



IIS Alumni Newsletter 2018

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MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTOR



Dear IIS Alumni

In the past year, the IIS and its alumni body have had the pleasure of celebrating some significant milestones. We moved to our new and permanent premises at the Aga Khan Centre located in King’s Cross, at the heart of London’s Knowledge Quarter. Within this beautiful building is the Aga Khan Library, where we hold a collection of over 40,000 resources. Membership is open to alumni, so please apply if you wish to take advantage of our holdings of books and journals. A number of alumni have offered their time to be tour guides for the Aga Khan Centre which has helped us deliver tours to members of the Jamat, special guests, and members of the public. If you are based in London and wish to contribute your skills, please get in touch with us.

As part of its Diamond Jubilee series of publications, the IIS released the first English translation and a new Persian edition of the *Memoirs of Aga Khan I* translated by Dr Daniel Beben and Dr Daryoush Mohammad Poor. *Salvation and Destiny in Islam* by Dr Maria De Cillis provides an in-depth study of how al-Kirmani harmonised his views with those of earlier renowned Ismaili scholars on issues of divine preordination and human redemption. *Understanding Sharia: Islamic Law in a Globalised World*, by Rafiq S. Abdulla and Dr Mohamed M. Keshavjee, endeavours to fill a long-felt need, both among Muslims and non-Muslims, for an accessible work that can provide a better understanding of the workings of shari‘a and its evolving role in the Muslim world today.

In conjunction with Azimuth Editions, we also produced *Islam: An Illustrated Journey*, which I authored with one of our alumni, Professor Zulfikar Hirji. The book is a timely reminder of Islam’s rich legacy and pluralistic heritage and takes readers on a visual journey through Islam’s rich 1400-year history. We launched the publication at the Zee Jaipur Literary Festival and held events in India with the support of our alumni. We are grateful that you, our alumni, continue to contribute to the academic endeavours of the Institute and beyond, whether you are working with us directly on publications, contributing to academic journals, or publishing your own books.

In 2018, we held a conference entitled *The Renaissance of Shi‘i Islam in the 15th–17th Centuries: Facets of Thought and Practice* which investigated and evaluated the intellectual contributions of Shi‘i Muslims during this complex period. In 2019, we anticipate holding a conference on a theme related to Qur’anic studies, and we will be inviting you to participate in person or online.

I would like to close by sharing an achievement of the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement with SOAS. This agreement with SOAS means that, for the first time since the inception of GPISH, students who join the programme from September 2019 onwards will receive two Master’s degrees. SOAS will award an MA in Islamic Studies and Humanities for the first two years of the programme at the IIS. Their second Master’s degree will be conferred after the completion of their third year at a UK degree-granting university in a subject area that resonates with the aims of GPISH. STEP graduates will be awarded an MA in Muslim Societies and Civilisations by SOAS and a Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Reflective Practice (PGDip) by UCL Institute of Education. Also, the IIS is now registered with the Office for Students, the independent regulator of higher education in England.

I invite you to stay connected and engaged with us as we continue to explore and undertake initiatives to support your professional development.

I thank you for your continued support and engagement. With best wishes for success in all your endeavours.

Dr Farhad Daftary

MESSAGE FROM THE ALUMNI RELATIONS COORDINATOR



It is with great pleasure and excitement that I write this message as the Alumni Relations Coordinator. Like my predecessor, I am committed to supporting IIS alumni in various stages of their career and professional development, and to strengthening their connection with the IIS and various other Imamat institutions.

This issue of the *Alumni Newsletter* provides a snapshot of Alumni-related events and activities that have taken place in 2018 and the contributions of the alumni community to research and scholarship. One such event was the Global Alumni Reunion which took place in London 10–12 November 2018. This celebrated the 40th anniversary of the IIS and our move to the Aga Khan Centre. Bringing together over 160 alumni from seventeen countries, the Reunion was organised as an international conference on the theme of *'Muslim Renaissance in a Cosmopolitan World: Expressions of Muslim Identities through Faith, Knowledge and Art.'* Feedback from the alumni who attended the event has been positive and it will help us organise similar events in the future more effectively.

The IIS Alumni Association now comprises over 600 alumni across more than thirty countries. The data on alumni profile and contributions included in this issue was obtained through a survey conducted in December 2018. I am pleased to report that almost 90% of all alumni participated in the survey and would like to say a big thank you to all those who completed the survey.

I hope that you are taking full advantage of the online Alumni Community Portal to stay connected with the Institute as well as the global alumni community. Those few alumni who have yet to activate their profiles on the portal are requested to do so as soon as possible at <https://iisalumni.org>. This portal is increasingly becoming a positive social networking resource and we are looking to improve it every year. We welcome feedback and suggestions that will allow alumni to make full use of the portal's features. Please get in touch with us to pass on your recommendations.

If you are visiting London, please do stop by the alumni office located on the 8th floor of the Aga Khan Centre. I would love to see alumni and share with them the latest happenings at the IIS. Finally, please be sure to contact the alumni office at alumni@iis.ac.uk with any comments, suggestions or questions.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome new alumni and wish them the very best as they begin their careers.

Congratulations!

Sabeen Bashwani
Alumni Relations Coordinator

ALUMNI CHAPTER GROUP LEADERSHIP FOR 2018 – 2019

Chapter Leaders elected for the period September 2018 to August 2019:

ASIAN CHAPTER GROUP



President: Rami Gargour
Rami is a STEP graduate, Class of 2014, and works with ITREB UAE as a STEP teacher.



Secretary: Zohra Surani
Zohra is a STEP graduate, Class of 2014, and works with ITREB India as a STEP teacher.

EUROPEAN CHAPTER GROUP



President: Nasreen Hussaini
Nasreen is a GPISH graduate, Class of 2011, and works as a HR adviser for Priory Group Healthcare in the UK.



Secretary: Seema Manji
Seema is a STEP graduate, Class of 2012, and works with ITREB France as a STEP teacher.

NORTH AMERICAN CHAPTER GROUP



President: Alykhan Velji
Alykhan is a STEP graduate, Class of 2017, and works with ITREB, Canada as a STEP teacher.



Secretary: Safeena Keshavjee
Safeena is a STEP graduate, Class of 2016, and works with ITREB Canada as a STEP teacher.

GLOBAL ALUMNI REUNION



During the momentous 40th anniversary year of the IIS and its move to its permanent home at the Aga Khan Centre, alumni from across the world were invited to a Global Alumni Reunion, held at the Ismaili Centre, London, and the Aga Khan Centre from 10–12 November 2018. The reunion brought together over 160 alumni from seventeen countries in Asia, Africa, Australasia, Europe, and North America. The leadership of the three Chapter Groups conceptualised the theme of the conference: *“Muslim Renaissance in a Cosmopolitan World: Expressions of Muslim Identities through Faith, Knowledge and Art”*. Over three days, this international conference allowed the alumni to reflect upon their roles as educators and intellectuals, and on how to facilitate change in their respective contexts. A wide array of lectures, workshops, and seminars were led by scholars, educators, authors and professionals from a vast range of domains.

The first day opened with Dr Shiraz Kabani sharing recent developments at the IIS, followed by a keynote session on *Positive Pluralism as an Approach to Equality and Diversity in Religious Education Today* by Dr Denise Cush of Bath Spa University. This was followed by a panel on *Religiosity and Civic Culture*, moderated by Dr Shainool Jiwa and comprising three scholars who presented on related themes. Dr Jones Otterbeck, from the AKU-ISMC and Lund University in Sweden, shed light on *Active Citizenship among Muslims in European States*, while Ms Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, a prominent journalist and founder of British Muslims for Secular Democracy, spoke on *Globalisation, Muslims and the Future*. Thereafter, Dr Farouk Topan from the AKU-ISMC shared observations on *Muslims and Civic Culture in Britain*. The first day ended with alumni networking among themselves over tea and live music.

An Alumni Symposium was held on the second day, featuring presentations and discussions primarily led by alumni showcasing their academic/professional research and expertise. Over twenty-five alumni presented their work or moderated panels. In addition, there were two hands-on workshops and a session on *“Muslims Arts and Literature”*. The alumni were given a choice to attend either the *“Ebru Painting Workshop”* by Nawaaz Makhani (STEP 2010) and Hafiz Printer (STEP 2011) or *“Calligraphy Workshop”* by Soraya Saeed, Calligrapher. They also had the option of attending a session on *“Expressing Muslim Identities through Arts and Literature”* by Mohammed Ali, Artist and Nadifa Mohamed, Novelist and Lecturer. Throughout the day, the visiting alumni and their family members were also given guided tours of the Aga Khan Centre. In the evening, the alumni were hosted by IIS Governors for a celebratory dinner

at the Ismaili Centre, London. Mr Naguib Kheraj, a member of the Institute’s Board of Governors, delivered an address which was followed by a musical performance by the *Ismaili Community Ensemble*.

The third and last day started with a keynote address by Dr Aziz Esmail, a member of the Institute’s Board of Governors. This was followed by a presentation by Mr Aly Mawji from the Department of Diplomatic Affairs at Aiglemont on the department’s current and future role in the context of the Seat of the Ismaili Imam in Portugal. Mr Micheal Kocher, the General Manager of the Aga Khan Foundation, spoke on *Faith-based Development Organisations: A Case Study of the AKDN*.

The Global Alumni Reunion was a rare opportunity for alumni to reconnect with each other at a meaningful and interactive platform. Here is what alumni said about the reunion:

“““

“Reconnecting with fellow alumni, learning from the great work people are doing, and being motivated to want to do more.”

“Although challenges are there, we are the change agents and, hence, being academic resources of our institutions, we need to consider how we can contribute to minimising the challenges.”

“A sense of connection with the IIS and motivation to work for the community. Speakers brought new dimensions of art to understanding Muslim identities, which was new for me.”



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ALUMNI PROFILE REPORT 2018

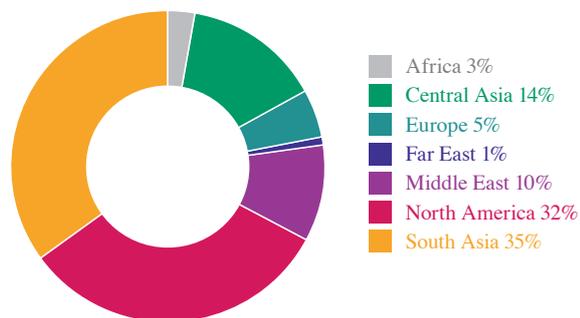
Presently, the IIS alumni body is comprised of 649 graduates who completed one of the five human resource development programmes since the early 1980s. A significant majority of the alumni (499; 77%) are currently employed, with more than half (320; 64%) in professional employment with AKDN, IIS or Ismaili community institutions. Another eighty-six are contributing (or have contributed in the past) in professional or voluntary capacities, including through Time & Knowledge

Nazrana. Twenty-four alumni are currently pursuing doctoral studies, of whom fourteen have received IIS scholarships while the remaining are self-funded or on external scholarships.

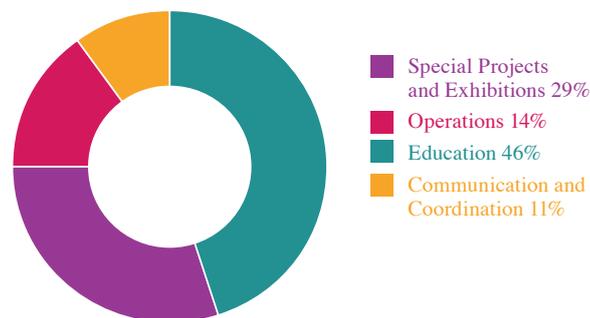
During 2018, twenty-eight students graduated from STEP and have joined ITREBs in their home countries; eleven students completed their final year of GPISH; and two alumni completed their doctoral degrees.

The following charts provide an overview of the profile and contributions of IIS alumni, based on a survey conducted in December 2018:

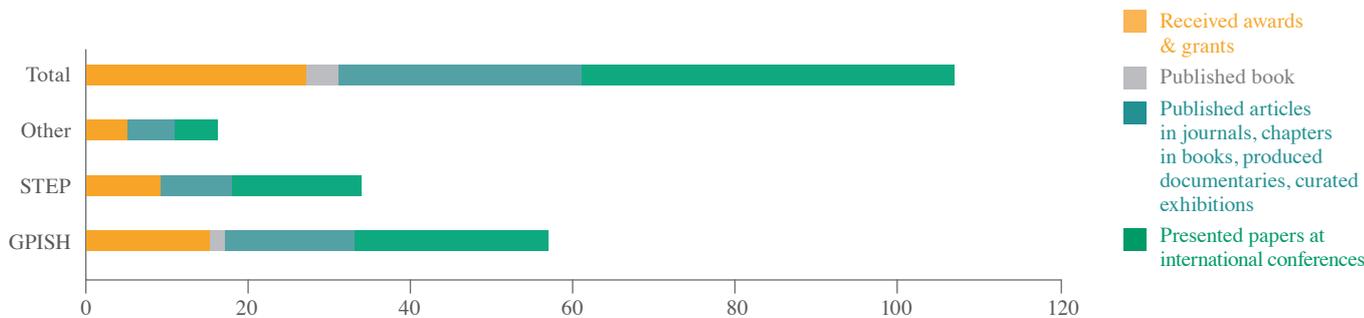
GEOGRAPHICAL DISPERSION OF ALUMNI



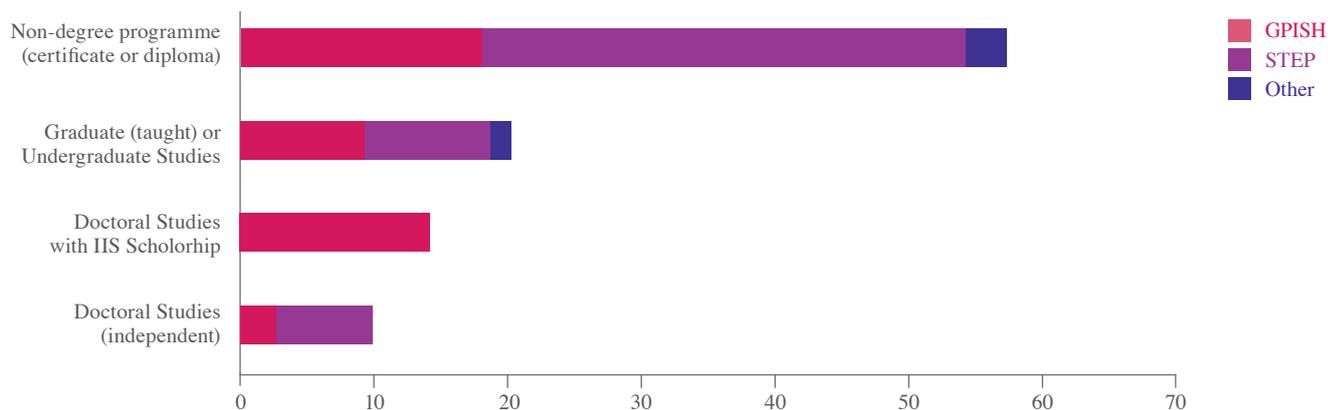
CONTRIBUTIONS TO DIAMOND JUBILEE PROGRAMMES



ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS



CONTINUING EDUCATION



ALUMNI INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Every year, the Alumni Relations Unit sets up internships for students graduating from the GPISH programme. These internships aim to facilitate students' transition to professional life. In 2018, with the support of the Department of Jamati Institutions and AKDN HR, we were able to place five graduates in internship positions as follows:

1. Kiran Rahim with Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan
2. Nido Guljon with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, UK
3. Gulrukhsor Aknazarova with the University of Central Asia, Tajikistan
4. Semina Halani with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, UK
5. Hasan Alhawati with the Ismaili Council for the UK

Several other alumni were offered internship opportunities but opted to take on more permanent employment opportunities. We wish all our new alumni best of luck in their endeavours!

REFLECTIONS ON INTERNSHIPS BY ALUMNI



Hasan Alhawati

“After completing my Master's Degree in Politics of Conflicts, Rights and Justice from SOAS, University of London, I was keen to find an opportunity to work with the Ismaili Council's Settlement Steering Group (SSG). I joined the SSG in December 2018 and am working with the Chair to conduct research and develop strategies to facilitate settlement and integration of the Newly Arrived Murids (NAMs) within the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom Council.

I find it professionally satisfying to be part of a team working on initiatives that seek to reach out to those in need of care and compassion. In addition, I value my work because it is directly connected to my academic, professional and life passion in contributing to help those who were forced to leave their countries and find a new home in foreign lands.

The work I do and my place of work at the Aga Khan Centre (AKC) are sources of motivation, interest and happiness for me. I am always surrounded by hard-working and inspirational professionals with a positive attitude. Working at the AKC with a great team for a noble cause is a dream come true.”



Semina Halani

“The internship with the Ismaili Special Collections Unit (ISCU) has proven to be an excellent training opportunity in managing, handling and analysing manuscripts and rare materials. It has also provided me with an understanding of different types of manuscripts and their contexts as well as the appropriate ways to deal with them.

Working under the mentorship of Dr Wafi Momin, Head of the Ismaili Special Collections Unit, has given me the opportunity to develop the critical and analytical skills required to work with manuscripts. This has been possible through working on different aspects of Ginān manuscripts, whilst learning about the cataloguing and management of these materials. As well as building my knowledge and understanding of the kinds of materials in the IIS' collection, the scholarly environment has motivated me to build my capacity in languages and to make other intellectual investments. I have been exposed to a wide range of materials in English, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu and Khojki, and have also had an opportunity to review different and sometimes quite unusual works from the Indian subcontinent. The knowledge, skills and experience that I have gained from this internship will work as a platform on which I can build my academic career.”



ALUMNI RESEARCH GRANT

The Institute of Ismaili Studies established the *Alumni Research Grant* in 2009. The grant aims to support alumni who wish to pursue further research, present research papers at academic conferences, publish articles, or undertake field studies in areas of relevance to the IIS.

In 2018, the following three alumni received a grant to present their research at the 2018 Harvard University International Journal of Arts and Science (IJAS) Multidisciplinary Conference:

1. Nosheen Hasni, STEP 2017: *Co-teaching with Audio-Visual Resources (AVRs): How do AVRs Impact Students' Historical Thinking Skills (HTS) in Karachi, Pakistan?*
2. Shehzeen Alamir, STEP 2016: *Exploring How STEP Teachers Promote Critical Thinking: A Study in a Karachi RE Classroom*
3. Nisha Khorasi, STEP 2016: *Impact of Using Creative Arts Strategies on Students' Perceptions of Learning Literature*



REFLECTIONS BY ALUMNI RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENTS



Nosheen Hasni

“I feel enlightened, having recently attended the IJAS conference at Harvard Medical School in Boston, USA. The experience was rewarding in terms of not only attending the conference but being able to present one of my postgraduate papers. ... This multidisciplinary conference provided me with the opportunity to share my research findings both through the conference podium and IJAS’ double-blind refereed publications, as well as to interact with many academics from a range of disciplines and countries. ... The two off-campus tours to Maine and Plymouth Plantation offered another learning forum, allowing for personal interaction in an informal setting to discuss different points of view. This facilitated a lasting research partnership with many international researchers. ... This experience has sparked an interest in me to join in exchanging research and promoting the spirit of research and co-learning.”

Shehzeen Alamir

“The IJAS research conference was a great opportunity of learning. It provided me with a platform to encounter other researchers and professionals from other countries and institutions. The connections built among professionals and researchers are likely to become everlasting international research partnerships.”

Nisha Khorasi

“This was my first external research conference, and my first experience of presenting in a multidisciplinary setting. Other researchers shared very interesting findings from a wide array of fields, including business, technology, religion, science, health, and more. Coming from an education background, this multidisciplinary conference helped give me exposure to a wide array of current research. ... My main takeaway from participating in this conference was that, as STEP teachers, we are not so different from the broader field of educators. ... As I sat through presentations on engagement, technology in the classroom, adolescent psychology, and more, I realised that our context and struggles are not so different from other educational contexts and struggles. While there are some notable differences, we have more in common and can learn from these diverse educational settings.”

SCRIBAL CULTURE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY BADAKHSHAN: A CASE STUDY OF MUBĀRAK-I WAKHĀNĪ

Dr Abdulmamad Iliiev, Research Associate, Department of Curriculum Studies, IIS
Class of GPISH 2002

Scribal activists are a relatively new phenomenon in the remote mountainous regions of Badakhshan in Central Asia. Divided into Tajik and Afghan domains, the linguistic landscape of these regions is dominated by numerous unwritten Pamiri languages, but for centuries Persian has been the language of politics, education and literature. Examining the case of Mubārak-i Wakhānī (d. 1903), an eminent nineteenth-century mystical poet and scholar who was also a papermaker, scribe and bookbinder, this study aims to understand how scribal culture evolved in a predominately oral-tradition oriented corner of the Persianate world, and to what extent Wakhānī contributed towards its further growth in terms of production, distribution and preservation of handwritten texts.

akhānī's life and thoughts are thoroughly examined in my monograph: *The Ismā'īlī-Sufi Sage of Pamir: Mubārak-i Wakhānī and the Esoteric Tradition of the Pamiri Muslims* (2008). Here it suffices to summarise that his intellectual legacy consists of more than sixteen books of prose and poetry written in Persian about Sufi mysticism and Ismā'īlī esotericism. The themes of his works are similar to those of other mystic poets with a focus on the divine–human relationship and human efforts to grow closer to God through love and devotion, worship and prayer. He also had a good command of the Arabic language and wrote commentaries on selected verses of the Qur'an. Some of his major works include *Qalb al-Ṣafā'* ('the Purity of Heart'), *Kalām-i-Sa'ādāt* ('the Book of Felicity'), *Pandnāmayi Risālat* ('the Book of Prophetic Wisdom'), *Kashf al-Ṣalawāt* ('Unveiling the Prayers'), *Ṭalīb al-Maṭlūb* ('A Seeker of the Sought'), *Hājāt va Munājāt* ('the Needs and Inward Prayers'), *Dāstān-i Tafṣīr-i Āyāt-i Kalām dar Haqīqat-i Mujādila-yi Iblīs va Ādam* ('Qur'anic Commentaries on the Truth about the Dispute between Satan and Adam'), *Risāla-yi Chehel Dunyā* ('the Forty Worlds' Treatise'), *Qaṭrat al-Baḥr* ('A Drop from the Ocean'), *Tarjamat al-Bayān* ('Clarity of Expression') and *Dīvān-i Kulliyāt* ('Collection of Poems'). Wakhānī was also interested in art, calligraphy, music and astronomy – skills which were well-endorsed by his contemporaries and later generations of intellectuals. Appreciating Wakhānī's intellectual capacity to engage the sciences of his time, the famous Russian scholar Andrey Bertels called him 'the Avicenna of Badakhshan'.

Papermaking was one of the most remarkable and challenging skills that Wakhānī possessed in his economically disadvantaged context. As his toponym – Wakhānī – indicates, he came from Wakhan, a remote mountainous valley, where paper was a very rare and relatively expensive commodity imported from other parts of Central and South Asia. Wakhānī had to handmake his own paper on which to compose his books. According to his relatives, he invented a mechanical tool called *dastgāh-i qāghaz-barār* ('the paper-making machine'), which consisted of four wooden counters stuck to a flat four-angled stone with an iron mechanical tool in the middle and an animal horn serving as a tube for transmitting the raw materials (e.g., eelgrass, rice, reeds, hair and apricot twigs) from which the paper was made. Wakhānī's relatives believe that this unique machine remained intact in the private collection of one of his grandsons until 1970–75, but later it mysteriously disappeared.

It is evident from Wakhānī's poetry and many of his works (e.g., *Dīvān-i-Kulliyāt*) that paper was an essential vehicle for the preservation and transmission of his ideas and thoughts. He was preoccupied by the job of making paper and by the philosophy that he attached to its production. He asserts that the desire to write enabled him to produce paper, a silent material, which, once covered with ink, becomes the spokesperson of his thoughts, a scheme of his mind:

“ Even if I am not thinking of paper,
My brain is still preoccupied by it.
When I desire to move my pen,
Dozens of silent pages will come to life.”

Wakhānī's artistic designs are mostly demonstrated in the various forms of Islamic calligraphy and miniatures presented in his books and in other objects, for instance, in the ceiling of a house in his village. He tended to use the two most famous styles of handwriting in the Muslim world, namely *nasta'liq* and *naskh*, designed in multi-coloured frames in which the poems are printed. The line of a frame, which is usually divided into four sub-frames, is decorated with vegetable ornaments of various sorts and shapes. At the top of the first page of each manuscript, Wakhānī draws a domed frame filled with the names of Allah, Muhammad and 'Ali. Under the domed frame, there is usually a common Islamic expression: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful". Usually the first, second and occasionally the third and fourth pages of his books are decorated. His handwriting is beautifully presented and contains elements of Islamic art, such as geometric figures and vegetal ornamentations.

In conclusion, Mubārak-i Wakhānī lived his entire life in the Pamirs, far away from Central Asia's main economic and intellectual centres of his time. Yet he tested his intellectual and practical abilities by developing new knowledge and skills that hardly existed in Wakhan before his time, such as papermaking and scribal art. In addition to inventing a special mechanical tool to produce paper, he articulated his often-intertwined Ismaili-Sufi thoughts in the form of 'irfān poetry. It is believed that all his books were written on his own hand-made paper, which tends to be of high quality. Today, some of it is preserved in his museum-shrine in Tajikistan.



Cover page Mubārak-i Wakhānī's manuscript, *Qalb al-Ṣafā'* ('the Purity of Heart')



BEYOND ‘PARADISE GARDENS’: PRODUCTIVITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IN THE AGA KHAN GARDEN

Aleem Karmali

Class of GPISH 2009

Introduction

This article will reflect on the purpose of Muslim gardens, arguing that Muslim gardens have historically made positive and productive contributions to society. In the modern world, this role can extend to the pressing challenges of environmental conservation, as seen through the example of the Aga Khan Garden in Edmonton, Canada.

Gardens of Paradise

One of the common descriptions applied to the diverse gardens found in Muslim cultures is the term ‘Paradise Gardens’. This phrase suggests that Muslim gardens are created primarily as reflections of paradise as described in the Qur’an, in which paradise is symbolised as a garden. Such an interpretation, viewed primarily through a religious and social lens, emphasises the role of gardens as places for pleasure, relaxation and spiritual reflection on the Divine. Emma Clark summarises the symbolism of ‘Paradise Gardens’ in this way: ‘Centred on a spiritual vision of the cosmos, these gardens... mirrors of their Heavenly counterparts – aim, like all sacred art to draw the visitor closer to God’.¹

Muslim gardens typically offer an engaging aesthetic and sensory experience, featuring colourful plantings, fragrant scents, the sounds of running water, and beautiful geometric and symmetric design elements. Yet, it is important to view such gardens not only through an aesthetic lens or as a reflection of spiritual ideals, but to see them as serving multiple functions motivated by a variety of aims. Although gardens have served a variety of purposes in Muslim history, one purpose that should be given attention is gardens as spaces of productivity.

Gardens of Productivity

The historical roots of the Muslim garden tradition lie in the agricultural need to grow food in the hot, dry climates of the Middle East. As Muslim empires expanded, the control and careful use of water to irrigate the land was essential for survival and prosperity in both rural and urban settings. In rural contexts, one common garden form was the *bustan* (orchard), in which fruits and other crops were grown. What many people typically think of today as Muslim gardens, such as the landscape architecture at the Taj Mahal, Humayun’s Tomb, or the Alhambra, were built as royal gardens by rulers or elites in society. While serving as a space of pleasure, relaxation and social interaction, royal gardens also served as important sites of agricultural growth, botanical research and scientific innovation. As Andrew M. Watson writes,



“By the tenth century, the royal gardens at Cordoba seem to have become botanical gardens, with fields for experimentation with seeds, cuttings and roots brought in from the outermost reaches of the world... Thus, the gardens of the medieval Islamic world, and particularly the royal gardens, were places where business was mixed with pleasure, science with art. By being part of a network, which linked together the agricultural and botanical activities of distant regions, they played a role – perhaps one of great importance – in the diffusion of useful plants.”²

Environmental Stewardship

One of the great challenges, and most hotly contested issues, of the twenty-first century is the increasing scale of human impact on the environment. The need for increased environmental sustainability to combat climate change and pollution is a significant concern for many in the world today.

The notion of environmental stewardship is also rooted in the Islamic faith, as the Qur’an refers to humans as trustees of Divine creation, and thus Muslims are called upon to leave the world in a better condition than they inherited it. At the inauguration ceremony of the Aga Khan Garden in Edmonton, His Highness the Aga Khan stated that ‘a central part of the Garden tradition is the high calling of human stewardship, our responsibility to honor, to protect, and to share the gifts of the natural world’.³

Productivity in the Aga Khan Garden

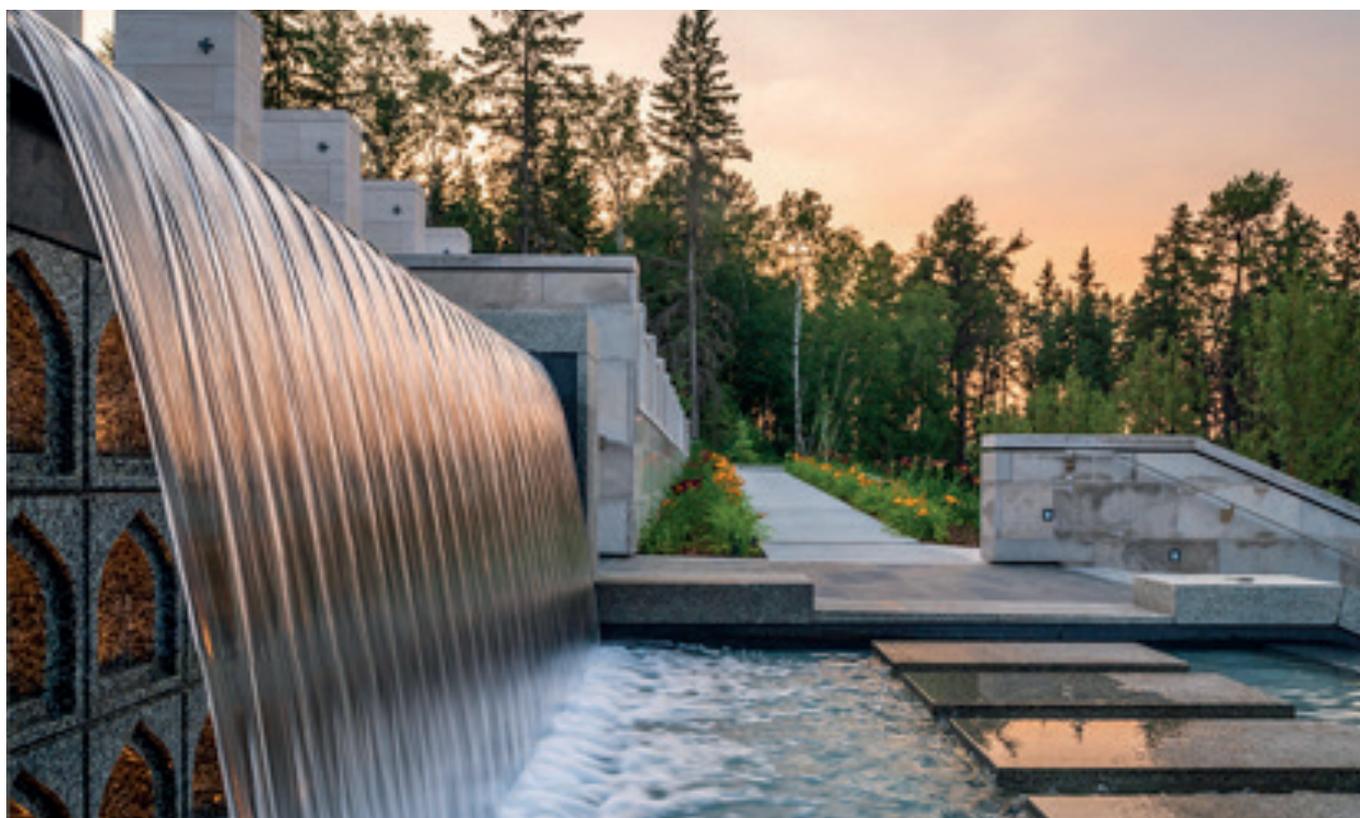
One example of positive contributions to the environment in modern Muslim gardens is the Aga Khan Garden. It was one of three garden projects opened in 2018 as part of the Diamond Jubilee of His Highness the Aga Khan and given as a gift to the University of Alberta Botanic Garden.

The Aga Khan Garden participates in the historic tradition of Muslim gardens being sites of productivity in three ways. First, as part of a university botanical garden, it will be a site of research, innovation and education for the wider community. In its educational role, it aims to teach about both wetland ecology and Muslim culture and design. Second, the garden features a formal *chahar-bagh* (four gardens) which connects to a large pond, around which is an informal *bustan* with trees that will grow a variety of fruits. Third, the garden is designed in a way that it can contribute positively to the local ecology. One of the province of Alberta’s most pressing conservation issues is the impact that oil sands mining has on surrounding wetland infrastructure. As D. Fairchild Ruggles explains,

“As a response that encourages remediation and contributes to wetland restoration, the [Aga Khan] Garden’s *bustan* will include diverse native plants in such abundance that the seed can be gathered to provide stock for planting new wetlands. In this way, the model of an Islamic garden... for the twenty-first century is one that engages actively and beneficially with its environment, whether it be in Edmonton or Agra.”⁴

Conclusion

Muslim gardens not only reflect a spiritual conception of the life hereafter, but also engage with Islamic ethics in the here-and-now. Through the example of the Aga Khan Garden, we can see that Muslim gardens of the twenty-first century can also contribute positively to the wider society and the pressing environmental challenges of our day. This is in keeping with the historic Muslim values of using intellectual resources for the benefit of others and the importance of being good stewards of the Divine creation.



¹ Emma Clark. “The Symbolism of the Islamic Garden”, *Islamic Arts & Architecture*, 2 October 2011, <http://islamic-arts.org/2011/the-symbolism-of-the-islamic-garden/>.

² Andrew M. Watson. “Gardens of Islam”, *Muslim Heritage*, <http://muslim.heritage.com/article/gardens-islam>.

³ His Highness the Aga Khan. “Inauguration of the Aga Khan Garden, Alberta”, *Aga Khan Development Network*. University of Alberta Botanic Garden, Edmonton. 16 October 2018, <https://www.akdn.org/speech/sua-alteza-o-aga-khan/inauguration-aga-khan-garden-alberta>.

⁴ D. Fairchild Ruggles. “An Islamic Garden in Edmonton”, in *Heritage of the Mughal World*, edited by Philip Jodidio, 267–271. Munich: Prestel, 2015.

ALUMNI PUBLICATIONS

ISLAM: AN ILLUSTRATED JOURNEY

Dr Farhad Daftary, Professor Zulfikar Hirji
Class of GPISH 1997



Islam: An Illustrated Journey is a richly illustrated, accessible account of Islamic history that gives the reader an introduction to a faith that is practised today by over a billion people whose traditions and civilisations are rich and diverse.

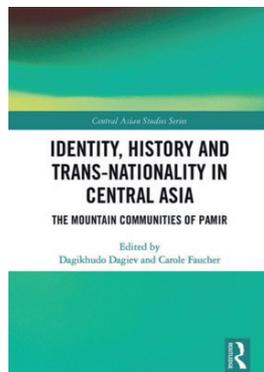
Travelling through more than fourteen hundred years of history from Islam's formative era to its place in the modern world, the book explores the many social and cultural landscapes of Arabia, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Central Asia, China, the Americas and Europe where Islam was adopted and took root.

The book also discusses the historical formation and development of Islam's many interpretative traditions and orientations including Sunnism, Shi'ism, Ibadism and Sufism. It also covers the diverse social and cultural institutions that Muslims have built and through which they have expressed their beliefs and ideas, as well as the numerous artists, intellectuals and personalities who have contributed to the story of Islam.

<https://iis.ac.uk/publication/islam-illustrated-journey>

IDENTITY, HISTORY AND TRANS-NATIONALITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Class of GPISH 2003



This book provides insights into the identity process of a group of mountain communities whose vigorous cultures, languages and complex political history have continued to shape a strategic part of the world. Its various chapters capture what being a Pamiri may entail and critically explore the impact of both trans-regionalism and the globalisation processes on activating, engaging and linking the dispersed communities. The

book presents a variety of lines of argument pertaining to Pamiri identity and identification processes.

Structured in three parts, the book first addresses themes relevant to the region's geography and the recent history of Pamiri communities. The second section critically explores the rich philosophical, religious and cultural Pamiri heritage through the writings of prominent historical figures. The final section addresses issues pertaining to the contemporary diffusion of traditions, peace-building, interconnectivity and what it means to be a Pamiri for the youth of the region. Contributions by experts in their field offer fresh insights into the Ismaili communities in the region while successfully updating the historical and ethnographic legacy of Soviet times with present-day scholarship.

<https://www.routledge.com/Identity-History-and-Trans-Nationality-in-Central-Asia-The-Mountain-Communities/Dagiev-Faucher/p/book/9780815357551>

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Evening view of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre, Khorog.
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Page 8:

Cover page of Mubārah-i Wakhānī's manuscript, *Qalb al-Ṣafā'* ('the Purity of Heart'), a lyrical poem composed in 1310/1893.
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Page 10:

Top Image: View along the Nahr to the Talar at dusk, Aga Khan Garden, Edmonton, Canada
Image Credit: Jeff Wallace / Courtesy of Aga Khan Trust for Culture
Bottom Image: Wetland Seed Banks and the Mahtabi
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Water flows over the Chinikhana
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View down the central axis (*Nahr*) and past the *Chahar-Bagh* to the *Bustan* – Aga Khan Garden Edmonton, Canada.
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