

Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society

Thirty-second Annual Symposium
St Anne's College, Oxford
May 23rd-24th, 2015

*A Living Legacy –
Ibn 'Arabi in Today's World*

Symposium Programme

The Speakers

Robert Abdul Hayy Darr has, for forty-five years, been a student of the spiritual culture of Islam. In the late 1960s, he studied North Indian classical music at the Ali Akbar Khan School of Music in California. By the early 1980s, Darr began studying Persian literature where he first encountered the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabi in the works of Abdurrahman Jami of Herat. This began a life-long interest in the Shaykh’s profound teachings. In 1987, Darr met Afghanistan’s poet laureate in exile, Ustad Khalilullah Khalili and this friendship led to his English translation of the poet’s quatrains in 1989. From 1988-2007, Darr was tutored in Persian miniature painting by Ustad Homayon Etemadi, Afghanistan’s last court painter and royal librarian. Darr was the disciple of the Afghan Sufi poet, Raz Mohammed Zaray from 1992 until the poet’s death in 2010.

Sou’ad Hakim is one of the leading contemporary scholars in akbarian studies. She was Professor of Philosophy at the Lebanese University, Beirut, and Dean of the Doctoral School in Literature and Human and Social Sciences. Her many publications include critical editions including *Ibn ‘Arabi’s Kitab al-Isra (The Book of the Night Journey)* and *Mashāhid al-Asrār (Contemplation of the Holy Mysteries)* (with Pablo Beneito), and of *Sharḥ al-Mashāhid al-qudsiyya* by Sitt al-‘Ajam, a 13th-century female commentator. She has written and lectured widely on Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought, and is the author the standard lexicon of his terminology, *Almu jam al-sufiyya*.

Dr. Mahmud Erol Kiliç has been an honorary fellow of the Society for many years. He is currently professor at Marmara University, faculty of Islamic Theology and since 2008 Secretary General of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC) Tehran. He was Chairman of the Board of The Islamic Manuscript Association, University of Cambridge (2006 - 2014) and President of the Turkish-Islamic Art Museum in Istanbul (2005 - 2008). He is editor of the *Journal of Sufi Studies* (Brill - Leiden) (2010–2015). He is published widely in Turkish including: *Sheikh Akbar: Introduction to Ibn Arabi’s Thought*, 2009 and *Lectures on Rumi*, 2014.

Mohammed Rustom is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at Carleton University in Canada. A specialist in Sufism, Islamic philosophy and Quranic exegesis, his book *The Triumph of Mercy: Philosophy and Scripture in Mulla Sadra* (2012) was awarded Iran’s Book of the Year Prize in 2014. He is also the assistant editor of *The Study Quran: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary* (Editor-in-Chief, S.H. Nasr), and the lead editor of an anthology of William Chittick’s writings: *In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought* (2012).

Sa’diyya Shaikh is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. She has an interest in Sufism and its implications for Islamic feminism and feminist theory. She teaches courses in religion and gender; Islamic mysticism; and the psychology of religion. In 2000 she co-presented at the United Nations Millennium World Peace Summit of Spiritual and Religious Leaders in New York. Her book *Sufi Narratives of Intimacy: Ibn ‘Arabi, Gender and Sexuality* is published by the University of North Carolina Press (2012). Sa’diyya is married, the mother of two children and an ever-grateful member of the “ant-family” of Shaykh Muhammad Raheem Bawa Muhaiyaddeen.

Cecilia Twinch is a Senior Research Fellow of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society, Oxford. Besides working as a teacher, translator and editor, she has written numerous articles and has lectured on Ibn ‘Arabi and mysticism worldwide. She has studied at Cambridge University and the Beshara School. Her publications include an English translation of *Ibn ‘Arabi’s Contemplation of the Holy Mysteries* and a new translation of *Know yourself: An explanation of the oneness of being* (Ibn ‘Arabi/Balyani).

Provisional Programme

Saturday, May 23rd

- 8.30 am Doors open for Registration
- 9.15 Welcome and introduction
- 9.30 Cecilia Twinch: *Refreshing repose and a reviving scent.*
- 10.30 Coffee
- 11.00 Robert Darr: *Waking to the Embrace:
Applying Ibn 'Arabi's Teachings on Embodiment.*
- 12.00 Sou'ad Hakim: *To be announced.*
- 1.00 pm Lunch
- 2.15 Part I of film *Looking for Muhyiddin.*
- 3.30 Tea
- 4.00 Group discussions with speakers until 5.00 pm
- 5.15 Whole group discussion until around 6.00 pm
- 8.30 Part II of film

Sunday, May 24th

- 8:30 Doors open
- 9.15 Opening summary
- 9.30 Mohammed Rustom: *Akbarian Aphorisms for the 21st Century.*
- 10.30 Coffee
- 11.00 Sa'diyya Shaikh: *Intimate Echoes of Self:
Gender And Sexuality in Ibn 'Arabi's Cosmology.*
- 12.00 pm Mahmud Erol Kiliç: *If You Meet Ibn 'Arabi in Damascus...*
- 1.00 Lunch
- 2.30 Group discussions with speakers until 3.30 pm
- 3.45 Whole group discussion.
- 5.00 Tea. Symposium ends

Please see the notes overleaf. Any changes to this programme will be updated on the website.

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Travel

St Anne's College is within easy walking distance of both coach and rail stations. Car parking is very restricted in the vicinity of the College and those coming by car should allow time to leave their cars in the "Park and Ride" facilities available on each of the major routes into the city. Buses leave these parking areas for the city centre frequently.

St Anne's College

From the Porter's Lodge please follow signs to the Tsuzuki Lecture Theatre where all symposium proceedings will take place. Please be seated by the time papers are due to begin. It may not be possible to enter the Tsuzuki Lecture Theatre once a paper is in progress.

Meals

There will be buffet lunches at St. Anne's each day for those who have booked them.

Otherwise, the centre of Oxford offers a variety of places to eat within a five-minute walk of St Anne's College. On Friday and Saturday evening, booking is advisable.

Books

A selection of books will be on sale during the weekend.

Film

Looking for Muhyiddin, a film by Nacer Khemir (Director of *Bab Aziz*). For those who would like to see this, there will be a showing of the film in two parts on Saturday.

Sponsorship

The Society is very grateful to the Beshara Trust and individual members who have generously sponsored this event.

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