



Institute of Medieval and Post -Medieval Studies

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Mission Statement

The mission of IMPMS is to make people aware of the great contributions of Islamic civilization to the West, and indeed to the whole world, by presentations and dissemination of written and audio-visual materials, and also through participation in academic conferences as well as by organizing events on this subject.

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THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Build America as a homogenous community where people of all faiths and ethnicities live together

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a beautiful country which has produced eminent scholars, poets and great artists. It is situated at the crossroads of Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East. Afghanistan is a land-locked country bordering on Iran to the west, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan to the north, a tiny border with China at the northeast, and Pakistan to the east and south. Despite its mountainous terrain and fiercely independent inhabitants, the country has been invaded time after time throughout its history. The population of Afghanistan is about 32.7m .Its largest ethnic group is the Pashtun, 42%. Tajiks 27%, Hazaras and Uzbeks 9% each and Aimaks. The remaining 22% are Turkmen, Baluchi, Nuristanis, Kizilbashis, and other groups Dari and Pashto, both of which are Indo-European languages of the Iranian sub-family. Dari and Pashto use a modified Arabic script. Majority of Afghanistan's people are Muslim, 80% are Sunni, and 19% Shia. The remaining 1% includes Baha'is and Christians. Afghanistan also has a population of 30,000 to 150,000 Hindus and Sikhs. Today, only a few Hindus remain.

Major Cities:Kabul, population 1,780,000, **Kandahar**, (226,000) **Herat**, (177,000)**Mazar-e-Sharif**, (131,000), **Jalalabad**, (58,000) and **Konduz**, population 57,000

Afghanistan was settled at least 50,000 years ago Around 700 B.C., the Median Empire expanded its rule to Afghanistan. Alexander the Great of Macedonia invaded Afghanistan in 328 B.C., founding a Hellenistic empire with its capital at (Balkh). The Greeks were displaced around 150 B.C. by the Parthians, nomadic Iranians who established the Kushan Empire. Most Afghans were Hindu, Buddhist or Zoroastrian at that time, but an Arab invasion in 642 A.D. introduced Islam. The Arabs ruled until 870. In 1220, Mongol warriors under Genghis Khan conquered Afghanistan, and descendants of the Mongols would rule much of the region until 1747. In 1747, the Durrani Dynasty was founded by Ahmad Shah Durrani, an ethnic Pashtun. This marked the origin of modern Afghanistan. Britain fought two wars with the Afghans, in 1839-1842 and 1878-1880. The British were routed in the first Anglo-Afghan War, but took control of Afghanistan's foreign relations after the second. Amanullah reigned from 1919 until his abdication in 1929. His cousin, Nadir Khan, became king, but lasted only four years before he was assassinated. Nadir Khan's son, Mohammad Zahir Shah, then took the throne, ruling from 1933 to 1973. He was ousted in a coup by his cousin Sardar Daoud, who declared the country a republic. Daoud was ousted in turn in 1978 by the Soviet-backed PDPA, which instituted Marxist rule. The Soviets invade in 1979 and remained in Afghanistan for 10 years. Warlords ruled from 1989 until the extremist Taliban took power in 1996. The Taliban regime was ousted by U.S.A led forces in 2001 for its support of Osama bin Laden

The country's most valuable export is opium; eradication efforts have done little to reduce production of this illegal cash crop. Other export goods include wheat, cotton, wool, hand woven rugs, and precious stones. Afghanistan imports much of its food and energy. Agriculture employs 80% of the labor force, industry and services 10% each. The unemployment rate is 40%. The currency is the Afghani.

Dr. Basheer Ahmed, Past President of IMPMS will be making a presentation at

**First Annual Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies
Monday, June 17, 2013 - Wednesday, June 19, 2013**

“Medieval Muslim Scholar Ibn Rushd (Averroes) - Influence of His Philosophical Ideas on the West”

Saint Louis University, MO

PLEASE JOIN IMPMS TODAY

IMPMS goals are to disseminate information about Islamic civilization's contribution to world civilization through presentations of lectures and seminars to students and teachers at all levels from Middle School to University and to establish a library of books, manuscripts, and other learning resources of and about major Medieval and Post-Medieval Muslim scholars in the Islamic World. If you like to support these activities,

Please become member of IMPMS and donate generously

For membership:

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Jamaluddin Afghani (1838-1896)

M. Basheer Ahmed, M.D.

Sayyed Jamaluddin al-Afghani was undoubtedly one of the most influential Muslim of the 19th century. He was a versatile genius, intellectual and an orator. He was born in 1838 in Afganistan at the border of Iran. He studied the Quran, Fiqh, philosophy, tasawwuf, logic, mathematics, and medicine. He knew Arabic, Persian, Turkish, French, English and Russian languages. At a young age he set out on his sacred mission of bringing about an awakening in the decaying world of Islam, in Afghanistan, India, Iran, Egypt and the Ottoman Empire.

In 1856, at the age of eighteen, Afghani spent a year in Delhi-India and felt the rising political pulse of the subcontinent, which was soon to erupt in the Uprising of 1857. From India, he visited Arabia where he performed the Hajj. He spent the period 1858 to 1869 in Afghanistan working for successive Amirs (rulers). In 1869 he made brief visits to India and Cairo on his way to Istanbul, capital of the Ottoman Empire. He was elected to the Turkish Academy but Turkish *ulema* (religious authorities) found his teachings unacceptable, and he was expelled from Istanbul in 1871. He went back to Cairo where he had a major role in the events that led to the overthrow of Khedive Ismail Pasha. He was at the head of the Young Egyptian Movement and the nationalist uprising under Torabi Pasha that sought to expel the Europeans from Egypt. The British, suspicious of his motives, sent him back to India just before their occupation of Cairo in 1882. After a stay of about eight years in Egypt, Jamaludin Afghani left Cairo in March, 1879, and arrived in Hyderabad Deccan (India). Here he wrote his famous treatise, "Refutation of the Materialists", which created a stir in the materialistic world.

"It is permissible... to ask oneself, why Arab civilization, after having thrown such light on the world, suddenly became extinguished, why the Arab world still remains buried in profound darkness. Afghani blames the Muslim rulers, theologian and likewise the orthodox Muslims.

The strangest thing of all is that our ulema these days have divided science into two parts. One they call Muslim science and one European science. Because of this they forbid others to teach some of the useful sciences. Science is International. There is no such thing as Islamic science. Science is like building a pyramid. Each person puts up a block. These blocks have never had a religion. It's irrelevant, the color, region or ethnicity of the person who put up the block"

From India, Sayyed Jamaluddin embarked on a journey through Europe and resided for various lengths of time in London, Paris and St. Petersburg.

In Paris he met and influenced the Egyptian modernist Muhammad Abduh. Together, the two started a political organization *Urwah al Wuthqa* (The Unbreakable Bond) whose sole purpose was to "modernize" Islam and protect the Islamic world from the greed of foreigners. The British were annoyed and were instrumental in shutting down the organization. However, Iran's Minister of Press read a newspaper published by *Urwah al-Wuthqa*, and he persuaded the King, Nasiruddin Shah, to invite Afghani to Tehran. There Afghani soon won followers impressed by his ideas and his eloquence, but the shah was not one of them. In 1887 Sayyed Jamaluddin was forced to leave Iran.

He spent some time in London, then lived in Russia for about four years. He won the confidence of the Czar, and it was through his influence that the Muslims in Russia were permitted to print the Holy Quran and other religious books, whose publication was earlier banned in Czarist Russia.

In 1889 Nasiruddin Shah was visiting St. Petersburg, and upon meeting Afghani there he invited him to come to Tehran again, promising him the post of prime minister. Afghani saw an opportunity to have an impact in the Islamic heartland, but he soon found himself once again out of favor with the monarch. This time he took sanctuary in a well-known shrine just south of Tehran. There he was able to meet with influential figures who were interested in his ideas about modernizing Iran's political and economic systems. Inevitably the shah learned of Afghani's attacks on some of his policies, and in January 1891 he sent armed troops to drag Sayyed Jamaluddin forcibly out of the shrine and deported to Ottoman Empire. From there and sometimes from London, Afghani led a campaign over the following years against Iran's policy of selling concessions for economic activities to foreign companies in order to get cash to fund the shah's visits to Europe and other activities. The most dramatic case was the awarding to a British subject of a concession for the production, sale and export of all Iranian tobacco to a British subject. Afghani got the highest Shi'i religious authority, to issue a decree forbidding Shi'is to buy or use any tobacco products from the concessionaire. The result was that beginning in December 1891, a remarkably effective boycott by smokers forced the government to cancel the entire concession early in 1892. A devoted Iranian servant and follower of Afghani named Mirza Reza Kermani visited him in Istanbul in 1895. On May 1, 1896, Kermani assassinated Nasiruddin Shah.

Jamaluddin Afghani spent the rest of his life in Istanbul and died of cancer in 1896.

Two principal themes run through the life and work of Sayyed Jamaluddin Afghani:

- I) He was a great Muslim revolutionary and reformer who aimed at the unity of Muslim people all over the world. He wanted to make Islam a great force in the world. The political principles followed by Afghani are as follows:
 - a) He wanted to influence the head of states in to achieve internal reforms as well as to resist foreign domination. Through this principle, he wanted to establish a model country to be followed by other Asian and Muslim countries.
 - b) He wanted to use France and Germany as a third power to support the Asian struggle against the British as well as Tsarist Russia.
 - c) In case of failure of the above theory, he wanted to influence the British to support the eastern nations in order to push the Russian imperialist out of Asia.
 - d) He also sought help from Russians to support Asians against the British.

The Muslim world was living under colonial suppression with major problems of internal discord, illiteracy and poverty. Jamaluddin's ideas were noble but he was never been able to materialize his goals and objectives. He was dealing with the powerful imperialist of the time without any support from any Muslim government. The colonial powers' primary interest was the division of the world of Islam and they continuously conspired against Jamaluddin and did not allow him the propagation of his mission..The British, promoted the narrow-minded nationalism rather than the pan-Islamism preached by Afghani.

II) He sought to “modernize” Islam to make it responsive, as he saw it, to the needs of the age.

It was essentially a rationalist movement, which sought to bring about a renaissance of Islamic thought

The great French philosopher Renan says about Afghani: “The liberty of his thought, his noble and loyal character, made me believe, while I was talking with him, that I had before me, restored to life, one of my old acquaintances----Avicenna, Arerroes, or another of those great infidels, who represented for five centuries the tradition of the human mind.”

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal pays glowing tributes to Jamaluddin Afghani when he says: “A perfect master of nearly all the Muslim languages of the world and endowed with the most winning eloquence, his restless soul migrated from one Muslim country to another, influencing some of the most prominent men in Iran, Egypt and Turkey.”

His influence throughout the east and especially in the world of Islam was indeed overwhelming. He was, to a great extent, responsible for the awakening of Muslims during the 19th century.

Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273)

The full article on Jalaluddin Rumi was published in the last newsletter of IMPMS

Jalal al-Din Mohammad Ibn Mohammad Ibn Husain **al-Rumi** was born in 604 A.H. (1207/8 C.E.) at Balkh (Afghanistan). His father Baha al-Din was a renowned religious scholar and Rumi received his early education under his patronage. When he was 18 years old, the family migrated and settled in Konya (Turkey). At the age 25, Rumi went to Aleppo and Damascus for advanced education. He received his mystical training first from his father and later he was trained by Shams al-Din of Tabriz. He became famous for his mystical insight, his religious knowledge and as a Persian poet. He became professor at the famous Madrasah in Konya where he used to teach a large number of students. He also founded the famous Maulvi Order in Tasawwuf. He died in 672 A.H. (1273 C.E.) at Konya which subsequently became a sacred place for dancing dervishes of the Maulvi Order.

His major contribution lies in Islamic philosophy and Tasawwuf. This was embodied largely in poetry, especially through his famous Mathnawi. This book, the largest mystical exposition in verse, discusses and offers solutions to many complicated problems in metaphysics, religion, ethics, mysticism, etc. Fundamentally, the Mathnawi highlights the various hidden aspects of Sufism and their relationship with the worldly life. For this, Rumi draws on a variety of subjects and derives numerous examples from everyday life. His main subject is the relationship between man and God on the one hand, and between man and man, on the other. He apparently believed in Pantheism and portrayed the various stages of man's evolution in his journey towards the Ultimate.

Apart from the Mathnawi, he also wrote his Diwan (collection of poems) and Fihi-Ma-Fih (a collection of mystical sayings). However, it is the Mathnawi itself that has largely transmitted Rumi's message. Soon after its completion, other scholars started writing detailed commentaries on it, in order to interpret its rich propositions on Tasawwuf, Metaphysics and Ethics. Several commentaries in different languages have been written since then.

His impact on philosophy, literature, mysticism and culture, has been so deep throughout Central Asia and most Islamic countries that almost all religious scholars, mystics, philosophers, sociologists and others have referred to his verses during all these centuries since his death. Most difficult problems in these areas seem to get simplified in the light of his references. His message seems to have inspired most of the intellectuals in Central Asia and adjoining areas since his time, and scholars like Iqbal have further developed Rumi's concepts. The Mathnawi became known as the interpretation of the Qur'an in the Pahlavi language. He is one of the few intellectuals and mystics whose views have so profoundly affected the world-view in its higher perspective in large parts of the Islamic World.

“Love is the sultan of sultans: both worlds bow at its feet.

Love has no body, no mind, no heart, no soul.

Love lies out of reach of dogma.

The light that reason sheds is a false dawn.

Dawn's real beauty can be seen not by the eyes,

but by the heart”. **Rumi**

I will for you: “to have fear of God secretly or openly, to

eat less, to sleep less, to speak less, to refrain from sins,

To continue fasting and praying to abstain from lust, to

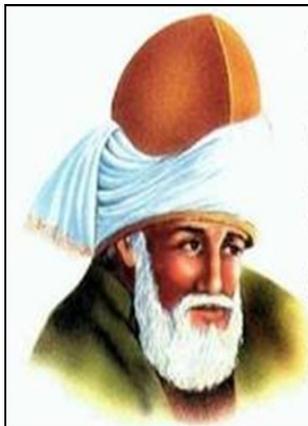
endure people's torment and ill treatment, to avoid of

being with dissolute and ordinary men, to be kind and

wise people. For the most beneficial man is the one

who does a favor for others. And the most beneficial word

is the one which is short and sincere”. **Rumi**



**“Raise your
words, not voice.
It is rain that
grows flowers,
not thunder.”**

Moulana Muhammad Jalaluddin Rumi



Yushau Sodiq, Ph.D President, IMPMS

Dr. Yushau Sodiq is the current president of the IMPMS. He is an Associate Professor of Islamic Studies and African Religions at Texas Christian University Fort Worth, TX. His academic work includes the following articles:

"Islam in Africa," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to African Religions*, edited by Elias Kifon Bongmba. Wiley-Blackwell Incorporation, Publication, 2012, pp. 323-337.

"Nigerian Civil Government and the Application of Islamic Law," in *Religion, Conflict, and Democracy in Modern Africa*," edited by Samuel K. Elolia. Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2012, pp.342-371.

Book Reviews:

"Feeling Betrayed: The Roots of Muslim Anger at America" by Steven Kull. (2011) reviewed by Yushau Sodiq in *the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol. 30 no. 1 (Winter, 2013): 94-97.

"Gender and Islam in Africa: Rights, Sexuality, and Law," by Margot Badran, ed. (2011) reviewed by Yushau Sodiq in *the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol. 29, no. 4 (Fall 2012): 87-90.

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Academy of Religion held in Chicago on November 17-21, 2012.

Yushau Sodiq, "Islam and West African Muslims in Diaspora: The Case of the Nigerian and the Senegalese Muslims." Presented on November 17, 2012 at Chicago.

Mr. Edward Thomas Past President of IMPMS Made a Presentation at Medieval Conference at Sam Houston University

"What Europe's Renaissance Owed to Islamic Civilization: The Case of Astronomy."

I concentrated on the contributions of four great scholars of the Islamic world: **Abu Rayhan Biruni**, **Omar Khayyam**, **Nasir al-Din Tusi** and **Ulugh Beg**. I then spoke about the great European (Polish) thinker **Copernicus**, who declared that the Earth revolved around the Sun. My paper goes on to tell about three other European scholars: **Tycho Brahe**, **Galileo** and **Kepler** (The fact is that I did not have time to do more than mention their names, but you may not want to mention that) I did point out that a diagram Copernicus used to explain the geometry of how circular motion can be changed to straight motion was quite clearly a copy of the diagram in a work written two centuries earlier by Tusi. But Copernicus did nothing wrong, and it was he who took the important step of calling the solar system heliocentric rather than geocentric. All the astronomers from the Islamic world were geocentrists. They developed the mathematical astronomy without which Copernicus could not have written his revolutionary book, for the math is the same whether the earth revolves around the sun or vice versa.

We welcome the New Member of IMPMS Executive Committee

Ms. Ora Hankins (Raufah Bilqis Hanifah)

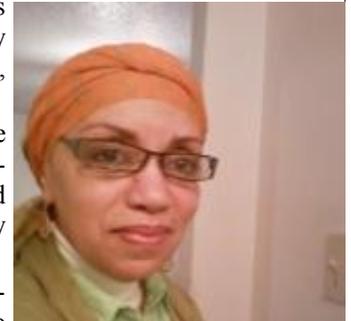
Secretary Institute of Medieval and Post Medieval Studies

I was born and raised in Philadelphia, PA on September 12th. I received a B.A. in American History and Education with teacher certification from Marygrove College in Detroit, Michigan, formerly a Catholic Women's College. I also worked for the US Civil Service Commission while living in Washington the first year after graduation. I converted/reverted to Islam in 1972.

I taught briefly in the Detroit Public Schools and later the Islamic madressa or community school as an instructor of older girls. During this time my life was involved mainly with my immediate family of husband and children and Muslim Women's activities in the Muslim community, such as nutrition, midwifery, hospitality, and fundraising.

We moved to New Orleans, LA in 1983, where I continued to work in the Muslim community as the children grew up. As mother of six adult children, I am also now grandmother to eleven grandchildren. In 1994, I began working in public libraries as an Associate. I received a Masters of Library and Information Science (MLIS) from Louisiana State University (LSU) in 2005 with election by faculty into Beta Phi Mu, the honor society for library and information studies.

Since receiving the Masters degree, I have been living and working in Dallas, TX for the Dallas Public Library. I am currently Branch Manager for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Branch where we work to promote education and learning in the community. I continue my interest in Islamic affairs, Islamic studies, in particular tasawwuf or sufism and promoting information on the contributions of Islam to society, both past and present.



Dr. Ahmed has presented a lecture on Contribution of Muslim Scholars to the World Civilization to Youth Group at Islamic Association of Colleyville on April 21, 2013.