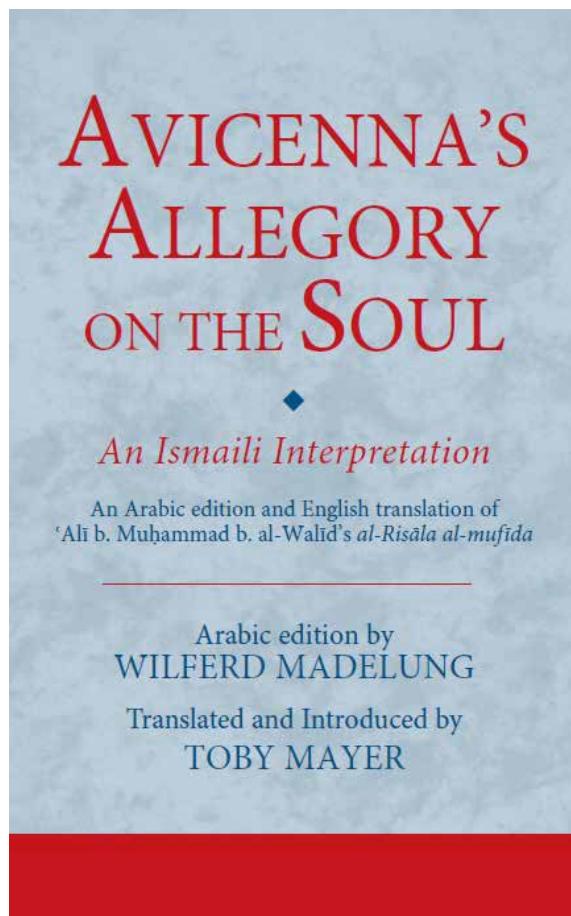
# Over 50 years of Scholarship: Professor Wilferd Madelung

What has influenced your interest in Ismaili and Shi'i Studies?

*"I came to Egypt, a Muslim country, and studied Islamic history as part of Arabic studies. My work is predominantly, if not exclusively, about early pre-modern history and the beginnings of [Islamic] history, and in my view, the beginnings of Shi'i Islam are right at the time of the death of the Prophet. At the time I began writing, western scholars believed the Shia were a later opposition who arose out of nothing. But, to me, this wasn't so and that is what my book Succession to Muhammad is about. Conflicts started right there, and this is what interested me."*

What projects are you working on and what can we look forward to?

*"The Encyclopaedia Islamica, which I co-edit with Dr Daftary, and the Encyclopaedia Iranica, which is another publication I have contributed to, are of particular significance because they cover Shia and Ismaili matters which are not covered in other western encyclopaedias. I think that we are making an impact with the IIS Encyclopaedia project, as I see it more and more in academic and university libraries."*



## STRUGGLING WITH THE PHILOSOPHER

*A Refutation of Avicenna's Metaphysics*

A New Arabic Edition and English Translation of Muhammad b. Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastani's *Kitab al-Musara'a*

Edited and Translated by  
**WILFERD MADELUNG**  
& **TOBY MAYER**

He also points to the re-editing and translation of the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'*, a multi-volume project at the IIS, for which he is assisting a younger scholar with the critical edition and annotated translation of Epistle 49, "The Actions of Spiritual, the Jinn, the Close Angels, and the Recalcitrant Demons." He will also be co-editing the *Risalat al-Jami'a* ("The Comprehensive Epistle"). Talking

**"I think that we are making an impact with the IIS Encyclopaedia project, as I see it more and more in academic and university libraries."**

**Professor Wilferd Madelung**

about the *Ikhwan al-Safa'*, he says:

*"The Ikhwan al-Safa' are a major aspect of Ismailism and Ismaili philosophy. It was not initially part of the Fatimid da'wa – they [the Ikhwan al-Safa'] have their own "brotherhood" of helping each other. They want to transform the world by philosophical and theological teaching. Yes, it is a very exciting project!"*

Talking about another field of research, he says:

*"I am also involved in the study of alchemy. Quite a bit of early Islamic alchemy is connected to the Shi'a and the Ismaili branch of Islam, even before the time of Ja'far al-Sadiq, who was considered a distinguished scientist and cosmologist. Also as part of my work at the IIS, I have translated and co-edited *Kitab al-Musara'a* by al-Shahrastani.*

*I enjoy mentoring young and new scholars. For example, Reza Pourjavady, a young Persian scholar, has asked me to edit with him a commentary by an early Safavid Iranian philosopher, al-Nayrizi (d. after 933 AH / 1526 CE) who engaged with Avicennan and Suhrawardian philosophy in his work."*

Explaining his enduring interest in early Islamic studies, Professor Madelung says:

*"I constantly find new meanings. So much of the early work, the texts, are still unpublished –*

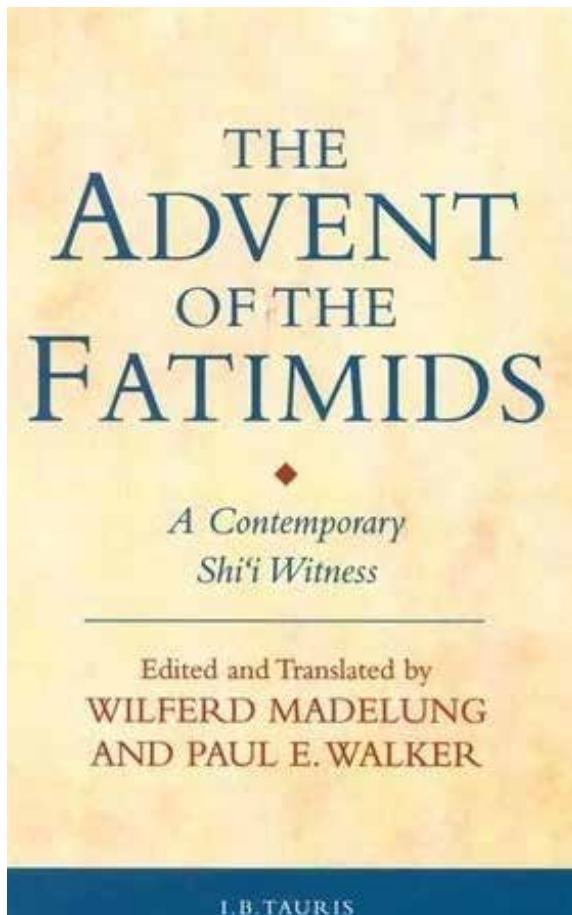
*al-Nayrizi for example. Not so long ago, he was known as al-Tabrizi – Well, if you look at the Arabic, the names look very similar. But, we now know he was from Nayriz.*

*As an historian one is interested in how things develop. My ideas about the succession to Prophet Muhammad have developed. I still enjoy learning these new things, making new discoveries. There is much work to do. My hope is, if I am not able to complete it, scholars can use my work and build upon it."*

Certainly, what is clear is that Professor Wilferd Madelung's work will leave a lasting legacy for generations of scholars to come.

**"Professor Madelung is unique in that he is the foremost scholar in the history of Shi'i communities and has written about almost every Shi'i community."**

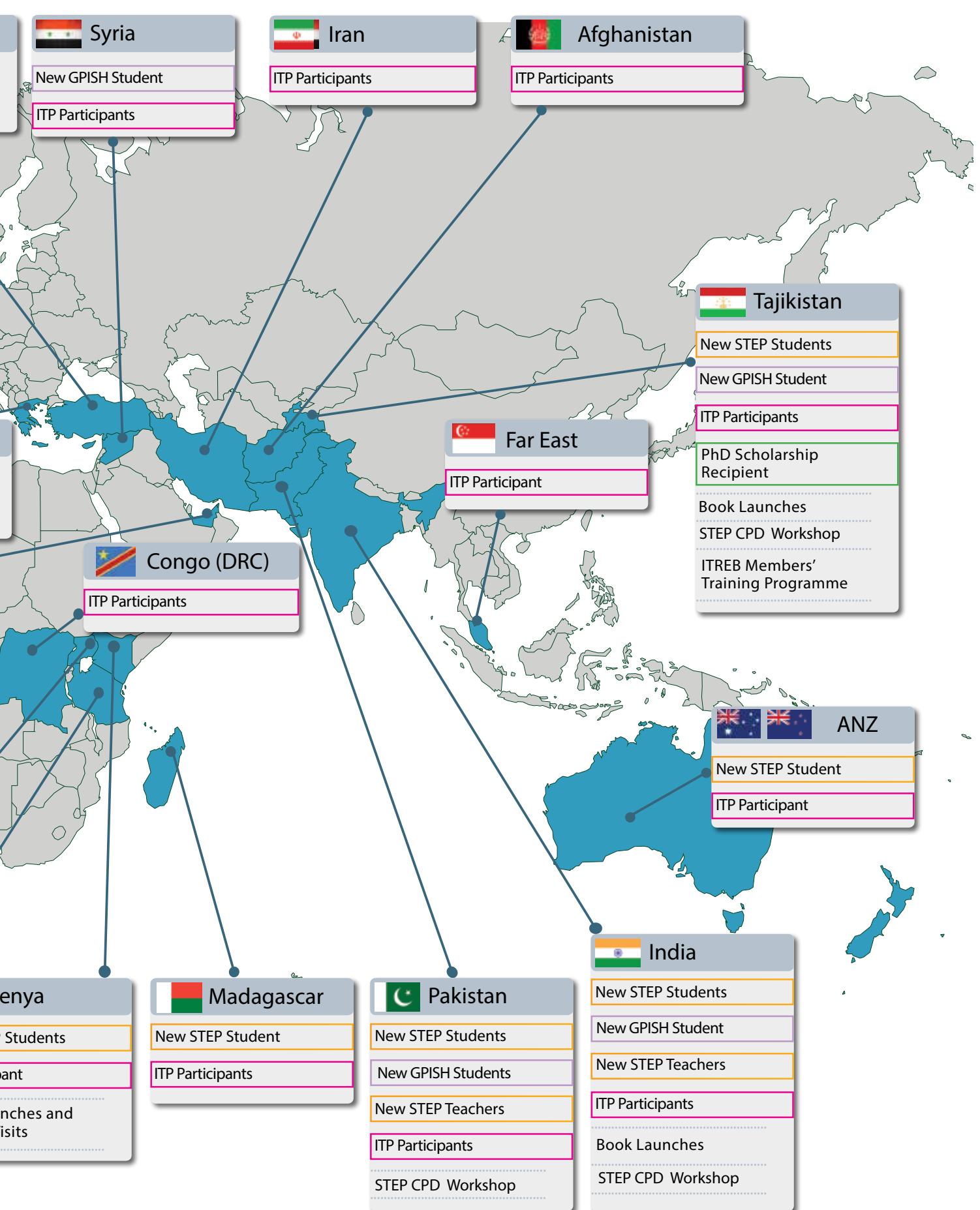
**Dr Farhad Daftary**



I.B.TAURIS

# Geographical Reach of the IIS in 2015





# Promoting Understanding Through Education - The N

The IIS Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH) was established in 1994 and today has over 200 graduates who are working in a variety of careers ranging from academia and education, to government, media, policy, and law.

Over the past two decades, GPISH has continued to evolve to ensure that, whilst academic standards remain consistently high, its graduates are equipped with the practical

Steering Committee initiated a major review of the programme three years ago, in its desire for the programme to remain at the cutting edge of education in the humanities and in its

new structure also ensures that these areas of research should not remain at the periphery but as an integral part of a broader discourse on Islam as a major world religion and the civilisations it spawned.



Dr Tullio Lobetti, Special Projects Manager, who was part of the curriculum development process, reflects on one of the underlying premises of the programme: "At the core of GPISH is a deep understanding of the complex nature of change. As life relentlessly evolves and changes around us, ideas and ways of learning also change and adapt, pervading every corner of a rapidly

"GPISH gives a student the grounding and the understanding to be able to participate in the debates and dialogues currently taking place in society regarding Islam. It does this by providing the tools and the discourse needed to help dispel myths about Islam and Muslims, and to promote understanding and conciliation."

**Asif Dhanani, Class of 2017**

skills to make a lasting contribution and impact in their fields of expertise. The programme has undergone regular assessment and review, with feedback being sought from students, faculty and stakeholders to ensure that the students' needs are met. Keeping this at the forefront, the Institute's Academic

pursuit of embracing change. One of the key aims of the review was to ensure that GPISH, whilst still retaining its characteristic of encouraging a broad based approach, would reflect solidly the mandate of the IIS to promote scholarship on previously under-studied areas of research – Shi'i and Ismaili traditions of Islam. The

transforming society."

He further notes that the changing view of the role of religion in today's society has had an impact on how the programme is conceived and taught: "Fifty years ago, it was not expected that religion would play such a pivotal role in modern society.

# New GPISH Curriculum

However, religious traditions are not merely resisting the once-unavoidable advance of secularism; they are gaining ground, establishing new roots in the now obvious cracks marring the modern edifice.” Highlighting a unique characteristic of the GPISH programme, he says: “Quite unlike many other courses in humanities, GPISH strives to embrace change, and to always question the status quo in order to uncover the best methodologies and academic technologies, as it were, to understand and study religion within the context of the most up-to-date situations.”

For these reasons, the minds that help to shape and mould GPISH decided to rewrite the curriculum anew, in order to incorporate groundbreaking subjects, new intellectual tools and approaches in order to attain not only a better understanding, but a different way of thinking about the Ismaili tradition, Islam, and religion in more general terms. This required a re-assessment of how ‘history’ is understood in contemporary academic practice, which is progressively abandoning a straightforward chronological model in favour of approaches highlighting

the cross-fertilisation of ideas, beliefs, practices and events that concurred in building a certain worldview.

Discussing what sets GPISH apart, Dr Laila Halani, Head of the Department of Graduate Studies, commented: “When GPISH was launched, its interdisciplinary approach was innovative and cutting edge.

through historical, literary and anthropological tools, allowing for depth and richness that engender a paradigm shift.”

The array of first year modules, intended to facilitate the development of historical knowledge and consciousness, now includes three foundational elements: examining the history of



Twenty-one years on, a survey of Islamic Studies courses on offer confirms the continued uniqueness of GPISH. While multidisciplinary courses are on offer at universities, few are truly interdisciplinary. The seamless integration of disciplinary tools from the humanities and social sciences into each module provides students the opportunity to evaluate and analyse key events or moments from multiple lenses. For instance, the events of Karbala can be analysed

Islam in its early, middle, and modern phases, as well as more specifically oriented modules dealing with the Shi‘i and Ismaili traditions. Dr Gurdofarid Miskinzoda who teaches the Shi‘i Studies course commented: “This course provides students with an awareness of key moments in the development of Shi‘i history and thought in the wider context. It also explores the interaction of religious and secular authorities in the formation of what can be

# Promoting Understanding Through Education - The N

identified as ‘Shi‘i identity’. An important aspect of this is the interdependence of religious and community identities among the Shi‘a, which the course explores through the examination of a number of key events, primary and secondary sources, and some of the fundamental doctrinal developments in Shi‘i Islam.”

Dr Elizabeth Key Fowden, an external lecturer from the University of Cambridge, who teaches on GPISH, described what makes the structure of the course unique: “The study of Muslims in history does not start with a backward glance toward pre-Islamic Arabia

South Asian Muslim contexts and on ritual practice, then complement the historical picture with topical subjects

think critically about the Qur'an and its interpretations without losing sight of the appreciation for the weight



“What I have found to be insightful in the GPISH programme is not only the rigour, but also the thoughtfulness with which the courses have been laid out over the two years. A class on “Muslims in History” coincides so beautifully with another on “The Qur'an”, helping us to inform new vocabulary learned in “Beginners Arabic” - all in just one week. The classes are interwoven and really illustrate the interdisciplinary approach from the moment you walk into the programme.”

Noreen Sajwani, Class of 2018

and then proceed onward to ‘real’ Islamic history. From day one, students engage with the cultural and religious diversity of the late antique world into which Prophet Muhammad was born. Students are challenged to become attentive to both practical and philosophical reformulations, and to account for the multiple responses Muslims have had to cultures they have inherited, from the Atlantic to Central Asia.”

Thematic-oriented modules, on the issue of identity in

and further intellectual tools. Lastly, a two-term analytically-informed module on the Qur'an provides the requisite familiarity with primary sources that students need to cultivate in order to tackle the origin and development of Islamic thought and civilisation in an organic manner.

Providing an insight into the delivery of the module on the Qur'an, Dr Omar Ali-de-Unzaga said:

“The course provides students with the intellectual tools to

of the prophetic revealed experience, evaluating in a balanced way both the perspective of the believer as well as the historical-critical perspectives on the Qur'an. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to understand the Qur'anic communications as events that took place in a specific time and space, to explore the negotiation with a diversity of interpretations in Islamic intellectual history, and to understand historical debates about the Qur'an, not as

# New GPISH Curriculum

textual scholarly exchanges, but in their full socio-political implications."

The purpose of the first year of the GPISH curriculum has never been to merely impart "taught information" to the students. Rather, the intention has been to take advantage of groundbreaking interdisciplinary approaches to stimulate intellectual curiosity, equip students with the intellectual tools and ideas necessary to challenge commonly held notions - even when such notions are their own.

The second year of the programme builds on the development of critical faculties, providing broad

thematic modules where students are given the time and space to express themselves and to cultivate goals that are personally-oriented. Thematic modules on intellectual traditions, law and society, art and religion, and other key areas rely on the foundational knowledge and critical stance developed in the first year to explore new avenues of understanding, where the students become protagonists of their own learning.

The idea of un-learning is central to the philosophy of the programme. Students are actively encouraged to question the obvious and the self-evident, while encouraging the development of a critically-

oriented mentality. Interdisciplinary work, an organic and critical approach, and a clear progression of learning are a few of the key terms that might be used to characterise the new GPISH curriculum. These elements represent the ambition that the GPISH faculty wish to impart to the students, who, it is hoped, will be some of the key thinkers, leaders and innovators within the Ismaili community and beyond in the years to come.



"Throughout the course, students are encouraged to understand the Qur'anic communications as events that took place in a specific time and space, to explore the negotiation with a diversity of interpretations in Islamic intellectual history, and to understand historical debates about the Qur'an, not as textual scholarly exchanges, but in their full socio-political implications."

Dr Omar Ali-de-Unzaga

## New IIS Publications

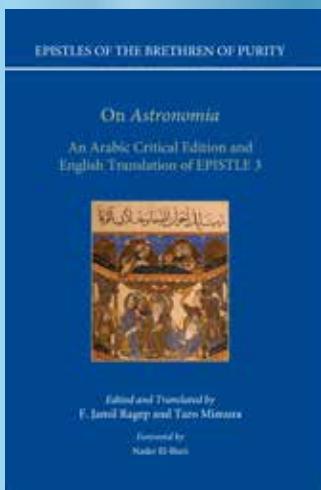
# PEOPLE OF THE PROPHET'S HOUSE

*People of the Prophet's House: Artistic and Ritual Expressions of Shi'i Islam*  
Edited by Fahmida Suleman

Despite their distinct theological differences, Shi'a and Sunni Muslims, followers of the two main divisions of Islam, share a number of core beliefs including an allegiance to and love for Prophet Muhammad and members of his family. For Shi'i Muslims, reverence for the Prophet and allegiance to his household (*Ahl al-bayt*, People of the House), comprising his immediate family and their descendants, constitutes an essential principle of belief that has directly impacted how Shi'i artists, rulers, patrons and ritual participants have conveyed their love and loyalty through material culture and religious rituals. The 22 essays in this volume, richly illustrated with over 200 colour images, present a diversity of beliefs and practices expressed through the arts, architecture, material culture and rituals that spans Shi'i history from the tenth century to the present day. With contributions from experts in the fields of anthropology, religious studies, art and architectural history, numismatics, film studies, and contemporary art, the book also highlights the diversity of the artistic and devotional expressions of Shi'i Muslims from across China, Egypt, India, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Senegal, Syria and Trinidad. Additionally, some essays draw upon important female Shi'i figures and female ritual practices, and many chapters underscore the theme of love for the *Ahl al-bayt* beyond Sunni and Shi'i demarcations.

## Epistles of the Brethren of Purity Series

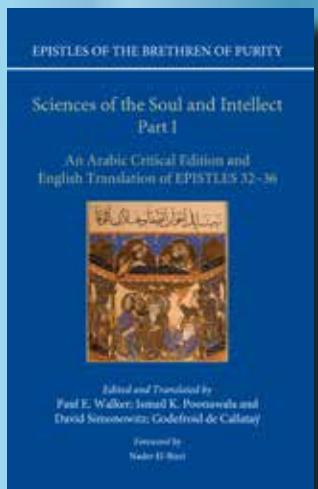
The Ikhwan al-Safa' (Brethren of Purity), the anonymous adepts of a tenth-century esoteric fraternity based in Basra and Baghdad, hold an eminent position in the history of science and philosophy in Islam due to the wide reception and assimilation of their encyclopaedic work, the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* (Epistles of the Brethren of Purity).



*Epistles of the Brethren of Purity. On Astronomia; An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistle 3*

**Edited and translated by F. Jamil Ragep and Taro Mimura**

This volume provides an edition, translation, and notes to Epistle 3: 'On Astronomia', from the section on Mathematics. The content is a mixture of elementary astronomy and astrology, but it is not a beginner's textbook; rather, the purpose is to use these disciplines for spiritual, moral, and soteriological guidance. Thus the Epistle uses the argument from design to show the necessity of a Creator who made this harmonious universe; the wondrous design is then employed by the authors as a paradigm for proper ethical, political, and even economic conduct.



*Epistles of the Brethren of Purity. Sciences of the Soul and Intellect, Part I; An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 32-36.*

**Edited and translated by Paul. E. Walker, Ismail K. Poonawala, David Simonowitz, Godefroid de Callatay**

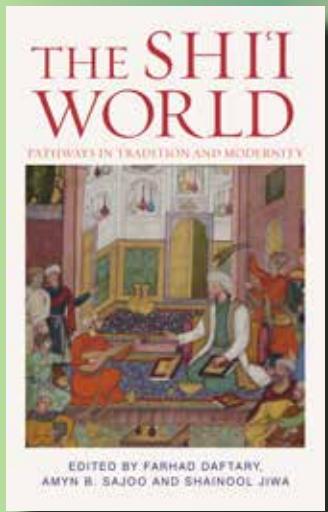
Epistles 32 to 36 constitute the first five treatises in the third division of the *Rasa'il*, on the sciences of the soul and intellect. Combining Islamic revelation with Hellenistic philosophy, the Ikhwan delineate herein their metaphysical system. Epistles 32 and 33 present adaptations of Pythagorean doctrines, and of Neoplatonist leitmotifs, whereby a numerical analogy is applied to the unique and transcendent God, or the One, from whom all existence emanates. Epistle 34 takes up the pervasive theme of the correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm, situating the human being as the central link between the celestial and terrestrial realms. In Epistle 35, we find an explanation of the intellectual faculties of the individual human soul, whose ultimate aim is ascension to the timeless reality of pure intellect. Finally, Epistle 36 presents itself as the astrological epistle par excellence of the *Rasa'il*; from the coming-to-be of worms, to the emergence of religions and empires, nothing in the sub-lunar sphere escapes the determining influence of the celestial cycles.

# New IIS Publications

## Muslim Heritage Series

*The Shi'i World: Pathways in Tradition and Modernity*

**Edited by Farhad Daftary, Amyn B. Sajoo and Shainool Jiwa**



The various Shi'i Muslim communities of the world express their faith in a multiplicity of ways, united by reverence for the *Ahl al-bayt*, the family of the Prophet. Shi'i Islam has given rise to diverse traditions and practices across varied geographic and cultural landscapes. *The Shi'i World* is a comprehensive work authored by leading scholars from different disciplines, which seeks to provide a better understanding of how Shi'i communities view themselves and articulate their beliefs. The topics discussed range from Shi'i Islam's historical and conceptual foundations, formative figures, and intellectual, legal and moral traditions, to its devotional practices, art and architecture, literature, music and cinema, as well as expressions and experiences of modernity. The book thus provides a panoramic perspective of the richly textured narratives that have shaped the social and moral universe of Shi'i Muslims around the globe. This fourth volume in the 'Muslim Heritage Series' will appeal to specialists and general readers alike, as a timely resource on the prevailing complexities not only of the Muslim world, but also of the dynamic Shi'i diasporas in Europe and North America.

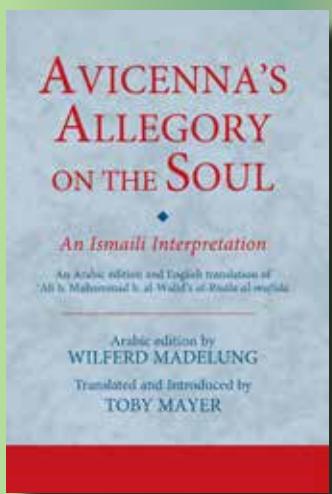
## Ismaili Texts and Translations Series

*Avicenna's Allegory on the Soul: An Ismaili Interpretation. An Arabic edition and English translation of Ibn al-Walid's al-Risala al-mufida*

**Arabic edition by Wilferd Madelung & Translated and Introduced by Toby Mayer**

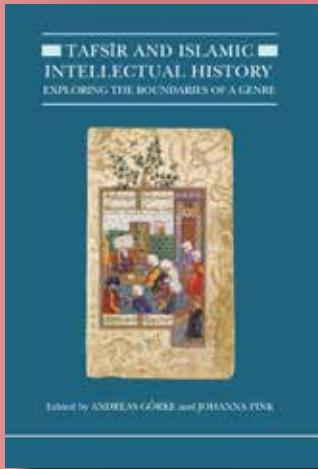
The Persian philosopher Ibn Sina (d. 1037), known in Europe as Avicenna, was arguably the greatest master of Aristotelian thought in the Muslim world.

The symbolical 'Poem on the soul' (*Qasidat al-nafs*), which portrays all earthly human souls as being in temporary exile from heaven, is traditionally attributed to him. Renowned for his encyclopaedic treatments of philosophy, Avicenna also experimented with a variety of intellectual genres and discourse styles, including a small number of mythopoeic texts. Among those, this brief *Qasida* drew the particular attention of commentators on account of its aesthetic impact, popularity and the ostensibly esoteric character of its teachings. It depicts the human soul as a strayed dove, which can only return home after retrieving awareness of its celestial origin. The text therefore expresses metaphorically the need for a philosophical perspective in life and for philosophy as a path to salvation.



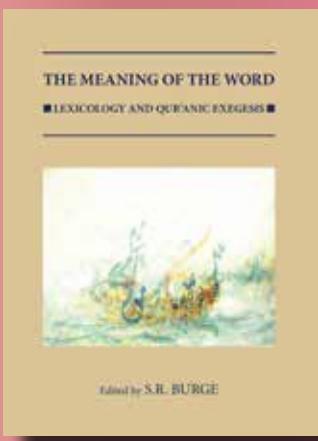
## **Qur'anic Studies**

*Tafsir and Islamic Intellectual History: Exploring the Boundaries of a Genre*  
**Edited by Andreas Gorke and Johanna Pink**



This volume constitutes the first comprehensive attempt at describing the genre of Qur'anic exegesis in its broader intellectual context. Its aim is to provide a framework for understanding the boundaries of *tafsir* and its interaction with other disciplines of learning, as well as the subgenres and internal divisions within the genre. It discusses the emergence of the genre in the beginnings of Islamic history and the changes and potential ruptures it has experienced in later times, the role of *hadith*, law, language, philosophy, theology and political ideology for the interpretive process, the regional dimension, the influx of modernist ideas, and the process of writing *tafsir* in languages other than Arabic.

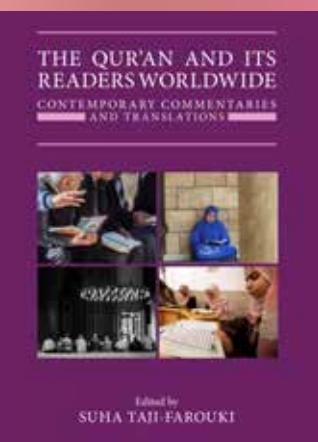
*The Meaning of the Word: Lexicology and Qur'anic Exegesis*  
**Edited by Stephen Burge**



*The Meaning of the Word* provides an overview of the development of lexicological analysis in the *tafsir* tradition, and examines how exegetes interpreted words in the Qur'an. The contributions reflect on lexicology in Qur'anic exegesis through studies of a wide range of subjects, from linguistics to literary criticism, and law and gender to mysticism; from considerations of the issue of lexicology in the Arab, Persian and Turkish worlds to its examination in the European world; and from studies of the earliest discussions of Qur'anic lexica to those made in twentieth-century Turkey and recent English translations of the Qur'an. This volume can serve as a subject-specific reference volume for anyone working on the interpretation of the Qur'an, as well as in Islamic studies and the wider field of religious studies.

*The Qur'an and its Readers Worldwide: Contemporary Commentaries and Translations*  
**Edited by Suha Taji-Farouki**

*The Qur'an and its Readers Worldwide* provides an introduction to this rich and expanding field. It brings together a selection of Qur'an commentaries and translations produced across the twentieth century to the present day, and ranging in provenance from the regions of the traditional Islamic heartlands to the new loci of global Islam. Individual chapters examine works in Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, English, German, Malay, Persian, Swahili, Turkish and Urdu, each viewed in terms of the impact of modernity on the encounter with the Qur'an, providing an English readership with an exceptionally broad overview.



# New IIS Publications



## Central Asian Studies

*Diwan-i Qa'imiyat of Hasan-i Mahmud Katib (Tajik Edition)*  
Edited by Ato Mirkhoja

The Tajik edition of the book is based on the Persian text edited by Dr Jalal Badakhchani. The *Diwan-i Qa'imiyat* (Poems of Resurrection) is one of the finest examples of Ismaili literature from the Alamut period of Ismaili history. The *Diwan* was composed in praise of the Ismaili Imams, and it is imbued with expressions and terminology which are helpful for understanding the development of Shi'i thought and literature. The interpretation of Ismaili terminology in poetical forms makes it a unique and enduring source of knowledge about the Ismailis' interpretation of Imamat and their religious outlook during the Alamut period.

*Russian Translation of Arzina Lalani's Early Shi'i Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir*  
By Nikolay Terletskiy

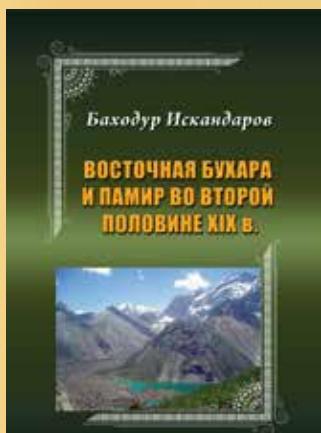
*Early Shi'i Thought* represents a rigorous study on the contribution of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir to Shi'i thought and Islamic intellectual heritage. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir's contribution had not only given the Shi'a a scholarly context for the articulation of their view of Imamat, but also laid the foundation of a distinctive school of jurisprudence, the *madhab ahl al-bayt*, with well-defined views on several aspects of *fiqh* or jurisprudence. The book has already been translated into many European and Eastern languages. The Russian publication will contribute to a better understanding of Shi'i thought, its theological underpinnings, and its role in the development of Islamic thought in the Russian-speaking world.

*Nasiri Khusraw's Safar-nama (Tajik Edition)*  
Edited by Dr. S. Jonboboev

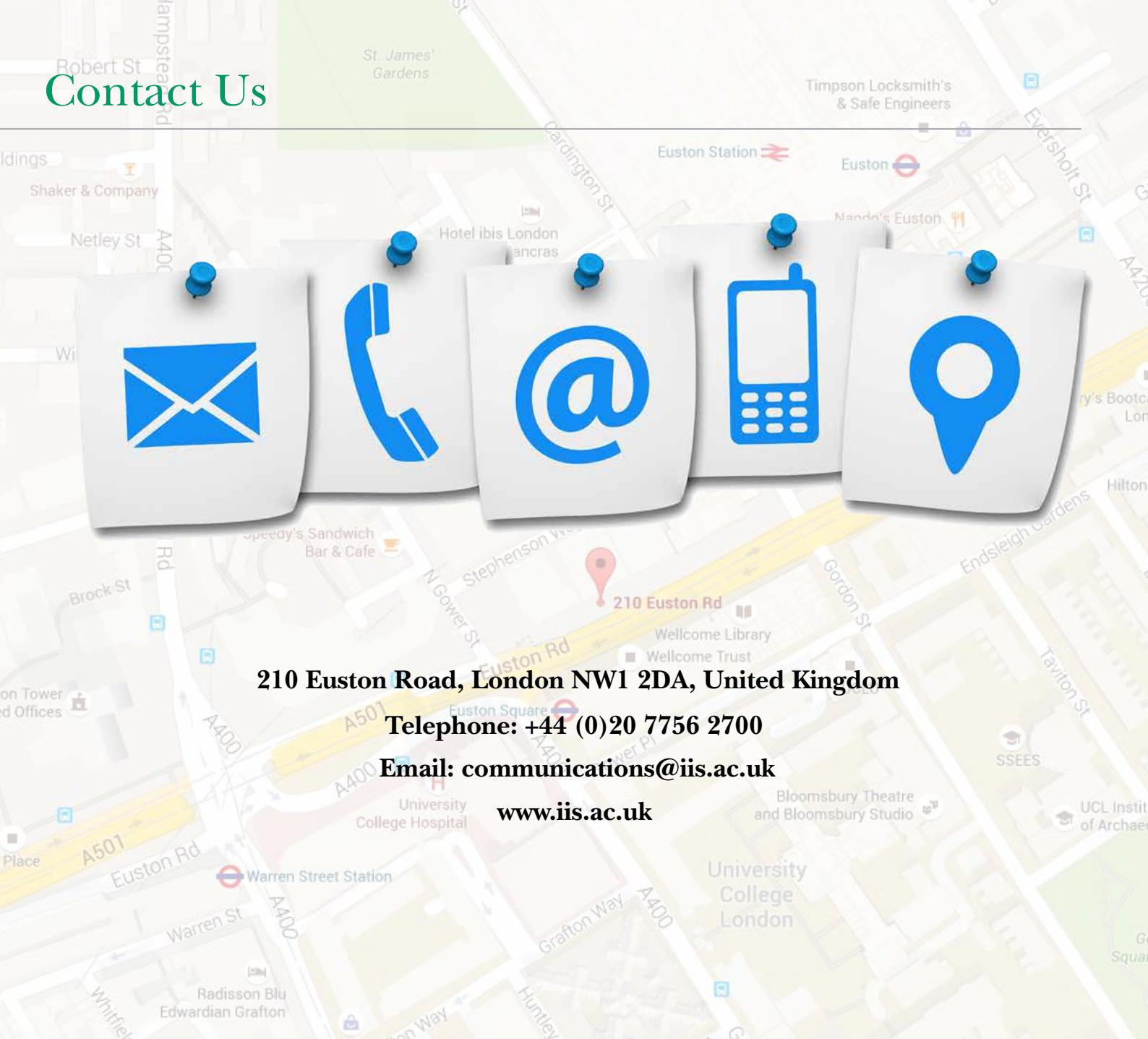
This is a new critical edition of the *Safar-nama* (travelogue) of the celebrated Ismaili philosopher, poet and traveller Nasiri Khusraw, produced in Tajik. The *Safar-nama* is considered to be one of the finest travelogues, providing insight into the social and cultural heritage of the Muslim world in the 11th century. The meticulous descriptions of the landscape and architectural edifices of the time across different countries continue to fascinate both scholars and general readers today.

*Eastern Bukhara and the Pamirs in the second half of the XIX century (Russian Edition)*  
By Bahodur Iskandarov

This new edition of the distinguished book presents a detailed analysis of events in the Pamirs and Eastern Bukhara in the late nineteenth century, including the rivalry between Russia and Britain in the mountainous region. The work is recognised as an authoritative publication on the history of the Pamir region for that period. This new publication was prepared and published in collaboration with the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan.



# Contact Us



**210 Euston Road, London NW1 2DA, United Kingdom**

**Telephone: +44 (0)20 7756 2700**

**Email: [communications@iis.ac.uk](mailto:communications@iis.ac.uk)**

**[www.iis.ac.uk](http://www.iis.ac.uk)**

## New Appointments

### Academic Research and Publications

**Dr Mohammad Rasekh**  
Senior Research Associate

### Community Relations

**Farzad Kadkhoda**  
Academic Coordinator  
ITP Persian

**Zulfiqar Khimani**  
Academic Coordinator

### Curriculum Studies

**Samira Lalani**  
Education Officer

**Dr Almina Pardhan**  
ECD Coordinator

### Graduate Studies

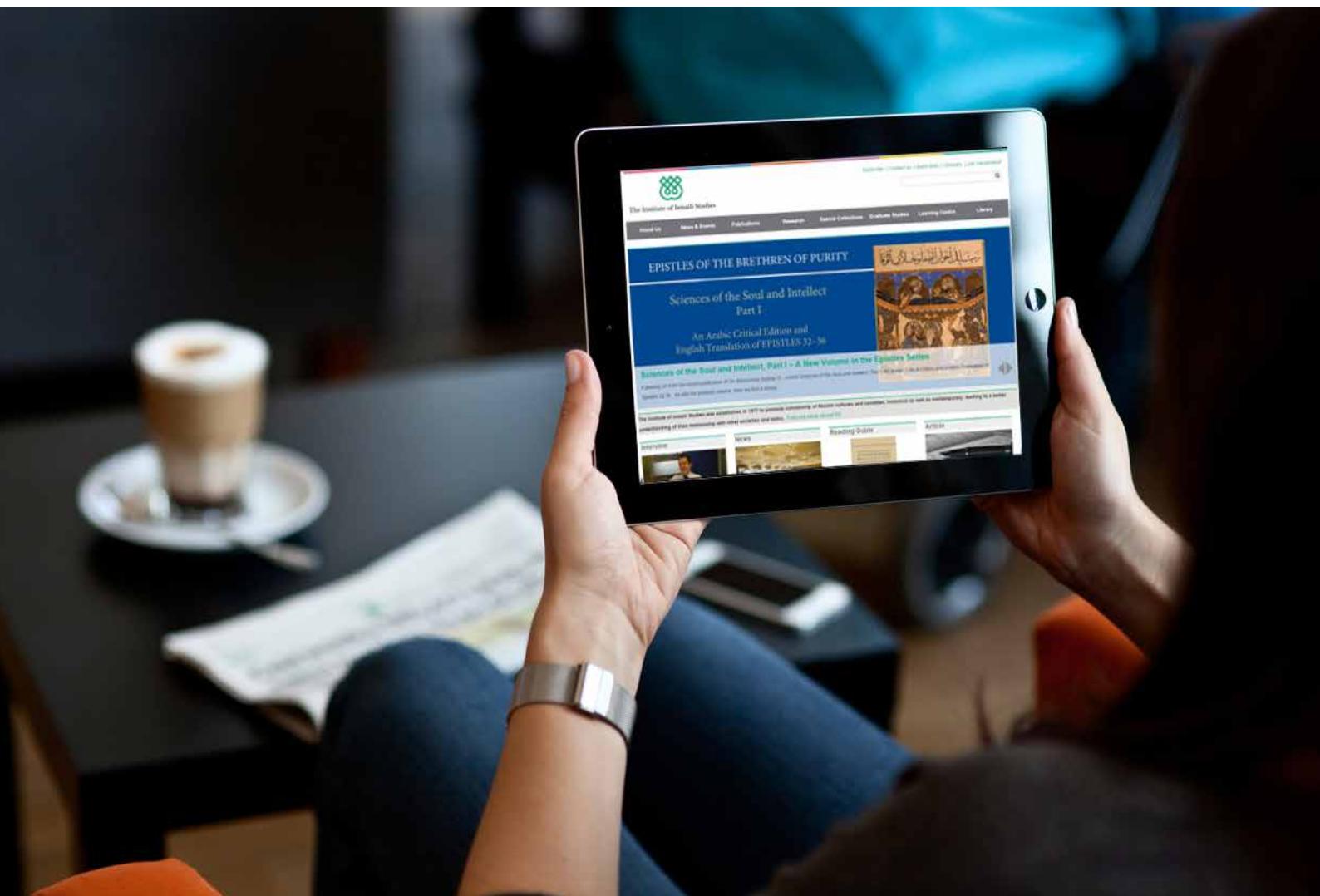
**Dr Mike Diboll**  
STEP Programme Leader

**Dr Christie Johnson**  
GPISH Programme Leader

**Rakeeza Kanth**  
Student Services Officer

**Hollie Kent**  
Student Services Officer

# www.iis.ac.uk



Coming Soon  
Arabic | Farsi | French | Russian



Mobile



Tablet



Online



The Institute of Ismaili Studies