



MAULANA JALALUDDIN MOHAMMAD
RUMI 1207-1273 A.D.
SUFI PHILOSOPHER MYSTIC

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

Raise you words,
not voice. It is rain
that grows flowers,
not thunders.

A brief outline of life and work of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi

M.Basheer Ahmed M.D.

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi was one of the great mystic poets and the founder of Mevlevi Sufi order. His teachings are universal in nature. His mystical writings cover every aspect of human life. His writings inspire tolerance and humanism.

Mawlana Rumi was born in Balkh, present-day Afghanistan in the year 1207 CE. His father, Bahauddin Balad, was a well-known jurist, Islamic scholar and mystic. Rumi's childhood was a period of social and political turbulence due to the crusades and the constant threat of Mongol invasion, and this has influenced much of his poetry. Rumi traveled extensively with his family from Balkh to Baghdad, Mecca, Damascus and other parts around the Muslim world. In 1228, at the invitation of the Sultan of the Seljuk's, Alaeddin Keykubad, they settled in Konya, Anatolia, in the present-day Turkey. He became known as 'Rumi' because he moved to Anatolia, once the base of the eastern Roman Empire.

Rumi studied under his father and later under a renowned scholar and Sufi Burhaneddin al-Tirmithi and devoted himself to his service for nine years, Sufi Fareeduddin Attar also had a considerable influence on Rumi during his early years. He learned and promoted the idea that serving people are ultimately serving God. Rumi completed his scholarly education in Damascus, mastering in the classical Islamic sciences, including Quran and its Tafseer, knowledge of Hadith (traditions of Prophet (pbuh)) and jurisprudence (fiqh).

While Rumi was in Damascus, he met Darvesh Shams Tabrizi, which completely changed his life. He became more interested in Tasawuf and Sufi traditions. After meeting "Shams" he composed poetry for 10 years in his honor and named it "Diwan Shams Tabrizi". This was a collection of 40,000 verses of poems, which is considered one of the greatest works on Tasawuf in Persian literature expressing the union of man to the divine.

Rumi's major work is the Masnavi, a six-volume poetry book containing some fifty thousand verses. This was considered the greatest spiritual masterpiece ever written by any human being. He focused on removing the cultural and religious barriers and bringing humanity close to God. He communicated the inspirational messages through his writing that attracted people from almost every religion throughout the world. This is the reason why his writing became popular in East as well as in West. Although Rumi was a Sufi and a great scholar of the Quran, his appeal for tolerance and close relationship with the God reaches across religious and cultural divisions.

Rumi's life and work showed us that it is not faith, belief and religion, which cause hatred, conflict and violence, but the anger, greed and the unrestrained ego contribute to these human weaknesses. He showed that the true practice of religion and the purification of the heart, is the remedy for these.

Rumi's work was translated from Persian to German Language by Joseph Hammer (an Austrian historian). It was Goethe (the Father of European romantic movement), who was greatly influenced by Rumi's poetry and introduced Rumi to the Western World.

"The world of Rumi is neither exclusively the world of a Sufi Muslim, nor the world of a Hindu, nor a Jew, nor a Christian; it is the highest state of a human being; a fully evolved human. A complete human is not bound by cultural limitations; he touches every one of us. Today, Rumi's poems can be heard in churches, synagogues, Zen monasteries, as well as in the downtown New York" (Shahram Shiva).

Rumi's teachings were liberal and appealed to Muslims and non Muslims. He focused on reaching God through art, poetry and music. He encouraged SAMA to enlighten oneself through listening to the music and doing sacred Dance(Whirling Dervishes)

If the sky is not in love, then it will not be so clear.

If the sun is not in love, then it will not be giving any light. If the river is not in love, then it will be in silence, it will not be moving.

If the mountains, the earth are not in love, then there will be nothing growing."



SEMINAR ON RUMI – Speakers

Institute of Medieval and Post Medieval Studies DFW, The Dialogue Institute

Perkins School of Theology SMU, Multi Cultural Alliance & Rumi Foundation for Peace

RUMI SEMINAR- March 21st 2015

Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas

A universal message of peace

**The teachings of Rumi are universal in nature; for him, religion was mostly a personal experience
and not limited to logical arguments, as his couplets suggests.**

*I searched for God among the Christians and on the Cross and therein I found Him not.
I went into the ancient temples of idolatry; no trace of Him was there.
I entered the mountain cave of Hira and then went very far but God I found not.
Then I directed my search to the Kaaba, the resort of old and young; God was not there.
Finally, I looked into my own heart and there I saw Him; He was nowhere else.
-Jalauddin Rumi*

Dr. Robert Hunt, PhD — Dr. Hunt received a PhD from the University of Malaya in 1993. He is presently Director of Global Theological Education and the Center for Evangelism and Missional Church Studies at the Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, where he teaches in World Religions, Islam, Interreligious Dialogue, Cultural Intelligence, and Mission Studies. Dr. Hunt is author of several books, including *Islam in Southeast Asia*, and *Muslim Faith and Values: What Every Christian Should Know*.

Dr. Yushau Sodiq, PhD— Dr. Yushau Sodiq earned his Doctorate Degree in Islamic Studies in 1991 from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. He is serving as an associate professor of Islamic and Religious studies at Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX. Dr. Sodiq has authored many articles and edited several books. His most recent entries can be found in *Africa and the Americas, Culture, politics, and history: A Multidisciplinary Encyclopedia*, 2008, *Holy People of the World: A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia*, 2006.

Dr. Ori Z. Soltes, PhD. is from New York. Completed Masters at Princeton University. After completing PhD, he served as a director of B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum and now he teaches History, Theology and Philosophy at Georgetown University. He authored 240 articles and books. Some of his recent books include *Our Sacred Signs: How Jewish, Christian and Muslim Art Draw from the Same Source*; *Searching for Oneness: Mysticism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*; *Untangling the Web: Why the Middle East is a Mess and Always Has Been*; and *Embracing the World: Fetulleh Gulen: "Thought and Its Relationship to Jelaluddin Rumi and Others"*.

Dr. Mahmoud Sadri PhD. received his Masters degree from University of Tehran and PhD from New School University, New York. He is currently serving as Professor of Sociology at Texas Women's University and the federation of North Texas Area Universities. He has published more than 50 book chapters and articles. His books include *Migration, Globalization and Ethnic Relations*; *Reason, Freedom and Democracy in Islam*. He appeared on national news concerning developments in Iran, Islam and Middle East.

Dr. Farid Younos PhD. was born in Afghanistan and after completing undergraduate work in Denmark, Dublin and US he received his PhD in International and Multicultural Education from the University of San Francisco. He is a professor of Cultural Anthropology of Middle East and Islamic philosophy at California State University, East Bay. He has presented papers and lectured on Islam and politics of Afghanistan, women's rights and he is the founder of Afghan Domestic Violence Prevention Program. He has received multiple awards including peace at home award from California Senate, the distinguished ambassador of Islam and visionary of peace Award and outstanding professor Award.

Dr. M. Basheer Ahmed, M.D.- is the founding member and President Emeritus of Institute of Medieval and Post Medieval Studies. He is the founding member and Chairman Emeritus of Muslim Community Center for Human Services, North Texas. He is the native of Hyderabad, India, obtained medical degree from DOW Medical College, Karachi and completed post graduate studies at Glasgow University, Scotland. He is the Distinguished Life Fellow of American Psychiatric Association. He is the past President of Islamic Medical Association, North America, and the member of board of directors of Multicultural Alliance. He was an Assit Prof of Psychiatry at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, NY and was a Prof at South Western Medical School, Dallas, TX. He has edited three books on "Domestic violence", "Islamic intellectual heritage and its impact on the west" and "Muslim contribution to world civilization". He has received many awards including Humanitarian Award from Tarrant County Medical Society and Peacemaker of the year Award from Dallas Peace Center.

Muhsin Shaheed is the current President of IMPMS. He holds double Masters degree from TCU and Graduate school of Islamic and social sciences, VA. An educator with Fort Worth independent school district and is a Chaplain at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. He is the member of the board of trustee at Masjid Hassan of Al Islam. He has been very active in Muslim and interfaith organizations.

Mehmet Soyler is the Director of Dialogue Institute. He will be completing his PhD in June 2015. He is very active in Turkish community and has been the member of various interfaith organizations.

PRESENTATIONS AT RUMI SEMINAR

Dr. Basheer Ahmed will be presenting a brief outline of life and work of Maulana Rumi. Maulana Rumi was born in Balkh– Afghanistan and at an early age moved to Konya, Turkey. He met Dervish Shams Tabrizi whose influence made him a great mystic poet and sufi. He composed the Sufi poetry Diwan Shams Tabrizi which contained 40,000 verses. His most famous contribution to the Persian Sufi literature was “MATHNAVI” which contains 50,000 verses. His message was universal and his appeal for tolerance and close relationship with God reaches across religious and cultural divisions. Rumi was introduced to west in 18th century when his work was translated in German language. It was Goethe, the famous German poet, who was influenced by Rumi’s poetry and introduced him to the west. His teachings were liberal and appealed to Muslims and non Muslims. He focused on reaching God through art, poetry and music. He encouraged “SAMA” reaching enlighten through listening to the music and doing sacred dance (whirling dervish).

Dr. Mahmoud Sadri, will present the first 18 verses of Rumi’s magnum opus: “Mathnavi.” This section encapsulated Rumi’s entire work and connects Rumi’s own biography to his idea of humanity’s worldly existence as separation from the divine.

Dr. Farid Younous presentation: Since the middle of nineteenth century, even earlier, Western scholars have delved into studying Rumi. Their efforts, hard work and dedication on exploring Rumi is phenomenal. There are many pupils of knowledge and literature who are not aware about the immense contribution on Rumi by Western scholars for the sake of knowledge. Contribution of Western scholars on Maulana Jallaluddin Balkhi known as Rumi bridged the East with the West on a spiritual level. Consequently, Rumi not only has become the most read poet among Westerns, but also brought a message of peace among nations in which we need the most today.

Rumi’s studies connected the East with the West intellectually and spiritually. This relationship based on scholarship is a solid prove that connection through knowledge and wisdom can be constructive to people because self-interest is in not involved. Secondly, it established cooperation between scholars. This cooperation cemented for an understanding between cultures and a true appreciation of each other. Third, Maulana believing in monotheism and One Reality opened the door for understanding Tauhid (unification), the Islamic philosophy of Oneness of God, humanity, knowledge and the universe to Western cultures. Maulana , we can say, introduced the true nature of mysticism, “Love of the Absolute,” (Tasawuf) to the West. And last but not least, it was through Maulana that people of the world, those who seek peace found not only peace of the soul, but also peace of co-existence and among nations of the world.

Ori Z Soltes presentation: The world in which Jalaludin Rumi (1207–73) lived was ridden with violence and strife. Rumi was an intensely devout Muslim. One day a man name Shams of Tabriz showed up in his classroom and posed a question that pushed him on a journey beyond shari’a (Muslim law), into the inner depths of the divine hiddenness, the mysterion.

One might expect that, as a child of his time and as someone so committed to Islam, Rumi might have espoused a position of hostility toward non-Muslims and perhaps also to Muslims whose understanding of shar’ia he found wanting. But Rumi’s writings evince an unwavering universalism that would stand out in any era, but particularly that in which he lived.

There is a logic to this. The goal of the mystic is to become one with God’s innermost recesses. For a Sufi, as Muslim mystics are called, this implies a paradox: how can the seamlessly singular God—the embodiment of tawhid (oneness)—have an “innermost” part, implying an “outermost part,” -which implies duality? For a mystic, however, paradox is simply part of what one must embrace in pursuit of one’s goal: to achieve oneness with the One. To be one with God is to be completely filled with Godness. To do that one must be completely emptied of self. And if one empties oneself of self, then one is emptied of ego.

So as a consummate mystic, for all of his profound Islamic intensity, Rumi was also a universalist. For to be emptied of ego is to be empty of the ego-bound notion that my path to God is the only true path. This is expressed in the poetry contained within the Mesnevi that is Rumi’s great verbal legacy.

One can discern both a uniqueness to Rumi as a universalist and also a connection to a handful of other mystics in the Muslim as well as the Jewish and Christian traditions. One can also understand how the thinking of Rumi has inspired the movement known as Hizmet—altruistic service—inspired by Fethullah Gulen (b.1942), whose writings on Sufism and on the diverse paths of serving God by serving others is a model of post-Rumi thought.

Institute of Medieval and Post-Medieval Studies (IMPMS)

M. Basheer Ahmed, MD President emeritus IMPMS

In 2001, the late Professor Dilnawaz Siddiqui, past president of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), visited Dallas to explore the possibility of organizing regional conferences for AMSS in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Between 2001 and 2005 four annual regional conferences were organized under the leadership of Ambassador Syed Ahsani, Dr. Basheer Ahmed, Dr. Yusuf Zia Kavakci and Dr. Siddiqui. These conferences, highlighted the contributions of Muslim scholars to the world civilization in sciences, medicine and many other fields. These conferences were well attended by Muslims and non-Muslims in DFW area. Dr. Basheer Ahmed, Ambassador Ahsani and Late Dr. Dilnawaz Siddiqui also made presentations at the annual International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo in 2003, 2004, 2005. Around that time, they began meeting with the aim of establishing an organization devoted to spreading information about the important contributions of Islamic civilization, to the world and the Institute of Medieval and Post-Medieval Studies (IMPMS) was established. Ambassador Ahsani became the first president of the newly incorporated organization. Subsequently, Dr. Basheer Ahmed, Mr. Edward Thomas and Dr. Yushau Sodiq became the presidents. Mr. Muhsin Shaheed has taken the responsibility as a president since January 2015.

Goal and Objectives of IMPMS: The essential goal of the Institute of Medieval & Post-Medieval Studies (IMPMS) is to help generate a climate of mutual understanding and respect between Muslims and people of other faiths and cultures and make them aware of the Muslim contributions to the World civilization. In this way, we aim to quell what has been labeled as a clash between Islamic and Western civilizations. In pursuit of this goal, IMPMS seeks to reach people at all ages above kindergarten with information about the great contributions and contributors of the Islamic world in many fields of knowledge and art. This is done by giving talks to varied audiences, including students and teachers at schools and universities, congregations at churches, mosques, synagogues and other places of worship, and organizations promoting peace and non-violence, etc. We also circulate written materials, including a Newsletter, try to find opportunities to publish articles in newspapers and journals, and take part in conferences.

Some Noteworthy IMPMS Activities

Between 2007 and 2009, IMPMS board member Edward Thomas taught a Continuing Education course at Southern Methodist University entitled "Great Thinkers of the Islamic World."

In December 2009, Michael Hamilton Morgan, author of "Lost History: The Enduring Legacy of Muslim Scientists, Thinkers, and Artists", gave the keynote address to a large gathering at the IMPMS annual dinner.

In September 2010, IMPMS board members Basheer Ahmed, Edward Thomas and Muhsin Shaheed presented papers in an IMPMS session at the Texas Medieval Association (TEMA) annual conference at Southern Methodist University, and board member Reem Elghonimi gave a presentation in another session there.

In November 2010, Basheer Ahmed and Edward Thomas gave presentations at Texas A&M University as members of a panel on "Contributions on History of Science from Islamic Civilization."

In September 2011, Basheer Ahmed, Edward Thomas, Yushau Sodiq and Muhsin Shaheed gave presentations in an IMPMS session at that year's TEMA conference, held at Baylor University.

In 2011, IMPMS conducted an essay contest for high school juniors and seniors, who had to write about a Muslim scholar of Medieval Period who made an important contribution to the world. An Award Ceremony was held at SMU on March 4, 2012 when the Awards were distributed to the winners.

In June 2012, Dr. Ahmed presented a paper at international meeting on Renaissance at St. Louis University, Missouri on the influence of Ibn e Rushd philosophy in the west.

In June 2012, IMPMS arranged Screening of award-winning documentary film "Out of Cordoba" by Jack Bender outlining the influence of Ibn e Rushd and Maimonides on the western civilization.

Published Books: Dr. Basheer Ahmed, President Emeritus, edited two books, "Muslim Contributions to World Civilization" published by Association of Muslim Social Scientists & IIIT in 2005; "The Islamic Intellectual Heritage and its Impact on the West" published by Institute of Medieval and Post -Medieval Studies in 2008.

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.

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For membership please send name, address, phone number, e-mail address and \$25 annual membership fee to IMPMS: 10 Home