

Association for the Study of Ginans

International Ginan Conference

**Saturday 29th October 2011
&
Sunday 30th October 2011**

Holiday Inn Hotel Brentford Lock, London TW8 8GA

Association for the Study of Ginans

WELCOME

The Ginan Study group during the past nine years has been involved in six International Conferences. The first conference was organised by Mr A Rahmatoullah of the *Society of Ismaili Studies* with co-sponsorship of **theEcole Pratique des Hautes Etudes(Sorbonne)** and the *North Gujarat University (Patan)* at the French Riviera in April 2002; followed by the second in collaboration with and at the location of the *University of Saurashtra Rajkot India* in November 2004; and the third entitled '*Devotional Expressions of South Asian Muslims*' organised by *The Institute of Ismaili Studies* at the Ismaili Centre London in November 2006; the fourth was held in London in June 2007 when the Association for the Study of Ginans was formally established; the fifth conference was held in London in October 2009; and the last one entitled '*Sounds and Spaces of Muslim Piety: Tradition and Transformation*' was co-sponsored with the *Canadian Centre for Ethnomusicology at the University of Alberta* in Edmonton.

This therefore is the seventh International Ginan Conference with the largest gathering to date of people who have keen interest in Ginans and the study of Ginans. We are very happy that this conference is being held at the ***Holiday Inn Hotel Brentford Lock, London on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th October 2011*** and thank the hotel management for their wonderful support.

The two day event features presentations by eminent scholars from across the globe and the recitation of Ginans and garba on Saturday evening.

The highlight of the conference will be the launch of the much improved Ginan database that will be accessible through the Association's website www.Ginans.org

At the conference we would present the report for the years 2007-10 and elect the office bearers for the *Association for the Study of Ginans*.

The aims and objectives of the Association are to promote, study, research, publish and create awareness of the Ginans; to provide information, advice and support including resources and financial support to individual scholars and non-scholars who seek to study Ginans; organise meetings; work in harmony and with collaboration wherever possible with external bodies, including Imamati Institutions and places of higher learning.

We welcome all existing members and hope everyone present would join the Association as a member and participate actively in future events.

We are very pleased to meet you all, and pray for successful deliberations. Amen.

With best wishes and Ya Ali Madad

Mr Pyarali Jiwa
Chairperson

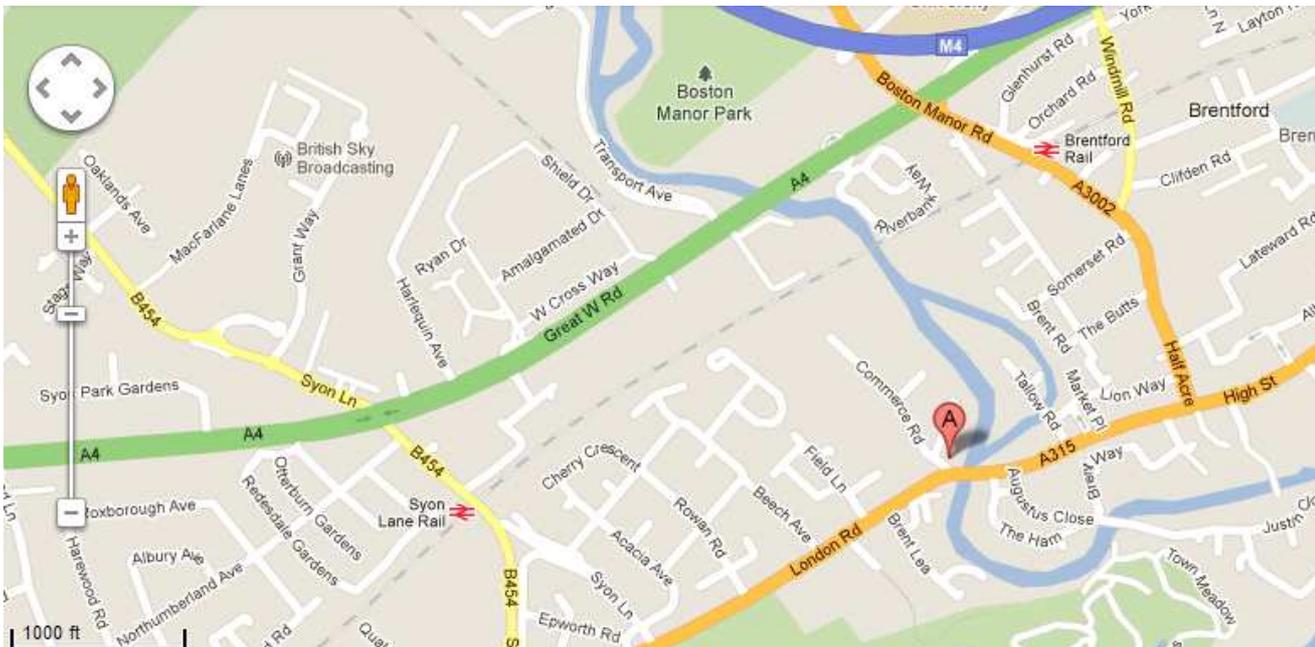
Professor Françoise Mallison
Vice Chairperson

CONFERENCE VENUE



Holiday Inn London - Brentford Lock

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Welcome to the Holiday Inn London Brentford Lock. This modern and stylish hotel is situated within the newly developed area of Brentford Lock and on the banks of the Grand Union Canal, offering unique waterside views.

Brentford train station and Boston Manor tube station are a short distance away. The hotel is also easily accessible from Heathrow and Central London. The hotel is with easy access to the M25, M4, A4 and is ideally located 6 miles west of Central London and 6 miles from Heathrow Airport.

The Holiday Inn London Brentford Lock offers 134 air-conditioned spacious rooms including 18 executive rooms with balconies overlooking the Brentford Lock. All rooms offer complimentary tea and coffee, iron and board, safe, mini fridge and hairdryer. Wi-Fi and Hard Wired high speed internet access are available throughout the hotel.

The Island Restaurant & Bar at the Holiday Inn Brentford Lock offer a very special dining experience, offering the delights of Pan-Asian dishes, weekday specials and Traditional Sunday Carvey. The Academy conference & training suites offer modern up to date facilities, for up to 700 people. All meeting rooms offer natural daylight, blackout and High Speed Internet Access. The Waterfront Banqueting Suite can hold weddings and events up to 600 people with stunning views of the canal. All rooms are suitable for a variety of events from training courses, boardroom meetings, conferences, weddings & team building events.

Parking facilities available on site.

Speakers and Title of Papers

1. Professor Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy (*Department of Ethnomusicology, UCLA, USA*)
- *Piety Performed and Visualized: Devotional Sung Poetry, Paintings, and Textiles of Shi'a Imami Ismailis (Khojas) of South Asia*
2. Professor Balvant S Jani (*Saurashtra University, Rajkot, India*)
- *Comparative Analysis of Satpanth Ismaili Ginans and Gujarati Bhajans of Bhakti Tradition*
3. Mr Bashir Ladha (*London, UK*)
- *Search for Meaning and Meaning of Search: Spiritual Quest and Images in the Ginans*
4. Dr Diana Steigerwald (*California State University, Long Beach, USA*)
- *Ginans in Ismaili Theosophical History*
5. Dr Fateh-Ali M Ladhani (*Health Sciences & Spiritual Sciences School of Consciousness, Rutherford University*)
- *Ginans - Derivation of Omniscience, Spirituality, Biopsychosocial and Neuropsychotherapeutic paradigms*
6. Professor F. 'Nalini' Delvoye (*EPHE, Paris*)
- *Studying the Musical Aspects of Ginans as Song Texts: Revisiting the definitions of poet-composers, performers, musical modes and repertoires*
7. Mrs Hamida Madhani (*Lawrenceville, GA, USA*)
- *From Art to Spirituality – A personal Journey*
8. Mr Mohan Devraj Thontya (*Karachi, Pakistan*)
- *Barmati panth*
9. Mr Nizar Mawani B.Pharm (*London, UK*)
- *The concept of Personal Spiritual Search conveyed in the Ginan 'Ho jire maaraa ha(n)saa' by Pir Sadardin*
10. Dr Otambek Mastibekov (*Aga Khan University-ISMC, London, UK*)
- *A Journey of Faith through Music: How Qasida Became a Sole Source for Teaching Religion in Badakhshan*
11. Mrs Rashida Hunzai (*London, UK*)
- *The Holy Qur'an in the Ginanic Literature – an Initial Exploration*
12. Mr Sadrudin Hassam (*London, UK*)
- *Gināns – Manual for Serious Learners*
13. Mr Zahir Virani (*London, UK*)
- *Preservation of Ginanic literature electronically*

Professor Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy, (Department of Ethnomusicology, UCLA, USA)



Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy (B.A. Vassar College 1970; M.M. Yale University 1972; Ph.D. Brown University 1980) is a visiting faculty member in the Department of Ethnomusicology at UCLA, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on the classical and folk music of South, Southeast and East Asians and Asian-Americans, field methodology, ethnographic film, music and the sacred, and applied and public sector ethnomusicology. Amy's research, writing, teaching, curating, and multi-media publications often have an applied focus aimed at community development of minority traditions, especially in diasporic settings. Her applied research includes projects with Cambodian-American refugees and the Hmong-American tribal minority of Laos. She and UCLA historian Edward Alpers co-edited *Sidis and Scholars: Essays on African Indians* (New Delhi: Rainbow Publications, 2004) concerning the African-Indian Sidi community of India. Her recent writings address the impact of international touring on the sacred traditions of Sidi Sufis. Her most recent video/DVD documentary, *Music for a Goddess* concerns musical tradition and modernity among Dalit (untouchable) devadasis of the Deccan region of southern Maharashtra and Northern Karnataka (Van Nuys: Apsara Media, 2008). She is currently an affiliated professor at the University of Visual and Performing Arts in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

<http://www.apsara-media.com>

Title

Piety Performed and Visualized: Devotional Sung Poetry, Paintings, and Textiles of Shi'a Imami Ismailis (Khojas) of South Asia

Abstract

The ginan tradition has long served as a unique marker of Ismaili Khoja identity. This identity continues to undergo various types of transitions. Pir Satgur Noor (12th century est.) is believed to be the first Pir to compose ginans. Two paintings of scenes from the Pir's life during his introduction to the Princess Palande of today's Gujarat will be discussed, with iconographic elements compared to his life as found in hagiographies. The miniature paintings are presumed to have been included in a volume of ginan texts. Such volumes have long been a method of making ginan oral texts into sacred objects. An early twentieth century embroidered depiction by a Khoja woman of her Ismaili Pir, and her patchwork portrayals of scenes from the 1932 hajj, will broaden the discussion to the rarely considered realm of Khoja visual representational sacred art.

The ephemeral nature of the sounds of ginans has now also become more tangible through audio recording technologies. The earliest known recordings, of five "Khoja devotional songs," were recorded in Karachi in 1939 by the Dutch ethnomusicologist Arnold Adriaan Bake. One, sung by Ghulam Rishah Ali Shah, noted by Dr. Bake as being "sung in Persian," is not recognised by Farsi speakers, and which conference participants will be asked to consider. To conclude, some recent trends in Khoja geet will be critically considered within the tradition of Sh'ia Imami Ismaili devotional expression.

Professor F. ‘Nalini’ Delvoye (EPHE, Paris)



Françoise ‘Nalini’ Delvoye is Professor at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, where she teaches Indo-Persian literature on performing arts in the Sultanate and Mughal period and poetry sung in North Indian music. She is affiliated to the “Iranian and Indian Worlds” research group, and associated with the “Centre for South Asian Studies”, Paris. She has a Ph.D. in Braj literature (1976) but has specialized in Indo-Persian culture in medieval and pre-modern India. The English version of her D.Litt. thesis on “Tānsen and the Tradition of Dhrupad Songs in Braj Language, 16th Century to the Present Day” (1991), is in preparation. In addition to numerous articles on literature and music in the Indo-Persian context, Delvoye was the editor of *Confluence of Cultures: French Contributions to Indo-Persian Studies* (New Delhi, 1994; rpt. 1995). She co-edited (with Muzaffar Alam and Marc Gaborieau) *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies* (New Delhi, 2000). With the late Professor Prem Lata Sharma she co-edited the first volume of Nūr-Ratnākar and Amīr Khusrau’s *Prose Writings on Music by Shahab Sarmadee* (Kolkata, 2003 and 2004). She co-edited (with Joep Bor, Emmie te Nijenhuis and Jane Harvey) *Hindustani Music: Thirteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (New Delhi, 2010). She is presently working on the patronage of performing arts in Indo-Persian and regional sources, and studying the historical and literary contribution of lyrics transmitted through oral and written tradition.

Title

Studying the Musical Aspects of Ginans as Song Texts: Revisiting the definitions of poet-composers, performers, musical modes and repertoires

Abstract:

My interest for Ginans started while attending the weekly lectures of Professor F. Mallison at EPHE, Paris (late 1990s – early 2000s), with a stress on the textual tradition of Gujarati literature. As a scholar of medieval and pre-modern literature of North India and a keen listener of Hindustani music, but not a specialist of Ginans, I would like to address specific issues on their musical aspect, as song texts performed as liturgical ‘hymns’ or as ‘songs’ in non ritual contexts.

In spite of Ginans being ‘poems meant to be sung’, monographs on their musical aspect are very few and the literary or historical works of eminent scholars belonging to the Khoja community hardly describe their performance. Ginan databases have also very few reference to their musical mode.

Pirs and Sayyids are often described as ‘composers’ of Ginans. Does that English term cover the range of skills of poet-composer-interpreters (vāggeyakāra) of medieval and pre-modern South Asia, or mean ‘music composers’ setting poetry into music?

Why and how do academic studies of Ginans differ from research done by scholars of literature and music on song texts of other faiths such as Vaishnavism or Sikhism, and South Asian Islam? Is the sacred or secret character of Ginans a reason for the lack of musicological studies by non-Khoja Ismailis?

The presentation will substantially benefit from the comments of scholars and practitioners of the Khoja community, and outsiders. That should help defining further pluridisciplinary research, taking into account the expectations of the Khoja community.

Mr Sadrudin Hassam (London, UK)



Sadrudin Hassam has graduated with a Master's degree from Edinburgh University, having studied in the Dept. of Arabic and Islamic Studies. He had previously qualified as a teacher at the Teacher Training College, Nairobi and is an experienced educationist. Over the years, he has conducted a number of short courses on Gināns and Gujarati in the HR training programmes in Tanzania, Portugal and the U. K., where he was employed as Religious Education Officer with ITREB. At the Institute of Ismaili Studies, he has worked on a number of research projects which gave him access and exposure to the Khojki and Gujarati ginānic manuscripts at the Institute's library. He has worked with waezeen and scholars on Ginānic literature, published articles on the explanations of the festival gināns for Ilm, and given lectures to graduate students at the IIS.

Soon after the 1975 Ismailia Association International Conference in Paris, he participated as an educationist representing the Ismailia Association Tanzania at the two Religious Education Conferences at Nairobi that were tasked to plan the International Religious Education curriculum for the worldwide Ismaili jamats. During the 10-day 1994 Padhrāmṇī to the U.K., he was given the duty to audition, select and train various individuals to recite verses of the Gināns in the presence of Mawlana Hazar Imam.

Title

Gināns – Manual for Serious Learners

Abstract

The draft edition of **Part One of Gināns – Manual for Serious Learners** will be displayed. Interested applicants would be asked to pilot-test and evaluate the suitability of the contents and methods of learning. The 10 Units should be completed in eight to ten weeks taking no more than 25 hours equating to about 20 minutes daily. Their responses would enable the author to improve the overall quality of the book so as it make it easy to follow with confidence. The published manual would prove useful to anyone interested in learning the Gināns in Gujarati script.

The aim of the manual is to enable the reader to learn, understand and appreciate the Gināns in their own Indic Ismaili vernacular idiom.

The 'tools of comprehension' as objectives in Part One are to:

- a. Become familiar with more than 1,600 Ginānic words, expressions and their meanings many of which are context embedded in the verses of the gināns quoted,
- b. Understand the translations and meaning of more than fifty verses from selected Gināns,
- c. Recite with appropriate rāga; and understand the handwritten verses,
- d. Become familiar with the names of the Pirs and Saiyads to whom these Gināns are attributed,
- e. Master, as by-product, the sounds and conventions of the use of Gujarati vowels, diphthongs, nasal sounds, vowel signs, consonants, conjuncts and the numerals,
- f. Read, write and record all the printed and handwritten Gujarati letters and words fluently,
- g. Use a Gujarati-English dictionary with ease.

Mrs Rashida Noormohamed Hunzai (London, UK)



Rashida Noormohamed-Hunzai studied for a B.A. Honours in Geography from the University of Hull and a P.G.C.E. from Bristol University on a Kenya Government Asian Teachers' Scholarship. She was sponsored by the Institute of Ismaili Studies to do a M. Ed. at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. She read two courses in Islamic Studies as part of the M.Ed. She also has a Post-graduate Diploma in Curriculum Studies from the Institute of Education, London University. Her professional career spans several years of teaching at Secondary Schools in Kenya and Bristol, working as an Education Officer for the Birmingham Community Relations Council, the Education Unit of the Institute of Ismaili Studies and as a Religious Education Co-ordinator of the Ismaili Tariqah Board for the United Kingdom.

Her publications include **The Holy Ahl al-Bayt in the Prophetic Traditions**, Karachi, 2000 with Dr. Faquir Muhammad Hunzai, and Chapter "Islam" in **"Faiths for a Future – A resource for teaching environmental themes in religious education"**, Religious Education and the Environment Program, London, 1998. She has edited 60 English translations by her husband Dr. Faquir Muhammad Hunzai of the esoteric works of `Allamah Nasir al-Din Nasir Hunzai, including "Paradise of Flowers" which is a translation of Burushaski devotional poetry and "Gems of Ma`rifat", a translation of Persian devotional poetry.

Title

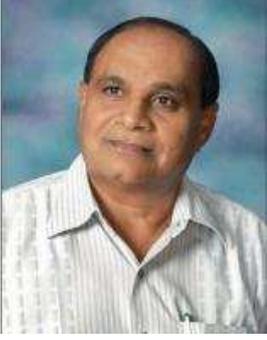
The Holy Qur'an in the Ginanic Literature – an Initial Exploration

Abstract:

The holy Qur'an, the Divine revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s.) symbolises the unity of the Muslim world. During the course of the history of the Ismaili da`wat this universal message or essence of the glorious Qur'an was expressed in diverse languages and different modes, creating a rich heritage of diversity within the unity of the faith of Islam. A part of this heritage, the Ginans continue to impact the lives of thousands of Ismailis from the Indo-Pak subcontinent, including the diasporas of this community across the globe.

This initial exploration of what is thus a living tradition, will seek to identify examples of the Qur'anic message in the Ginans under such headings as fundamental principles, religious practices, ethics and spiritual search. An attempt will be made to provide examples of both the tanzili or exoteric as well as ta`wili or esoteric expressions of the Qur'an in the Ginanic literature. The paper will also aspire to highlight the superb creativity of the Pirs and Sayyids who composed the Ginans, the majority of whom were from the Persian Ismaili tradition. It will focus on how they seamlessly wove the Qur'anic message into the vernacular idiom, the environmental context and the predominant mythology of the sub-continent.

Professor Balvant S Jani (*Saurashtra University, Rajkot, India*)



Balvant S. Jani is Professor and Head, Department of Gujarati Literature and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Saurashtra University, Rajkot. He is a specialist of medieval Gujarati Literature with reference to Khoja and Bohra communities. He also contributes to the study of bardic, oral and folk literature as well as hagiography and hymnology of traditional saints and he has written extensively on classical medieval Gujarati.

Title

Comparative Analysis of Satpanth Ismaili Ginans and Gujarati Bhajans of Bhakti Tradition

Abstract:

Ismaili Ginan literature is one of the most important traditions of medieval Indian literature. Writers and preachers of Ginan known as Pirs originally migrated from Arabia/Persia to Gujarat via Kashmir. The Pirs studied the regional language of Gujarat and became acquainted with the culture, literature and social beliefs of the society.

They began preaching their religion through Ginans, a literary form of poetry. This Ginanic literature of Satpanthi Ismailis is unique and incredible in its form as well as in its content. It depicts original individuality as an indigenous literary piece of medieval Indian literature, and has many similarities in themes and musical elements with the famous bhaktipadas (Bhajans of Gujarati Santvani or literary Bhakti tradition). This paper proposes a comparative analytical approach, focusing on similar features of Ginan and Bhajan literature.

The first part will elaborate on how and why the Ginan literary tradition of India is important in South Asian Literary traditions through its unique identity; and the purpose behind its creation and cultivation. In part two, a brief introduction to the Pirs will be followed by a selection of ten Ginan texts written by six Nizari Ismaili Pirs with English translation. In part three, the musical features and mode of expressions with the Bhajans along with the themes of the Ginan texts would be explored. In the final part, a discussion on how these two different forms of literature share the unique symbols of oneness, peace and harmony; yet retaining their own religious identity and tradition.

Mr Bashir Ladha (London, UK)



Bashir completed his Masters degree in Social Anthropology and Development at SOAS in 2003. His previous qualifications include the Advance Diploma in School Management from ULIE, the Advance Certificate in Islamic Studies from the Institute of Ismaili Studies and the Diploma in Curriculum Studies from ULIE.

His career commenced as Research Assistant at the Ismailia Association Pakistan and has continued his service as academic (and at times administrative) staff at ITREB UK since 1983. During this time, he has organised and delivered numerous lectures, waez, and talks; conducted teacher training courses; and provided support and expertise to all the activities of ITREB UK, including covering assignments in Europe and overseas.

He has a special interest in Indian classical and other folk lore music.

Title

Search for Meaning and Meaning of Search: Spiritual Quest and Images in the Ginans

Abstract:

Imagining, the ability to perceive and engage with a reality in a creative way is itself a stage of consciousness. It is space that is nowhere yet it is space that allows for personal and intimate connection with the reality. In a spiritual quest, imagination is an intermediary space between the divine and the manifest. Conversely, it is also a ladder ascending from the manifest to the divine.

The latter is the core function of images employed in Ginans. These images allow a listener to engage directly, without the medium of senses and even reason with the spiritual reality embodied in these images. Considering images as space for creatively engaging with spiritual reality, the images in Ginans could be considered a continuum space from the manifest '*zahir*' to the unseen '*batin*' and beyond that. By this definition these images are ontological states gradually enabling the realisation of the self.

The presentation will look at examples from various Ginans to explore the wonderful world of imagination as expressed through some key images in the Ginans.



Dr Fateh-Ali. M. Ladhani. MBChB, FRACGP, FACPsycheMed, Ph.D is currently at the Health Sciences & Spiritual Sciences School of Consciousness, Rutherford University and a Senior Lecturer Medicine at the University of New South Wales, Australia. He is the founder and Director of Ulul Albaab & Qauman Ya'qiloon Spiritual Psychotherapeutic Research Library & Laboratory.

Title

Ginans - Derivation of Omniscience, Spirituality, Biopsychosocial and Neuropsychotherapeutic paradigms

Abstract

Through scientific disciplines and ardent practice of Islam (SATPANTH) it is possible to appraise the Ginanic 'devotional literature' and unfold the quintessential attributes.

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) said: "learning and searching after knowledge is a sacred duty and that knowledge had to be acquired even if one had to go to China in search of it".

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) said: "The most complete gift of God is life based on knowledge".

Ilm is what we all strive for constantly. In other words we are seeking the TRUTH. For a simpleton like me there are two prerequisites for this task -a book of ILM and the GUIDE. Otherwise one is sailing in uncharted sea. To me this spells out that this arduous and yet fundamental journey is the conduit for character promoting quest which I do indeed willingly undertake. However, I soon learn that the road map highlights diversity and plurality. Hence the universal wish that everything should be simple but realize not simpler because the human life is a 'high calling'. The contemplative utterance of one word strikes a note on the keyboard of consciousness which leads to 'surti' which in turn like 'the Burraq' propels one to 'Bharmand'.

At the establishment of the Aga Khan University, His Highness the Aga Khan said, "The interpretation of our faith since the time of Hazrat Ali has been that the intellect of man should be entitled to its full dimension".

Many areas of religion remain unexplored by psychology despite the fact that religion and spirituality play a significant role in the lives of many people. With the use of scientific teaching tools which have been derived from the corpus of Ginans, further insight into the novel and yet primeval communication will be instilled and in turn generate intercommunication.

The mere ocular sensory modality sees only the exterior (zahir), but the quintessential is invisible (batin) to the eye. Only the Qalb (heart) can perceive the esoteric which is the reality. With the 'Light' one is enabled to see with the Qalb and reach the heights of spiritual awakening.

Mrs Hamida Madhani (Lawrenceville, GA, USA)



Hamida Madhani is a Georgia based contemporary artist, Independent creative director and a designer. Driven by the search to experientially understand our subjective experience of beauty and its relationship to forms and objects, Hamida's art explores the glorious rays of our being by creating art as a pathway to inner realities and spiritual dimensions of our existence. Utilizing her educational background in Computer Science, Design and Industrial Management, her artistic creations are a beautiful synthesis between digital and traditional art forms as well as eastern and western forms. She works in a variety of styles and themes but her focus has been in inspirational abstract and modern calligraphy art. Numerous works of her art have been commissioned by collectors internationally and has exhibited in galleries across US. Currently, she is exploring a variety of mixed media, creating collections of contemporary art in anticipation of upcoming international show in China.

Hamida has taken part in numerous exhibitions and donated a beautiful piece to our last International Conference held jointly with the University of Alberta at Edmonton in 2011. She has contributed to various publications and has won a number of awards.

<http://www.myhmstudios.com>

EXHIBITION BY HAMIDA MADHANI

Artworks specially commissioned for the Conference; later to be displayed at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London

Title

From Art to Spirituality – A personal Journey

Abstract

A very personal account of my artistic journey covering the different phases of my work starting from my discovery of beautiful forms and objects, to the different stages of my inner development and gradual transformation - all the way through to my present artistic endeavours. My journey started with a deep fascination of beauty and the simple question of why something appeared beautiful. At first it seemed to me beauty was somehow connected to objects and forms. My artistic experiential explorations but led me to the deeper realization that there was a strong relationship between the perceived objects and the presence of something to which the objects appeared. It seemed paradoxical that my personal experience was changing from moment to moment, but there was a presence of something essential, a self-luminous background so to speak, that was always unchanging in all experience. Coming from a strong spiritual background, it ultimately dawned on me that this ever present background was nothing but the actual substance, the spirit, the soul of everything we sensed or perceived and to which and in which everything was appearing. So in a sense, I was always only experiencing the soul in every forms and objects that I tried to visualize or express in an artistic form. Today, my work - whether they be exploratory forms or mystical objects – are always simply an expression of this universal ever present soul appearing in the different shapes, colours, forms, etc. My quest for beauty had led me to this profound experiential understanding and my art is nothing but the expression of THIS, which I hope to further describe and illustrate in this paper.

Mr Nizar Mawani, B.Pharm (London, UK)



Born in Tanzania, Nizar attended H.H.The Aga Khan Primary and Indian Public Secondary Schools where he completed his senior Cambridge Overseas School Certificate. He moved to the United Kingdom to continue his 'A' levels and graduated as a pharmacist at the Welsh School of Pharmacy in Cardiff.

Whilst at the Indian Secondary Public School his subjects included Gujarati language and Indian history; these subjects exposed him to Indian mythology which ignited his interest and enabled him to appreciate the richness of the Ginans. He has written and directed numerous Gujarati plays; written and directed plays involving Ginans; and has written the gist of Ginans for the three Ginan conferences held at London.

He has from a young age served the Ismaili community as a volunteer in various capacities; and as a waezeen for many years.

Title
The Concept of Personal Spiritual Search conveyed in the Ginan 'Ho jire maaraa ha(n)saa' by Pir Sadardin

Abstract

The use of allegoric language and parables are found in most religious scriptures, in prose and in poetry. The hidden spiritual world 'batin' is indeed a powerful force that can only be explained poorly by the perceivable physical senses in context of the material world around us which is further conditioned by cultural and environmental considerations.

In order to stimulate our understanding and to reflect upon the deeper esoteric meaning of life, Ismaili Pirs have composed Ginans that use the above tools to enable us to embark on the personal spiritual search towards the Light 'Noor' of Allah.

The Ginan 'Ho jire maaraa ha(n)saa Karani kamaavo to rabajisu(n) raacho' by Pir Sadardin is one such example. The Ginan expounds the ways of earning the blessings 'karani kamaavo' (and warns of the pitfalls) in order to achieve the ultimate spiritual goal. Through a captivating presentation expanding on each of the 11 verses of this short Ginan, Nizar will explain the meaning and the messages contained therein.

Dr Otambek Mastibekov (Aga Khan University-ISMC, London, UK)



Otambek Mastibekov received his PhD in Theology and Religious Studies in 2009 at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. He obtained MA in Islamic Studies from the same university, and has completed The Institute of Ismaili Studies' Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH). His doctoral thesis was entitled '*The Leadership and Authority of Ismailis: A Case study of the Badakhshani Ismaili Community in Tajikistan*' and his book based on this research will be published soon.

Title
A Journey of Faith through Music: How Qasida Became a Sole Source for Teaching Religion in Badakhshan

Abstract
The paper being presented is divided into two parts.

The first part deals with the musical instrument *Rabbob*, which has been used specifically for singing Qasidas by the Tajik Ismailis since the time of Pir Nasir Khusraw (1004-1088) if not earlier. These areas would be explored: the physical form of the *Rabbob* and the meaning of each single part of it; the sacredness of the *Rabbob* within the Ismaili Community and its place in the social and private life of the people; and demonstration of the tune or the sound of the *Rabbob* and its vocal reflection within the Qasida.

The second part of the presentation is the journey of the faith with Qasida at its centre. It will cover brief history of Qasida in Badakhshan; teaching religion through Qasida; the consequences of seventy years of the Soviet regime which forced the abandonment of all kinds of religious teachings; the resilience of Qasida recitation throughout this period despite the obstacles placed by the State machinery.

The Qasidas were a unique source for teaching religion, and the paper discusses the Islamic ethics that one grasps from our devotional poetry in both Ginans and Qasidas.

Dr Diana Steigerwald (*California State University, Long Beach, USA*)



Dr. Steigerwald is an expert in the History of Islamic Thought specialising in theology, philosophy, and Shi'ism. She has a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from McGill University (Montreal). She has lectured at different universities in Canada and United States.

Her first two books analyzed the works of al-Shahrastani (1086-1153), a Nizari Ismaili, who is recognized as an influential Muslim theologian and as an historian of religions. He was among the pioneers in using a scientific approach to the study of religions. Her second book is an annotated French translation of a work written in Persian Majlis by al-Shahrastani, which reveals particularly the esoteric and mystical facets of his thought.

L'Islam: les valeurs communes au Judéo-Christianisme is her third book which was reviewed through Les Éditions Médiaspaul (Paris). Her book develops different themes of Muslim ethics such as: tolerance, brotherhood, faith, prayers, prophecy, justice, and death. For each topic, she highlighted several concepts that Islam shares with the Bible, different Jewish and Christian traditions, and apocryphal literature. Her work emphasises the common principles of the faith shared by these three monotheistic religions. It shows the affinities of Muslim ethics with Judeo-Christian ethics.

In addition to her books, Diana has more than thirty published articles in academic publications and various encyclopaedias. She speaks a number of languages including French, Spanish, Classical Arabic, Persian and German.

Title

Ginans in Ismaili Theosophical History

Abstract

In this short lecture, Dr. Steigerwald will examine if certain elements of continuity exist between the Ginanic literature and previous Ismaili works. Are there philosophical concepts expressed earlier in Ismaili history that reappear in the Ginans? Although the Ginanic thought looks outwardly very different from the pre-Fatimid, Fatimid, and Alamut theosophy, she will select and analyse certain Ginanic concepts in detail and show that they convey the same fundamental truth as already expressed earlier in Ismaili primary sources.

Mr Mohan Devraj Thontya (*Karachi, Pakistan*)



Mohan Devraj Thontya is 47 years old, married and lives in Karachi, Pakistan. He has just completed his PhD Thesis on History & Culture of Meghwar: From the earliest times to the modern age at the University of Karachi. He previously obtained his M.A. (General History) from University of Karachi in 1999.

Mohan speaks several languages including Urdu, Sindhi, Kutchhi and Gujarati. He has contributed several research works and articles in journals, and wrote the article Some Ginans common to Barmati Panthi and Satpanthi traditions for the book *Ginans: Texts and Contexts* in honour of Dr Zawahir Moir.

<http://www.maheshpanthi.net/general/the-origins-of-meghwar-and-megh-rikh/>

Title

Barmati Panth

Abstract

The Barmati Panth also known as the Mahesh Panth is prevalent among the Maheshvari Meghwar castes of the Hindus of Sindh, Kutchh and Saurashtra. Founded by Shree Dhani Matang Dev in the 12th century A.D., his lineage still continues with the present descendants called *Gur Matangs*. Barmati Panth shares many features with Shaktism, Tantrism, Nathism, and Santism whereas the historical connection with Nizari Ismailis is worth noting. It has emerged as Shivaite mainly due to the worship of *Maheshvar* (God Shiva). The Barmati Panth scripture known as '*Mamai Dev Jo Ginan*' has survived through oral transmission and in hand-written form. The hymnology and rituals present a unique combination with its symbolic system.

The mythical accounts and figures were made part of the real history, due to one or other reason. This paper will try to re-establish the relation with the standard history of the Indian Subcontinent, and a more complete analysis of the same is available in my PhD thesis. The important feature that the Barmati Panth and other medieval movements have in common is the messianic element which usually derives from the concept of *Kalki* from Hinduism, or in our case, *Nikalank* Avatar who would appear to save the world.

Mr Zahir Virani (London, UK)



Zahir Virani graduated in Computer Studies in 1985 and runs his own information technology business.

He has 23 years of experience in the Financial Markets in London, managing large IT systems, primarily in Equities, Operations and Back Office, and has held senior management positions with blue-chip banks such as Phillips & Drew, UBS, Donald Lufkin Jenerette, Credit Suisse First Boston, HSBC, Cazenove and Bear Stearns.

He is a keen volunteer and has served in various Imamati institutions since 1979, holding positions of responsibility as Major of the Ismaili Volunteers Corps covering UK and Europe and currently serves as Chairman of the South London Jamatkhana Facilities Management Committee.

Zahir is a valuable member of the Association for the Study of Ginans - leading the IT requirements. He is responsible for managing the IT requirements for the Ginan Database; acts as webmaster for our website www.Ginans.org; and processes membership applications amongst other duties.

Website: www.imadz.com

Title

Preservation of Ginanic literature electronically

Abstract

Mr Pyarali Jiwa has produced a most comprehensive Encyclopaedia on Ginans in electronic format consisting of over 1900 titles of Ginans, over 450 audio CDs, electronic books, glossary giving English translation, and translations of complete Ginans. The database has cross reference and search facilities to enable retrieval of information that would benefit all scholars and Ginan enthusiasts.

Zahir has created the website www.Ginans.org for the Association for the Study of Ginans, and provided the IT structure and support to the Ginan database.

Zahir will demonstrate the database and explain the available functions including the search facilities. He will show the vast collection that is housed in the database. He will be using the latest version that is being launched at this conference which has many enhancements, additions and supplements.

He will touch on the history of Khojki and the Khojkijiwa fonts that he had created by Mr Jiwa and his grandson. Khojki was the language developed by our Pirs and used extensively in the written records of Ginans.