



MUSLIM Institute

UK Chapter



LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE BOOKS

‘AYN AL-FAQR - Eye of Spiritual Excellence
&
KALĪD AT-TAWHĪD - The Key of Monotheism

TRANSLATIONS OF
SULTAN AL-ARIFIN SULTAN BAHOO’S PERSIAN BOOKS

Wednesday June 15, 2022

at

The London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE)

Mission of Unity, Stability & Leadership In Muslims
www.muslim-institute.org

MUSLIM Institute (UK Chapter) organised a book launch ceremony of Sultān Al-'Ārifīn Ḥadrāt Sultan Bahoo's newly translated books by M.A. Khan at the London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE). The launch celebrated the translation of Sultan Al-Arifin Sultan Bahoo's two books 'Ayn Al-Faqr - Eye of Spiritual Excellence and Kalīd At-Tawhid - The Key of Monotheism, from Persian to English. The ceremony concluded with an interactive session during refreshments. Ali Iftikhar (Research Associate - MUSLIM Institute, UK Chapter) moderated the proceedings of the session. The event was attended by different diplomats, political personalities, academics, professionals, students, and people from various walks of life.



From Left (File Photos): Ali Iftikhar (moderator), Dr. Aasmaa Bygate, Dr. Iqbal Hussain, Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali, Prof. Dr. Amineh Hoti, M. A. Khan, Merve Cetinkaya

Honorable Speakers

Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali

Dewan of Junagadh & Chairman MUSLIM Institute

Prof. Dr. Amineh Hoti

Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge

Dr. Aasmaa Bygate

UK Director of Bridging Spiritual Cultures

Merve Cetinkaya

PhD Candidate, University College London

M. A. Khan

Author & Literary Translator of the Books

Dr. Fitzroy Morrissey

All Souls College, University of Oxford

Dr. Iqbal Hussain

President of MUSLIM Institute (UK Chapter)

Sultān Al-'Ārifīn Ḥadrat Sultan Bahoo authored around 140 books in Persian on mystical truths. His books have been unknown to the English audience especially the West until recent past. One of the reasons is that the original Persian manuscripts of majority of his books are still not available. In addition, there is a lack of quality in English translation of the books whose manuscripts are available. However, there is a large number of Persian manuscripts available in different libraries of South Asia that have yet to be either researched or translated into other languages.

The two valuable books 'Ayn Al-Faqr & Kalīd At-Tawḥīd were originally written by Sultān Al-'Ārifīn Ḥadrat Sultan Bahoo in the Persian Language and are now translated into English Language by M A Khan. Mr Khan has done a wonderful job to translate these Persian books into English while maintaining the essence of ideas discussed. The Persian text, consulted to translate these books, is the one researched and compiled by Mr Said Amir Khan Niazi. To extract the accurate text of Ain Al-Faqr, Mr Niazi compared the manuscripts by Khalifa Gul Muhammad Sindhi, Ghulam Mustafa, Muhammad Hassan, Molvi Noor-ud-din Kunjahi and publication by Molvi Nizam Uddin Multani.



‘Ayn Al-Faqr is one of the masterpieces in prose-writing by Ḥaḍrat Sultan Bahoo that is enriched with classical Sufi ideas. The literal meaning of ‘Ayn Al-Faqr is “the Eye of Faqr.” This book provides a pervasive awareness about the realities of human beings’ innermost states as observed by the sight of spiritual excellence. Kalīd At-Tawhīd (Khurd) (The Key of Monotheism) is an inspiring work of Sultan Al-Ārifīn Sultan Bahoo and it is described as Mushkil-Kushā (Remover of Difficulties) by Sultan Bahoo. That means this book serves as a complete guide for the desirous of Allah Almighty, both the beginners and the accomplished ones. Even though these books are in a prose form, the poetic stanzas in the books add honour and deep understanding. Furthermore, the Persian text itself has a poetic touch where one feels rhythms on various places.

Translating these classical texts is not a straight forward task, as one has to keep in mind the spacio-temporal environment and society of the time when these were written. In order to translate these books, the translator left his lavish life in UK and spent more than two years on the shrine of Ḥaḍrat Sultan Bahoo in search of inner-freedom and feelings which are necessary to produce such

literature. He got spiritual training there and spent time with faqīrs and dorveyš in order to experience the realities described in these books. There are a lot of terms which are misunderstood in English translations of other Sufi writings. For example, the word ‘faqr’ is usually translated as poverty. However, in spiritual context it has different meaning, the term spiritual-excellence is introduced to translate faqr. As in a Hadith of Exalted Prophet (ﷺ) it is described as:

اذاتم الفقر فهو الله

“When faqr reaches its perfection then there is only Allah”.

The word ‘murāqabah’ is often translated as meditation or trans. However, these translations are not much appropriate while describing the actual concept of murāqabah. The meaning of murāqabah is to mount over your nafs while you are contemplating name of Allah Almighty and you don’t focus on any candle or any other physical object. Other examples include the difference among the terms nafs, qalb, fawād and rūḥ. These words are often considered as synonyms for describing one entity.



These books could be related with spiritual and mental health as well. Sufi practices help the individual in mental wellbeing. Research on literature academically and non-academically in both ways is fruitful to find the connection between the mental health and spiritual practices. Wellbeing is one of the important points in spirituality keeping in view of the contemporary world. Popularity of spirituality and spiritual practices like mind fullness are quite popular. Ḥadrāt Sultan Bahō emphasizes on meditation of 'HOO' in which one breath is used to take the name of beloved and refer to the beloved. Today we pay a lot of money for meditation apps and subscriptions. But here you have a beautiful concept of meditation of 'HOO' which is Allah's remembrance which bestows eternal calm and satisfaction.

Ḥadrāt Sultan Bahō's mystical poetry and prose work is an expression of disillusionment with institutionalized forms of religion. It is the teachings of optimistic faith in the possibility of a personal, individual and spiritual relationship with God and Prophet (ﷺ). In 'Ayn Al-Faqr, page 47, Sultan Bahō explains that there is only one desire in being of the dorveyš (mystical wayfarer), and that to have faqr because faqr is the secret of Allah Almighty and Allah Almighty is the secret of faqr. Moreover, he also equates this with the attainment of mystical annihilation. Sultan Bahō also enlightens so beautifully on page 93 of Kalīd At-Tawhīd how one can walk on path of love through meditation, recitation, and zikr of God's name.

All Sufi authors cite from the Exalted Qur'an and Ḥadīth. Likewise, Ḥadrāt Sultan Bahō also cites a number of verses from Exalted Qur'an. He cites some verses recurrently. For instance, the verse which says that "God is closer to man than

his jugular vein” and a Ḥadīth in which the Exalted Prophet (ﷺ) tells his listeners to “die before you die,” or the Hadith which says that “God was a hidden treasure, he loves to be known, so he created the world in order to be known.” Sultan Bahoo is quite systematic and schematic thinker, so often we're presented with numbered lists, for instance, the seven stages of meditation. He gives a coherent shape to the Sufi path and mystical experience. Ḥaḍrat Sultan Bahoo frequently gives references to some of the great figures from the formative and classical periods of Sufism. He cites, the legendary female mystic Rābi‘ah Baṣrī, the great Sufis like 'Abd Al-Qādir Al-Jīlānī, Junayd Baghdādī, Shibli and Imam Abū Ḥanīfah. Ḥaḍrat Sultan Bahoo also applies imagery, when he compares the Murshid to the gardener who is skilled at taking care of the plants. Sultan Al-Arifin Sultan Bahoo describes the seeker as gold or pearls because such precious items go through a difficult process to reach that special stage.



In his books and beautiful poetry Ḥaḍrat Sultan Bahoo says, Exalted Prophet (ﷺ) is the leader of the leaders, honoured above

all preachers and creations of 18 thousand universes. In the honour of Exalted Prophet (ﷺ), Allah Almighty mentioned in Ḥadīth Qudsī that Beloved if you are not to be than I would have not created the heaven. He is so dear and beloved to all Muslims. It is important to understand and respect him.

Today the world has seen multiple ways of crises, from death to the diseases like Covid-19. We witnessed seen clashes between religion and secularism. We have witnessed murder, genocide, and wars.

We just have seen images of Afghanistan where people are literally in pain. The Muslims and Christians have difficult time in India regarding citizenship where their life, property, and wealth is under threat. In such a tough situation people look towards role models to guide them, and Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali is one such character, the speakers highlighted.



Words are very important because if there are no words, it will not be possible to communicate. Communication about Islam is through internal and external spiritual realization without which no position can be achieved and the heart needs to be kept pure and meaningful which is more important than anything. Therefore, words are too poor to share the mystical experience in the journey of life. Sufism is a path that leads from the heart of man to the meeting of Allah Almighty and purifies our hearts.

The translation of these books therefore is of utmost importance, and it was also imperative that the teachings of Hadrat Sultan Bahoo be disseminated to the people in other languages as well. The translator has translated these books in a unique and beautiful way so that the reader can easily benefit from these teachings. Ideas and work of Sufis like Sultan Bahoo should be highlighted more and the next generation should be encouraged to read about them. Hadrat Sultan Bahoo and all others Sufi saints should be heroes and role models for the young generation, as they must learn from the teachings about attaining inner satisfaction. The important and critical role of the mother of Hadrat Sultan Bahoo for his spiritual growth should also be read and highlighted. All mothers must learn from her about how to bring up one's child.



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