

International Conference

Faces of Islam: Of Tolerance and Coercion

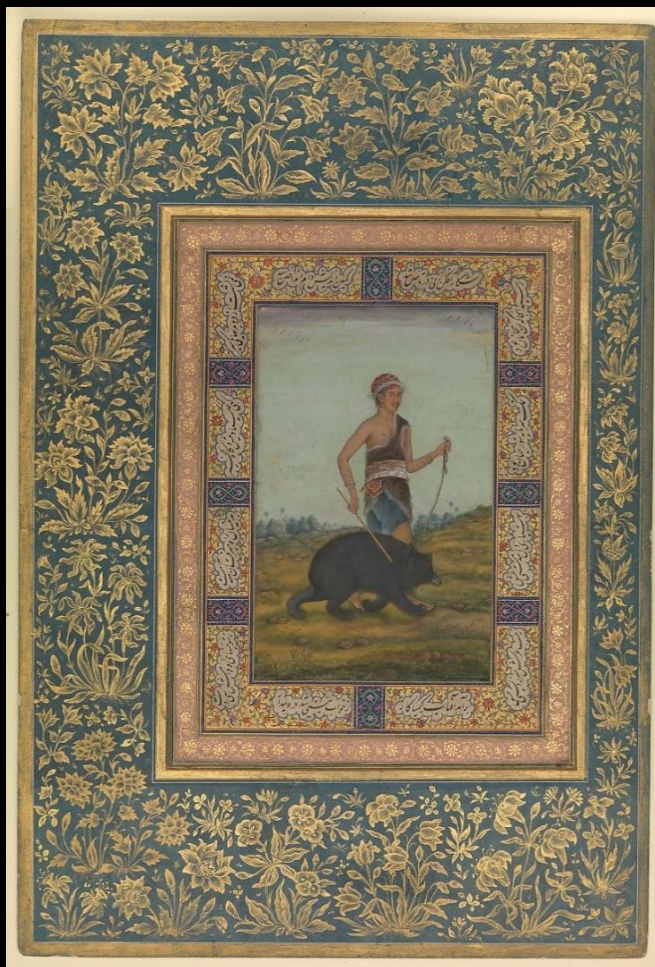


Image: "Dervish Leading a Bear", Folio from the Shah Jahan Album recto:
early 19th century; verso: later copy of 16th century original, painting by Govardhan (metmuseum.org)

Location

Utrecht University
Sweelinckzaal
Drift 21, room 0.05

Date

Thursday 13 &
Friday 14 October 2022
From 09.00 to 18.00

Admission is free. As seats are limited **please register** by sending an email to d.farhosh-vanloon@uu.nl

With lectures by

Mehrdad Alipour – Martin van Bruinessen – Amin Ghodrätzadeh – Maarten Holtzapffel – Colin Imber – Majdoddin Keyvani – Michiel Leezenberg – Cornelis van Lit – Fatemeh Naghshvarian – Alexandra Nieweg – Zhinia Noorian – Zeynep Oktay – Eva Orthmann – Arash Ghajarjazi – Khodadad Rezakhani – Lloyd Ridgeon – Mehdi Sajid – Asghar Seyed-Gohrab

Faces of Islam: Of Tolerance and Coercion

Islam is shaped by a solid intellectual tradition in which various debates and discussions have been conducted about doctrinal concepts, the nature of the Sharī‘a, and its applicability to society, the concepts of belief (*īmān*) and unbelief (*kufr*), thorny questions about the doctrine of Resurrection and the existence of heaven and hell, and whether one’s piety should be based on the fear of God or on the passionate love of God.

Islamic mysticism, usually called Sufism, is an indispensable part of Islam which has enabled Muslims to reflect critically on the holiest laws and tenets of Islam, questioning the piety and sincerity of religious divines (‘*ulamā*’), jurists, theologians and preachers, offering an alternative religious system in which an individual can commune with God. The mystical dimensions of Islam existed already during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad and mystics link their genealogy to the Prophet. In the early Islamic period ascetic movements emerged, reacting to the luxurious lives of Muslims, questioning what true Islam and a true Muslim are. Asceticism was a demonstrative rejection of what the ascetics considered to be a corrupt society, and a way to protect their own piety from the dangers of hypocrisy by attracting “blame” (*malāma*). Convinced that blame had a positive and purifying effect on one’s piety, they concealed their religiosity. From the 12th century onwards these ideas were disseminated by the *qalandars*, who spread over a vast area from the Indian subcontinent to the Balkans.

Next to ascetics, several other movements such as Khurramiyya (or Khurramdīnīya, “Joyful Religion”) and Shu‘ūbiyya emerged from the 9th/10th century. Some movements such as the Karrāmiyya and Malāmātiyya

were non-conformists, reacting to doctrinal issues on Islam, opening a new intellectual dimension to the nature of religion, faith and God. This conference aims to discuss various subjects linked to Islamic antinomianism, examining how non-conformist mystics internalised almost all aspects of Islamic life, interpreting them in different ways. For these mystics, the Quran and ḥadīth possess a secret spiritual meaning (*bāṭin*), giving readers an alternative to the literal prescriptions.

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Programme Thursday October 13 2022

09.00 Welcome and opening Asghar Seyed-Gohrab

Session One: Chair Arash Ghajarjazi

09.05 **Eva Orthmann**

Akbar and his religion: The interaction between Sufism and political ideology in the time of Akbar

10.00 **Lloyd Ridgeon**

The History of Spiritual Javānmardī (futuwwa)

10.45 Break

Session Two: Chair Zhinia Noorian

11.00 **Asghar Seyed-Gohrab**

Curing Doubts and Unbelief: Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ghazzālī on Freethinkers

11.45 **Zeynep Oktay**

Imagination and Time in Turkish Sufi Poetry

12.30 Lunch break

Session Three: Pooyan Tamimi Arab

13.30 **Fatemeh Naghshvarian**

Qalandars in Divine Religion: The Antinomian Poetics of Feyzī in Akbar's Court Shah

14.15 **Arash Ghajarjazi**

Deconstructing Ākhira: Khayyāmic antinomianism in debates about the hereafter in 1210-1406

15.00 Break

Session Four: Chair Joas Wagemakers

15.15 **Alexandra Nieweg**

Studies on Ḥakīm Sanā'ī and Qalandariyyāt

16.00 **Martin van Bruinessen**

Islam's Margins: Ahl-e Haqq, Angels and Peacocks

16.45 **Maarten Holtzapffel**

A Mystic's Eternal Truth: Rūmī's Reception by the Perennialist Tradition

Programme Friday October 14 2022

Session Five: Chair Maarten Holtzapffel

09.00 **Majdoddin Keyvani**

Moderate level-headed antinomianism of Ḥāfiẓ and its artistic expression

10.00 **Colin Imber**

How to recognise a Heretic: the Utility of Fiqh

10.45 Break

Session Six: Chair Amin Ghodrätzadeh

11.00 **Zhinia Noorian**

Qalandarī Bodily Heresy: The Case of Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī (d.c. 1232/3)

11.45 **Mehrdad Alipour**

Sexuality in the Prospect of Before Revelation Discourse in Sharīf al-Murtadā's Approach: the case of homosexuality

12.30 Lunch break

Session Seven: Chair Fatemeh Naghshvarian

13.30 **Amin Ghodrätzadeh**

Madness and its Categories in 'Aṭṭār's Ilāhī-nāma

14.15 **Mehdi Sajid**

Transgression, Madness, and the Transformation of Islam in Modern Morocco

15.00 Break

Session Eight: Chair Alexandra Nieweg

15.15 **Cornelis van Lit**

Continued Discussions on Metempsychosis (tanāsukh): An Early-Modern, Persian Treatise Defending al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl

16.00 **Michiel Leezenberg**

Freethinking, antinomianism, and the philosophical way of life in the tenth century CE: The case of Abu Bakr al-Razi

16.45 **Khodadad Rezakhani**

Khorramdīnān, their history, religious beliefs and practices

Akbar and his religion:
The interaction between Sufism and political ideology in the time of Akbar
(Eva Orthmann)

The Mughal Emperor Akbar is famous for his inclination to Sufism, but also for having left orthodox Islam and – maybe – founding a kind of own religion, the so-called “Divine Religion”. Diverse elements which influenced his religious practices have been studied: his interest in other religions like Hinduism, Zoroastrism and Christianity, but also his engagement with occult sciences, like astrology and lettrism. These interests went along with intense translation activities, in particular from Indian languages. Akbar’s interests were not an isolated phenomenon: Sufis in India had since the Delhi Sultanate period been taking notice of texts and practices of Indian origin and had adopted some elements of them into their own thought and devotional practices. The lecture will look into this intersection between Sufism and imperial ideology in the period of Akbar.

Eva Orthmann is Professor of Iranian Studies at the University of Göttingen. Previously she worked at the University of Bonn and the University of Zurich. She obtained her MA degree in Islamic and Iranian Studies at the University of Tübingen in 1995, followed by a PhD in 2000 at the University of Halle-Wittenberg. Orthmann has also served as Director of the Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies at the University of Bonn. In her research, Eva Orthmann’s special interest is in subjects related to the Mughal Empire, astrology, Indo-Persian transfer of knowledge and culture, Ismā‘īliyya, history of science and tribalism in the regions of Irak and Syria. She has written several books such as *Lehrbuch der Persischen Sprache 1* (with Ghasem Toulany, Buske: Hamburg, 2013, second and revised edition 2016), *Lehrbuch der Persischen Sprache 2* (with Ghasem Toulany, Buske: Hamburg, 2022), *Stamm und Macht. Die arabischen Stämme im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert der Hiğra*, (L. Reichert: Wiesbaden, 2002). She has also written a large number of articles such as “Lettrism and magic in an early Mughal text: Muḥammad Ghawth’s k. al-Jawāhir al-khams,” in El-Bizri, Nader and Orthmann, Eva: *The Occult Sciences in Pre-modern Islamic Cultures*, Beirut 2017, pp. 223-247, “Iranisch-Indische Beziehungen in Islamischer Zeit,” in L. Paul (ed.), *Handbuch der Iranistik*, Band 2, pp. 19-26, 2017. She has also edited several book volumes such as Nader El-Bizri and Eva Orthmann: *The Occult Sciences in Pre-modern Islamic Cultures*, Beirut 2018, Eva Orthmann and Petra Schmidl: *Science in the City of Fortune: The Dustūr al-munajjimīn and its World*, Berlin 2017 and *Die Grenzen der Welt: Arabica et Iranica ad honorem Heinz Gaube*, eds. L. Korn, E. Orthmann, F. Schwarz. Wiesbaden, 2008.

The History of Spiritual Javānmardī (futuwwa)
(Lloyd Ridgeon)

Javānmardī has a rich history within Persianate lands, and some scholars have even traced pre-Islamic origins. This paper, however, focuses more specifically at a later period of history when *javānmardī* was promoted and understood in diverse ways: there was a form of military *javānmardī* (that foregrounded bravery, honesty and gallantry) propounded by Robin Hood type groups; there was a hedonistic form (which emphasized group solidarity, literature, and drinking); and there was also a Sufi (or “spiritual”) form that borrowed from the previous groups although “spiritualizing” their interpretations. These different groups did not exist in isolation, and borrowed from each other to advance their aims. The main focus of the presentation is the Sufi dimension, which may be traced by textual analysis of compositions from the early medieval period. The contributions made by famous Sufis, including Ḥallāj, Hujwīrī, Sulamī, and Suhrawardī (d. 1234) are all considered. The latter is particularly significant because from the thirteenth century the tradition of *javānmardī* became institutionalized as a form of “second-class” Sufism. This development reflected a Sufi response to the popularity of the Sufi movement, and an attempt to open the doors of the *khānaqāh* to a wider cross section of people. Sufism faced a dilemma of how to increase its popularity whilst maintaining a hold on the “purity” of the movement. The literature from the 13th century onwards is full of references to young men known as *akhīs* and *javānmards*, and the tradition of spiritual *javānmardī* also embraced trade occupations until the centralisation of the Persianate world in the 16th century by the Ottomans and Safavids. The latter are known to have been particularly hostile to forms of Sufism, so the decline of these formal *futuwwat* institutions was most likely a result of the anti-Sufi perspective of the state.

Lloyd Ridgeon is Reader in Islamic Studies at Glasgow University. His education includes a B.A. in Modern Middle Eastern Studies from Durham University (UK) , an M.A. in International Relations from the International University of Japan (IUJ), and a PhD from the University of Leeds (UK), where he was supervised by Professor Ian Netton. He has published widely on various aspects of medieval Persian Sufism, including monographs on ‘Azīz Nasafī (1998) and Aḥmad al-Dīn Kirmānī (2018). He has also published on modern Sufism, focusing on the *Anjuman-i Ukhuvvat* and *Zahīr al-Dawla* of the Ni‘matullahī order. His work on modern Sufism also includes a study of the criticisms of Aḥmad Kasravī, titled *Sufi Castigator* (2006). He has edited three collections of essays on Sufism: *Sufis and Salafis in the Contemporary Age* (2015), *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism* (2015) and the *Routledge Handbook on Sufism* (2021). More recently he has paid attention to aspects of jurisprudence in Iran under the Islamic Republic, and has published a

monograph on the topic of the *hijāb*. His forthcoming work looks at the worldview of the rationalist seminarian Aḥmad Qābil. He is also the chief editor of the peer reviewed British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, which produces five issues per year. He served as editor of *IRAN*, the journal of BIPS from 2013-2021.

Curing Doubts and Unbelief: Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ghazzālī on Freethinkers
(Ali-Asghar Seyed-Gohrab)

The notion of “unbelief” (*kufr*) is overall present in the works of the polymath Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad Ghazzālī (450-505 / 1058-1111). He was born in Ṭūs in the province of Khurasan, a heartland of the Persian culture, a centre of intellectual activities, where several antinomian trends and movements emerged. Reflecting on the tumultuous political period Ghazzālī lived, especially the crisis of piety and his search for certitude (*yaqīn*), I shall argue that Ghazzālī’s writings engage with refuting others, whether they are philosophers, theologians, or antinomians. In this paper, I shall examine how Ghazzālī defines “belief” (*īmān*) and “unbelief” (*kufr*), and how he battles against antinomian groups, which he characterizes as *ibāḥatīyān*. Who are these groups of people? Why do Ghazzālī and other authors abundantly treat the concepts of unbelief, inviting their audiences to a new religious system in which Sufism is a central part?

Ali-Asghar Seyed-Gohrab is Professor of Persian and Iranian Studies at Utrecht University in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies. He has published extensively on Persian literature, mysticism and religion. His publications range from Persian poetry to Sufism and the role of religious and mystical motifs and metaphors in Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) and how peaceful religious injunctions are used to justify violence. He authored *Soefisme: een levende traditie*, (Amsterdam: Prometheus/Bert Bakker, 2015 third print); *The True Dream: Indictment of the Shiite Clerics of Isfahan*, (London: Routledge, 2017, with S. McGlenn), *Layli and Majnun: Love, Madness and Mystic Longing in Nizami’s Epic Romance*, (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2003), *Mirror of Dew: The Poetry of Ālam-Tāj Zhāle Qā'em-Maqāmi*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Ilex Foundation Series 14, 2015), *Courtly Riddles: Enigmatic Embellishments in Early Persian Poetry*, (Leiden: LUP, 2008, 2010). His recent publication is *Martyrdom, Mysticism and Dissent: The Poetry of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021). He has edited twelve books, most recent publications are *Pearls of Meanings: Studies on Persian Art, Poetry, Sufism and History of Iranian Studies in Europe by J.T.P. de Bruijn* (Leiden: Leiden UP, 2020) and *The Layered Heart: Essays on Persian Poetry, A Celebration in Honor of Dick Davis* (Washington, DC: Mage Publishers, 2019). At the moment he is the

Principal Investigator (PI) of an ERC-Advanced Grant entitled *Beyond Sharia: The Role of Sufism in Shaping Islam* (www.beyondsharia.nl), examining Islamic nonconformist movements.

Imagination and Time in Turkish Sufi Poetry
(Zeynep Oktay)

This talk focuses on the concepts of the imagination (*hayāl*) and time (*dem*) in Turkish Sufi Poetry, in a range of texts dating from the 14th to the 17th centuries. The first half of the talk traces the concept of time in the works of antinomian Sufis such as Yunus Emre and Kaygusuz Abdal, as well as Alevi poets such as Pir Sultan Abdal. In these texts, the central element of the concept of time is the moment of the Pre-eternal Pact referenced in the Qur'an (7:172). This pre-eternal moment, referred to as *elest demi* (the time of 'Am I not?') or *dem-i ene'l-hakk* (the time of 'I am God'), is understood to be prior to creation, prior to the command *kun* (be!). In their identification with the light of Muhammad, the dervish already existed prior to this pre-eternal moment, which is the truth of their being. The return to this pre-eternal moment, or in some cases to the absolute pre-eternity prior to this moment, constitutes the aim of the Sufi path. It is also this special status that allows the dervish to be beyond shari'a, that is, not bound by the laws of the visible universe, the time of created beings.

In Turkish Sufi poetry, this concept of time is deeply linked to the concept of the imagination, which is highly influenced by the Wujudi tradition. This part of the talk also includes examples from canonical works such as 'Aşık Paşa's *Ġarīb-nāme* and Fuzuli's *Leylā ve Mecnūn*, to show that the poet's act of creating his work is a mirror image of God's creation of the universe. The Sufi poet is the one who has the capacity to imagine the truth. In fact, it is this capacity beyond any other that distinguishes him from the common people. The poet thus imagines the Pre-eternal Pact, the uninterrupted moment of being with God. It is this very act of imagination that constitutes the journey towards oneness, the upward arc of creation, the mirror image of the Prophet's Ascension. The imagined reality has greater truth than the visible one, because it is closer to being itself. The poet's pre-eternal language is not only beyond shari'a, but also beyond the experienced reality of society itself.

Zeynep Oktay studied Comparative Literature in the USA (Dartmouth College) and Classical Turkish Literature at Bogazici University in Turkey. She completed her PhD in Islamic Civilization at Sorbonne University École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, France. Between 2014-2016, Oktay worked as a research fellow on the research project "The Islamisation of Anatolia, c. 1100-1500" based at the University of St. Andrews in the UK. She currently

works as an assistant professor at the Department of Turkish Language and Literature at Boğaziçi University in Turkey, where she teaches courses on Sufism, folklore, and the emergence of Turkish literature. Oktay is the author of *Mesnevî-i Baba Kaygusuz* (Harvard University Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, 2013), as well as articles published in journals such as *Bjmes*, *Jotsa*, and *Turcica*. She has also prepared the Turkish translation of Henry Corbin's *L'Imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn Arabi* (*Birle Bir Olmak: İbn Arabi Tasavvufunda Yarattıcı Muhayyile*, Pinhan Yayınevi, 2013). Oktay's forthcoming monograph, titled *Kaygusuz Abdal and His Book of Prattle*, examines the literature produced by antinomian Sufi groups (*abdals*) in Anatolia and the Balkans. With a focus on the works of Kaygusuz Abdal and five other *abdal* authors, all of whom were major figures of Alevi-Bektashi literature, the monograph seeks to understand Alevi and Bektashi doctrines in their historical evolution.

Qalandars in Divine Religion: The Antinomian Poetics of Feyzī in Akbar's Court
(Fatemeh Naghsvarian)

The Mughal emperor Akbar Shah (1542-1605) in the late 16th century AD formulated a syncretic religious movement known as 'Divine Religion' (Dīn-i ilāhī). Akbar's religion, although quite selective in terms of granting discipleship, was an attempt to consolidate different elements of the religions that were being practiced during his reign. Being the first Indian Muslim emperor, who propagated equal respect for all religions, Akbar designed an ethical belief system that signaled progressive ideas revolving around tolerance and 'Universal Peace' (Şulḥ-i kull). To this end, Akbar's revolutionary ideas contrasted the dominant Islamic practices at the time, especially when he demonstrated an inclination towards the antinomian genres and heterodox religious thinking. In identifying and uncovering the interfering agents in the formation and flourishing of Akbar's innovative worldview and libertarian ideas, qalandars as wandering Sufi dervishes and Qalandariyya as a non-conformist movement are significant. Qalandariyya as an antinomian genre came to be extant in the early 12th century and was mainly popular in Greater Khorasan and South Asia. To understand the relationship between Qalandariyya and the conceptualization of Divine Religion, it is imperative to examine the role and impact of the Persian language as a Lingua Franca in the Indian subcontinent, particularly its use as a literary language in the court of Akbar. This means investigating the relationship between the pervasive role of Persian literary culture and the formation of a new intellectual and political ideology in response to complex religious tensions and ideological conflicts.

To investigate the role of Persian antinomian culture in stimulating critical religious thinking, I study the poetry of the poet laureate Feyzī (1547-1595). Among the courtly intellectuals who influenced the formation of Akbar's innovative ideas, Feyzī and Abu'l-Fazl 'Āllāmī (1551-1602), Feyzī's younger brother, the grand vizier and historiographer of Akbar's court were prominent. By studying Feyzī's poetry as a representative of the Mughal commission of Persian poets, the aim is to navigate the role of antinomian mystic poets in shaping the humanist ideologies and libertine policies in pre-modern India. What were the political implications of Qalandari ideas in 16th-century India? How did Qalandariyya, as an antinomian movement, and Qalandar, as a literary figure, contribute to the formation of Akbar's pluralist initiatives and alternative forms of sovereignty? In this presentation, by focusing on the life, career, and poetry of Feyzī, I aim to demonstrate the role of the Persian language in translating transgression and the formation of innovative ideas in medieval Northern India.

Fatemeh Naghshvarian is a PhD candidate in the ERC Advanced Grant *Beyond Sharia: The Role of Sufism in Shaping Islam*, working on the project Qalandars in the 'Divine Religion' in India. In this project, she investigates the formation of "Divine Religion" (*dīn-i ilāhī*) at the Indian Mughal court of Emperor Akbar relying mainly on the works of the poet laureate Feyzī (1547-1595). By conducting an inquiry into the applicable influences of antinomian movements and heterodox religious thinking within Islam, she aims to explore the traces of Islamic critical thinking on shaping the political concomitants of Divine Religion and "Universal Peace" in 16th-century Mughal India. For her Cultural Studies Master thesis, Fatemeh focused on the independent cinema of Ramin Bahrani exploring the aesthetic experimentations and the socio-cultural questions concerning the representation of the migrant body on the screen.

Deconstructing Ākhira:

Khayyāmīc antinomianism in debates about the hereafter in 1210-1406

(Arash Ghajarjazi)

This paper deals with the *conceptual authenticity* of 'Umar Khayyām's (d.ca. 1131) quatrains from early thirteenth century to the mid-fifteenth century. I develop this concept as complementary to what I call *identifying authenticity*. The latter has been dealt with by many scholars, particularly since the early twentieth century after the global impact of Fitzgerald's translation. This kind of authenticity is concerned mainly with the historical identity of Khayyām and seeks to determine whether a certain quatrain had been truly written by Khayyām himself. Far fewer scholars, however, have considered the intellectual linkages between some of Khayyām's quatrains and the intellectual context in which they circulated, irrespective of their literary identification. Following this

rather minor trend in Khayyām studies, I wish to offer a genealogical analysis of Khayyām’s quatrains between 1210 and circa 1406. I suggest that next to and beyond the issue of identification, there is a conceptual lineage between some of the quatrains ascribed, falsely or not, to Khayyām. I argue that this conceptual lineage should be understood in light of the broader debates over Islamic *Sharī’a*, personified in diverse literate communities from the Delhi Sultanate and the Seljūqs of Iran and Iraq to the Egyptian Mamluks. Conceptual authenticity is irreducible to issues regarding theme, motif, meter, and style in the quatrains. It is moreover a core that does something fundamentally philosophical in the quatrains and to their embedding intellectual milieus.

The starting point of my analysis is set to the beginning of the thirteenth century, almost four centuries into the evolution of the quatrain as a literary form in the Persian literature. No longer than a few decades before 1210, a quatrain by Khayyām is cited by Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1210) in his treatise *al-Tanbīh ‘alā ba‘d al-asrār al-maw‘ada fī ba‘da suwar al-Qur‘ān al-‘aẓīm*. Known by a key phrase, *tarkīb-i ṭabāyi‘*, this quatrain marks a discursive twist in the intellectual history of Persian literature as well as the history of Khayyām’s quatrains. Figuring in prosimetrum within Rāzī’s text, this quatrain directly and critically engages with the notion of the hereafter (*ma‘ād*). It questions the logic of *ākhirā*. Over the following two centuries, several more quatrains were ascribed to Khayyām. They were included in poetry collections, histories, and religious texts. Irrespective of their identifying authenticity, some of these quatrains can be seen in an intellectual continuity with the *tarkīb-i ṭabāyi‘* quatrain. What are the features that distinguish these quatrains from others? How are they continuous with that archetypical antinomian quatrain? How are they positioned within the genealogy of anti-*Sharī’a* critique of the hereafter in the Persian thought? I argue that one can speak about a conceptual authenticity that legitimised the ascription of such quatrains to Khayyām. This authenticity, furthermore, should be understood as a concrete phenomenon taking place in a shared space between literature and the society, and not merely as an abstract idea limited by the structural boundaries of the quatrains.

Arash Ghajarjazi received his PhD from the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Utrecht University. His work deals with the relations between Islam, sciences, and media technologies in the Middle East from the 19th century onwards. More broadly, trained both as a cultural analyst and a historian, he explores how Islamic traditions have evolved in and as media. He approaches histories of Muslim material cultures and ideas together. His work seeks a balance between historical contextualisation and philosophical conceptualisation. He is currently working as a postdoc researcher in the ERC funded research project *Beyond Sharia*, where he studies the intellectual

genealogies and the shifting popularity of ‘Umar Khayyām’s quatrains from the thirteenth to the twentieth century.

Studies on Ḥakīm Sanā’ī and Qalandariyyāt
(**Alexandra Nieweg**)

Today, Islam is often depicted as exclusively orthodox and Sharī‘a-centred, but Persian classical *qalandariyyāt* poetry shows that from the 12th century onwards, mystical Islamic ideas and doctrines have chiefly been communicated to broad Muslim audience in the Persian cultural areas through the vehicle of antinomian motifs, metaphors, imagery, and stories, to challenge the central religious hierarchy and Islamic orthodoxy. The *qalandariyyāt* genre, as a central part of antinomian movements, thus forms an important contribution to a more complete and accurate understanding of Islam. Despite this, scholarship on the topic has yet to give an analysis of the complete arsenal of the genre’s themes and motifs and leaves us with various questions regarding the relations between the genre and society, which I aim to contribute in my research. In particular, I shall focus on the *qalandariyyāt* poetry of Ḥakīm Sanā’ī (d. 1131). It is in Sanā’ī’s poetry that the genre appeared in a fully-fledged form for the first time. Although several authors have launched new investigations on the topic, a deep analysis of the genre is a desideratum. In this critical appraisal of studies done on the genre, I shall analyse the influential publications on classical *qalandariyyāt* poetry in chronological order, focusing on both the approach and the aspects of the poetry scholars of Persian and Iranian Studies have included in their discussions.

Alexandra Nieweg is a PhD candidate and works on ‘Literary Qalandars’ within the ERC-Advanced Grant *Beyond Sharia: The Role of Sufism in Shaping Islam*. Here, Alexandra shall explore religious and antinomian motifs, metaphors, imagery, and stories in Persian poetry from the 12th century onward. To this day, this poetry has had a great appeal to Muslims in the Persianate world. She also analyses how *qalandarī* themes in this poetry impacted social, political, and religious developments in subsequent centuries. Throughout her studies, Alexandra has had a keen interest in the way Islamic traditions feed into contemporary ideologies and their cultural expression in the Turco-Persian world in general, and in relation to Sufi-Shiism in Iran and Afghanistan and Sufism in Central Asia in particular.

Islam's Margins: Ahl-e Haqq, Angels and Peacocks
(**Martin van Bruinessen**)

My presentation will be a tribute to my late friend Peter Lamborn Wilson, aka Hakim Bey (d. 2022), and to the late Vladimir A. Ivanow (d. 1970), two marginal scholars who spent years in self-chosen exile in Iran and shared a fascination with Isma'ilism and the small heterodox communities that might be influenced by it, and who in different ways contributed to my motivation to carry out field research among the Ahl-e Haqq of Guran, reputedly the most antinomian community that could be found in Iran. I have often had reason to revisit Ivanow's writings, especially his book *The Truth-Worshippers of Kurdistan*, while over the years I have kept corresponding with Wilson about the place of Satan and the Peacock Angel in the cosmology and anthropology of the Ahl-e Haqq and the Yezidis.

I shall focus on two aspects of the Ahl-e Haqq religion: the place in their pantheon of seven angelic beings (*haft tan*) who appear in human incarnations in each cycle of history, and the social and ritual role of holy lineages (*khandan*) in Ahl-e Haqq communities. Both suggest similarities or perhaps historical connections with other communities such as Yazidis and Alevis, as well as a possible connection with pre-Islamic Iranian religions. Some authors have claimed that the Ahl-e Haqq religion is, beneath a thin Islamic veneer, essentially a survival of Zoroastrianism or a "popular" variant of Iranian religion. I shall argue that there is a much more pervasive influence of early Islam in Ahl-e Haqq religion (as well as Yezidism and Alevism) than these scholars are willing to admit.

Martin van Bruinessen is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Studies of Modern Muslim Societies at Utrecht University. He is an anthropologist with a strong interest in politics, history and philology, and much of his work straddles the boundaries between these disciplines. He has conducted extensive fieldwork in Kurdistan (Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria) as well as Indonesia and Southeast Asia generally and has taught on subjects ranging from Ottoman history and sociology of religion to theories of nationalism. He carried out his first field research among the Kurds during two years in the mid-1970s when access was relatively easy and has frequently revisited the region during the following decades and has published extensively on various aspects of Kurdish society, culture and history. His work was translated into Turkish, Persian, Arabic and Kurdish and is easily available in the countries concerned. The vicissitudes of the academic job market brought him to Indonesia in the 1980s, where he studied various aspects of Islam and society. His involvement with Indonesia began with fieldwork in a poor urban kampung in Bandung (1983-84) and included stints as an advisor on research methods at the Indonesian Institute of

Sciences (LIPI, 1986-90) and as a senior lecturer at the State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta (1991- 94). After his return to the Netherlands, van Bruinessen took part in founding the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) in 1998 and was one of its professors during 1999 through 2008. Since his formal retirement in 2011, he held visiting professorships in Indonesia and Singapore as well as Turkey. Some relevant publications: Martin van Bruinessen, “Between Dersim and Dalahu. Reflections on Kurdish Alevism and the Ahl-e Haqq religion,” in *Islamic alternatives: non-mainstream religion in Persianate societies*, ed. Shahrokh Raei, pp. 65-93. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017. Martin van Bruinessen, “The Peacock in Sufi Cosmology and Popular Religion: Connections between Indonesia, South India, and the Middle East,” in *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 15(2), 2020, 177-219. <https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2020.15.02.177-219>.

*A Mystic’s Eternal Truth:
Rūmī’s Reception by the Perennialist Tradition
(Maarten Holtzapffel)*

Due to the global popularity of the poetry of the thirteenth-century Sufi poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273), many people are attracted to his ideas about love, religious tolerance, and universal values. His modern reception has resulted in a variety of interpretations, from Rūmī as a New Age guru, a Sufi poet, a Western-styled humanist philosopher, to an anti-religious rebel criticizing Islam and organized forms of religion. In my presentation, I shall examine the Perennialist tradition, which had a considerable influence on Rūmī’s modern reception history in the West as well as in Iran. This tradition, which originated in the nineteenth century as a critique of Western modernity, deriving its name from *sophia perennis* or “eternal wisdom,” is characterized by the search for the eternal, non-formal Truth at the heart of all orthodox religions. In their search for this primordial truth, the authors affiliated with this tradition frequently refer to medieval mystics such as Suhrawardī (1154-1191), Ibn al-‘Arabī (1165-1240), and Rūmī.

In my presentation, I shall compare the interpretation of Rūmī’s poetry by several scholars affiliated with this tradition, such as Frithjof Schuon (d. 1998), Seyyed Hossein Nasr (b. 1933), and Reza Shah-Kazemi (b. 1960), and examine which lines of Rūmī’s poetry they use to support their messages. In addition, I hope to demonstrate in what ways their inclination to use Ibn al-‘Arabī in support of the Perennialist view influences their interpretation of Rūmī’s poetry. In this way, I compare the conceptualization of Sufism, and its influence on the interpretation of Rūmī’s poetry, in studies devoted to the search for a *sophia perennis*.

Maarten Holtzapffel is a PhD candidate for the ERC Advanced Grant *Beyond Sharia: The Role of Sufism in Shaping Islam*, working on the project *Of Love and Wisdom: Rūmī's Transgressive Ideas and the Rise of Humanism*. In this project, he investigates Rūmī's reception in the modern world, examining how the antinomian ideas expressed in his poetry are interpreted as a humanist philosophy, transcending religious boundaries. For his Research Master thesis he conducted a study on the appropriation of Rūmī's mystic poetry in contemporary Iranian politics, in particular by the political philosopher and theologian Abdolkarim Soroush (b. 1945).

Moderate level-headed antinomianism of Ḥāfiẓ and its artistic expression
(Majdoddin Keyvani)

Over time when Islam was well-established and, at the hands of influential jurists (*faqīhs*) took on an intolerable degree of rigidity, insularity and abuse, there arose some opposition to it. The inflexibility of the custodians of the orthodox *Sharī'a* and their functionaries caused some elements of the Islamic society to turn against them and their too narrow-minded interpretations of Islam. Out of this discord did arise a whole range of coteries and orders. Such dissident people could either belong to the main orthodox Sunni fold or to the Shi'ite denomination, their common denominator being opposition to the Islamic rigid Establishment.

Due to certain historical and cultural reasons, Sufism came to be an outstanding opponent of both fanatic *Sunnis* and Shi'ites in outlook, ritual, and daily life activities. Broadly speaking, deviant cliques such as *Qalandariyeh* and *Malāmatiyeh* can be regarded as sub-groups of both Shi'ism and Sunna, although hardly committed to either. Soon there came a time when a good many of the orthodox guardians of *Sharī'a* as well as their opponents, like Sufis, Qalandars and Malāmatis began to take advantage of their social positions by pretending piety and austerity. In this way they managed to manipulate both the naive commoners and some of the more educated layers of the society.

This hypocrisy and double dealing made Ḥāfiẓ criticize high ranking overseers and officials of both the religious Establishment and those running Khānqāhs, while he denied neither true Sharī'a nor genuine Sufism. Therefore, he can be described as a moderate unbiased antinomian who condemned any individual or any movement in the Muslim society that was polluted with corrupt morality, hypocrisy, and exploitation; no matter the condemned were staunch jurists and preachers, or Sufi Sheikhs and wandering Qalandars. The condemnation of such people is a recurrent theme throughout his *Dīvān*. However, his criticism is not of an ordinary run-of-the mill kind but artistically expressed.

Born in 1938 in Esfahan, **Dr Majdoddin Keyvani** gained his B.A. in Persian Language and Literature at the University for Teachers' Education in Tehran in 1961. After one year of teaching Persian literature in the city of Ahvaz, he journeyed to Britain in 1963 on a government grant. At Wales University he gained his diploma in Bilingualism in 1965. He worked on his PhD project in Applied Linguistics from 1965 to 1978. In the meantime he also taught Linguistics, English language skills, and translation at the UTE (present Kh^warazmi University) and several other universities both at undergraduate and graduate levels. From July 1974 to June 1978 he was Principal of the University for Teachers' Education at Zahedan Branch. From 1986 till present he has worked at the newly established Centre for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia (GIE) as translator, writer of entries and editor. In addition to the entries he has contributed to this Encyclopaedia, he has also written articles for the *Encyclopedia of Persian Language and Literature*; *Encyclopedia of the World of Islam*; *Farhang-e Athar-e Irani-Eslami (A Descriptive Dictionary of Iranian-Islamic Written Works)*, and a wide range of magazines and scholarly journals such as *Majale-ye Daneshkade-ye Adabiyat*, UTE; *Nameh-ye Farhangestan*; *Negah-e Now*; *Daricheh*; *Gozarash-e Miras*; *Zabanshenasi* (published in US); and *Iranica*. From 2009 to 2010 he worked at the *Encyclopedia of Iranica* at Columbia University. He has been the Editor-in-Chief of *Ayeneh-ye Miras* from 2013 till present. His publications are impressive: 380 Persian articles, reviews and editorials published in a wide range of journals and encyclopedias. 12 English articles printed in journals published in Iran and abroad (including *Iranica*). He has translated 30 articles from English in journals and encyclopedias published in Iran. He has edited 7 books. In addition, he translated 22 seminal works from English to Persian and the masterpiece of Abd al-Hoseyn Zarrinkub (1923-1999), from Persian into English (Zarrinkoob, *Step by Step Up to Union With God: Life, Thought and Spiritual Journey of Jalal-al-din Rūmī*, Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2009, Islamic Republic of Iran's World Award for the Year Book, 2009. The list of some of the books he has translated from English are as follows (the dates refer to the year of translations and not the original publication of the books): H.E. Palmer, *Principles of Language Study*, Charleston, South Carolina: Nabu Press, 1974; C.W. Ernst, *Ruzbihan Baqli: Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood in Persian Sufism*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998; K. Rayner, *The Psychology of Reading*, 1999; L. Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity: The Sufi Poetry and Teachings of Mahmud Shabistari*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999; H.I.W. Mason, *Al-Hallaj*, London: Rowledge, 1999; L. Lewisohn, ed., *The Heritage of Sufism*, 3 volumes, Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005; Amin-Razavi, M. *The Wine of Wisdom: The Life, Poetry and Philosophy of Omar Khayyam*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006 (Winner of Islamic Republic of Iran's Yearbook Award, 2004); J. Morris, *The Orientations*, 2008; Arbab-Shirani, S. *Shapes of a Myth: Literary Transformations of the Joseph Figure*, 2012. J.T.P.

de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry: An Introduction to the Mystical Use of Classical Poems*, Richmond: Curzon Press, 1997. Keyvani has also translated 30 articles from English which are published in journals and encyclopedias in Iran.

How to recognise a Heretic: the Utility of Fiqh
(Colin Imber)

By the second decade of the sixteenth century the Ottoman Empire had emerged as the largest sunni Muslim polity in the world, encompassing not only the Holy Cities of Mecca, Medina, but also the historic centres of Islamic learning in Aleppo, Damascus and Cairo. Further expansion during the course of the century added the Muslim cities in Iraq, and North Africa to the Ottoman domains. However, it was only during the sixteenth century, after the conquest of the Mamluk Empire that the Ottomans came to rule over lands where Islam and Islamic institutions had been established for centuries. The origins of the Empire lay in the early 14th century in north-western Anatolia, in a predominantly Greek-speaking Christian area. In the 14th and 15th centuries Ottoman territory spread eastwards into Anatolia, an area with a heterogeneous population where Islam was only recently established, and westwards into the Balkan peninsula where there were no pre-existing Islamic communities. The popular understanding of Islam in the Ottoman realms was evidently limited: the survival of simple Turkish texts instructing believers in the rudiments of sunni Islam suggest widespread ignorance of its basic tenets. With the establishment of madrasas to train a corps of ulama during the course of the fifteenth century, sunni Islam became firmly established in the Ottoman Empire. By the sixteenth it was the dominating cultural and political force. As such, it confronted a multiplicity of popular movements and beliefs, and it became a function of the ulama to distinguish which of these was a heresy, threatening *dīn ü devlet*, and which was compatible with orthodox Islam. It was often politics that guided their actual decisions, but it was in works of *fiqh* that they found the justifications for those decisions. How they used *fiqh* will be the subject of my presentation.

Colin Imber was Reader in Turkish at the University of Manchester until his retirement in 2005. Among other subjects, he has a particular interest in Islamic law and its application in the Ottoman Empire. He is the author of *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1481* (Isis Press, Istanbul, 1989), *Ebu's-su'ud: the Islamic Legal Tradition* (Edinburgh University Press, 1997), *The Crusade of Varna* (Ashgate, 2006), *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (3rd edition, Red Globe Press, 2019) and editor of Norman Calder, *Islamic Jurisprudence in the Classical Era* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) and *V.L.Ménage, Ottoman Historical Documents* (Edinburgh University Press, 2021). He has also published three volumes of articles: *Studies in Ottoman History and Law*

(1996), *Warfare, Law and Pseudo-History* (2012) and *Mamluks, Muftis and Sipahis: an Ottoman Miscellany* (Isis Press, 1996, 2011, 2022).

Qalandarī Bodily Heresy: the Case of Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī (d.c. 1232/3)
(Zhinia Noorian)

At the heart of the patriarchal sharia law regulating social behaviour in Islamic societies, lies the strict gender norms that good Muslims have always been required to meticulously observe. Even today, in Islamic societies, growing facial hair, particularly a moustache and beard for men is associated with masculinity. A group of Sufi saints, better known as *qalandars*, who were aspiring to gain vicinity to the Divine, provoked extreme blame from the respectable Muslim society by inverting gender norms. These *qalandars*, all male Muslims, would engage in homoerotic activities, sometimes dress like women, go about naked, shave all their facial and bodily hair, have (genital) piercings, and even at times adopt a feminine voice in public. Trying to preserve their piety inwardly, they used their body and social image as a means to show their indifference to the opinion of the religious scholars and jurists about their belief. In this paper, I investigate the *qalandars*' behaviour as an instance of using the body as a vehicle for religious transgression. By examining one of the anecdotes about how Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī (d.c. 1232/3), the Sufi master whose disciples later came to be known as *qalandars*, turned to asceticism, I focus on the bodily aspect of heresy in the *qalandarī* tradition. This case study contextualises the religious implications of Sāvī's closely shaved face as code of bodily heresy to assert *qalandarī* piety.

Zhinia Noorian is a Postdoc candidate for the ERC-Advanced Grant *Beyond Sharia: The Role of Sufism in Shaping Islam*, working on the project *Feminising Masculinity: Negotiating Gender Norms*. In this project, she investigates the homoerotic aspect of the Sufi saints better known as the *qalandars*. In her research, she focuses on examining how and why the *qalandars* assumed a feminine voice and transgressed the strict gender norms regulated by the sharia law in Islamic societies. Her research aims at explaining the sexual embodiment of the concept of 'blame', which was used by these saints as a means to attain union to the Divine. For her PhD dissertation, Zhinia studied the poetry and reception of Parvīn I'tiṣāmī (1907-1941), as an Iranian female poet. She investigated the enduring mark that I'tiṣāmī left on the literary and religious culture of Iran in the early 20th century through transgressing the socio-cultural norms of her patriarchal society. Her research demonstrated I'tiṣāmī's prowess in using the classical genre of Persian debate poetry and Persian mystical tradition as safe spaces to express her thoughts on the socio-politically sensitive issues of her times.

*Sexuality in the Prospect of Before Revelation Discourse in Sharīf al-Murtaḍā's Approach:
the case of homosexuality*
(Mehrdad Alipour)

The present study endeavours a discursive space on negotiating modern homosexuality in classical Twelver Imāmī scholarship. Currently, sexual diversity such as homosexuality is increasingly accepted in Western societies. In such societies, discrimination and injustice against homosexual people are not tolerated. However, both in Muslim-majority and in (Western) Muslim-minority contexts, traditional scholars of Islam and grassroots communities alike often oppose sexual diversity based on arguments that are fuelled by patriarchal interpretations of the received tradition.

Following such a patriarchal understanding of the Islamic revelation, Muslims are concerned about homosexual relationships, as these relationships – in their view – are believed to be sinful and immoral, thus prohibited in Islam. Nevertheless, despite such a patriarchal understanding of Islam, several contemporary Muslim activists and a few scholars advocate a more tolerant attitude to sexual diversity, including homosexuality. To enrich the existing scholarship on the ethics of sexual diversity in Islam, I investigate the repertoires of classical Imāmī thought to negotiate homosexuality in Islam. Thus, I shall examine Šarīf al-Murtaḍā's approach to the before revelation discourse (*ḥukm al-ašyā' /al-af'āl qabl wurūd aš-šar'*) to explore whether it can be used to argue for modern homosexuality. Concerning this debate in al-Murtaḍā's view, any useful things or actions that do not harm anyone, regardless or in the absence of Revelation, should be considered permissible (*mubāḥ*).

In doing so, I will first explicate the concept of modern homosexuality. Using a genealogical approach, I will then explore similar phenomena in classical Muslim cultures and legal traditions. Next, I shall compare modern homosexuality with pre-homosexual categories to accentuate the distinctions between homosexuality and pre-modern same-sex sexual behaviours. Finally, I shall examine how the principle of permissibility, as articulated by Šarīf al-Murtaḍā, can be used to argue for the permissibility of homosexuality in Islam in the absence of Revelation.

Mehrdad Alipour is a scholar of Islamic studies. His research mainly focuses on pre-modern and modern Islamic law, legal theory, Shi'i studies, and Iranian intellectual traditions. He is in particular interested in the transformation of Islamic legal and ethical traditions concerning gender, sex and sexual diversity in the premodern and modern eras. In September 2022, Mehrdad started his NWO Veni project titled "Beyond Binaries: Intersex in Islamic Legal Tradition" at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of

Utrecht. This study will examine intersex identity as a third sex and/or gender in (Shi‘i) Islamic legal tradition between the 16th and early 20th centuries.

Before joining Utrecht, Mehrdad was a postdoctoral researcher at the Goethe University of Frankfurt (September 2020-July 2022), participating in the two-year project *Wege zu einer Ethik* which studied classical Islamic thoughts and how they might be employed to tackle modern issues concerning gender and sexuality in Muslim communities. Having graduated from the Seminary of Qum (Iran) and received his first PhD in Comparative Philosophy (Centre of Tarbiyat Modarres, Iran), in 2017-2020, Mehrdad pursued his second doctoral research in Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter (U.K.). His PhD dissertation entitled 'Negotiating Homosexuality in Contemporary Shi‘i Islam' is the first academic exploration of discursive space(s) for debating homosexuality in modern Shi‘i Islam, based on a legal-hermeneutical analysis of Islamic law. An overview of his publications can be found here: <https://uu.academia.edu/MehrdadAlipour>.

Madness and its Categories in ‘Aṭṭār’s Ilāhī-nāma
(Amin Ghodrätzadeh)

In this presentation, I will study the wise-fools and their depiction in Persian religious poetry. I study the notion of madness and how it was perceived in medieval Islamic societies. Several authors, such as M.W. Dols and H. Ritter, have written about the subject of madness or the fool in medieval Islamic society and literature. In this respect Dols provides an invaluable classification of madness in medieval Islamic societies and Ritter provides an overview of fools' strive for God. However, both approaches are encyclopaedic and holistic in the sense that they have provided many examples from various sources and also explicate anecdotes, but have not carried out an in-depth study on the types of madness. Unfortunately, we know little about the different kinds of madness in Persian poetry. To bridge this undesirable gap, I will study the groundwork of these authors vis-à-vis the poetry in the works of Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār in order to find, analyse, and categorise the different kinds of folly. Interestingly, ‘Aṭṭār has several poems about madmen (*dīvānagān*) with different traits. For instance, there are madmen who weep, madmen who converse with God, madmen who are chained (in asylums) and so on. Nevertheless, these categories of madmen have not been categorised and studied systematically. In addition, we do not have any research connecting the behaviour of the wise-fools with antinomian mystics such as the qalandars. I shall present several ideas and arguments about these subjects and discuss them in the light of a number of poems by ‘Aṭṭār in order to demonstrate how these madmen resemble certain qalandars.

Amin Ghodrätzadeh is PhD candidate in the ERC Advanced Grant project entitled *Beyond Sharia: The Role of Sufism in Shaping Islam* at Utrecht University, focusing on his research about *Wise Fools and the Interrogation of God*. Amin studies the phenomenon of the wise-fools, as a possible forerunner of qalandar mystics, between the 9th and 12th century. Amin obtained his Research MA in Middle Eastern Studies at Leiden University, specialising in the Persian-speaking world. In his thesis, he examined Muḥammad-Taqī Bahār's (1886-1951) poetry, addressing Great Britain's occupation of Iran, Afghanistan, and India. From 2010 to 2014, Amin served as a student-assistant and library cataloguer. From 2016 to 2018, he taught Persian at both Leiden University and Leiden University Campus in The Hague for students of International Studies. In addition to his academic career, Amin served as an intern at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Leiden municipality, exercising his other expertise which lies in International Relations. He has a special interest in Islamic mystical philosophy, Persian poetry, and philosophical treatises.

Transgression, Madness, and the Transformation of Islam in Modern Morocco
(**Mehdi Sajid**)

The paper discusses a number of hagiographical narratives related to ecstatic saints (*majādhīb*) who left a lasting mark on the spiritual memory of the city of Fez during the nineteenth century. Besides their veneration by large segments of Moroccan society, the main element that all these figures had in common was their transgression of religious, moral, and social norms. Many people today can hardly conceive of an Islam in which Muslims do not abide by the Sharīʿa laws. Yet, such examples are a constant reminder that not too long ago other approaches to the divine were not only possible, but – more than that – celebrated and commemorated in Muslim societies. Against this background, one of the main arguments of this paper is that pre-colonial Sufi hagiographies are much more than just myths or miracle-mongering literature. Reading them in tandem with other sources can offer indeed invaluable insights into how the notion of “Islam” was constantly challenged and broadened by people who were believed to embody charisma.

Mehdi Sajid is Assistant Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies. His research has dealt with various aspects of Islamic intellectual history, modern encounters between East and West, and the transformation of Islamic religious and intellectual traditions in the modern era. His current project investigates the historical development of "Moroccan Islam" in the pre-modern and modern periods. He has written a long bibliographical history on Christian Muslim relations (*Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History Volume 13 - Western Europe (1700-1800)*). Leiden: Brill).

*Continued Discussions on Metempsychosis (tanāsukh):
An Early-Modern, Persian Treatise Defending al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl*
(Cornelis van Lit)

Abstract: Metempsychosis, or reincarnation, entered the medieval Islamic world as a foreign concept, but found friendly hosts in several circles. One such circle was the Illuminationist philosophy of Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191). Or did it? Suhrawardī himself is inconsistent on it and later commentators took his ideas in different directions. I shall discuss a hitherto unstudied Persian treatise explicitly designed to defend Suhrawardī against accusations of supporting metempsychosis. This is an exciting piece of evidence to consider. As it can be traced back to the Safavid milieu of early 18th century, it shows the continued interest in the subject as a key marker in shaping the identity of different schools of thought. Interesting as well is that although Jīlānī relates the discussion to a highly esoteric part of Suhrawardī's writings, he does not push it that way but rather embeds it in a mainstream discussion on resurrection, citing traditional, exegetical, philosophical, and theological sources, mostly from Sunni authors of the 12th to 14th centuries. This should challenge our own assumptions about strict characterisations of schools of thought from this period.

Dr. Cornelis van Lit is a postdoctoral researcher at Utrecht University. His main expertise lies in Islamic philosophy but he also has been working to introduce digital humanities into Islamic studies for a number of years through his online magazine *The Digital Orientalist*. His first book is entitled *The World of Image in Islamic Philosophy* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), in which he studied Suhrawardī (d. 1191) and his commentators on their thinking on the imagination and the afterlife. Given that similar ideas on imagination emerge from the writings of Ibn Arabī and his commentators, he has been focussing on that corpus for the last few years.

*Law, Antinomianism and the Philosophical Way of Life in Classical Islam:
The Case of Abu Bakr al-Razi*
(Michiel Leezenberg)

Pierre Hadot's distinction between academic or scholastic philosophy and philosophy as a way of life has proved fruitful for the study of the history of Western philosophy; but its potential for the study of the Islamic world has yet to be fully realized. With the partial exception of Aristotle, Hadot argues, all ancient pagan thinkers saw philosophical activity in terms of daily and lifelong 'spiritual exercises' rather than in terms of a body of knowledge or skills to be acquired over a specific period of learning. In *Confessions of the Flesh* (2018), Michel Foucault elaborates on this idea for the early Christian period, but surprisingly, his notion of 'practices of the self' does not develop the thematic

of spiritual authority in any great detail, despite his emphasis elsewhere on ‘pastoral power’ and on spirituality as resistance. Yet, from St. Augustine to Thomas a Kempis and Ignatius of Loyola, Catholic Christian spiritual exercises involve the strict obedience to one's spiritual guide, and to the institution of the church.

In the Islamic tradition, a comparable emphasis on obedience and humility is largely, though not entirely, absent. Clearly, classical Islamic articulations of spiritual exercises and spiritual authority are rather different from those found in the Christian world. In Tariqa mysticism, the person of the shaykh rather than the institution of a church embodied the pastoral power concerned with the novice's spiritual well-being; and the well-known antinomian tendencies of some Sufi orders further complicate this picture. In classical philosophy, we find a critique - astonishingly radical by present-day standards - of the epistemic authority of the prophet as lawgiver, and by extension of the legitimacy and limits of spiritual guidance.

In this presentation, I will focus on the famous freethinker Abu Bakr al-Razi, whose explicit rejection of prophets, as reported in hostile sources, dovetails well with his views on spiritual and epistemic authority as found in his surviving writings. In *The Philosophical Path*, his apologia, by contrast, Razi defends his way of life as in agreement with (religious) morality. This will lead us to explore whether Razi's notion of the ‘philosophical way of life’ involves anything like Hadot's spiritual exercises; whether Razi's views on epistemic and spiritual authority leave any room for spiritual guidance; and how his views on authority dovetail, or clash, with other classical Islamic views on antinomianism and the law.

Michiel Leezenberg teaches in the departments of Philosophy and Classics of the University of Amsterdam. His current research interests focus on the intellectual history of the early modern and modern Islamic world, the history and philosophy of the humanities, and the Kurdish question. He has held visiting positions at INALCO-Sorbonne (Paris), Jagiellonian University (Cracow) and the University of Ghent. In 2001, he published *Islamic Philosophy: A History* (in Dutch), which won the Socrates cup for the best Dutch-language philosophy book of the year. Among his other publications are *Sex and Politics in Islam* (in Dutch, 2017) and (with Gerard de Vries) *History and Philosophy of the Humanities: An Introduction* (2018).

The Happy-Go-Lucky Sect: the Khurramdiniya Between the Sasanians and Islam
(Khodadad Rezakhani)

The rebellion of Babak in the early ninth century CE was the greatest crisis the Abbasid Caliphate had faced since its founding in 751. It was also perhaps most threatening since apart from its anti-governmental goals, the rebellion was built around a little known sect called Khurramdiniya (“Joyful Religion”) or Khurramiyya (“(those of) Joyfulness”). While Khurramdiniya has been called a “Mazdakite” sect by most scholars (eg. Madelung 1986), recent opinion has tried to contextualise the movement in the larger context of the Iranian religious expanse (Crone 2012). However, most previous scholarship has considered the Khurramdiniya purely within their Islamic context and within their relationship with the Muslim authorities, as well as tenuous connections to Mazdakism, of which we also know very little. The results has been unsatisfactory and often lacking in depth where it concerns the Khurramdiniya themselves.

The present paper aims to approach the question of the presence of Khurramdiniya in the early Islamic empire from the view point of its Iranian and Armenian religious contexts. By comparing the Khurramdiniya with the other contemporary religious traditions, from the local cults of Bactria to the Orthodox Zoroastrianism forming in Baghdad, this paper will try to present a new understanding of Khurramdiniya. In particular, the relationship with non-orthodox Islamic, Zoroastrian, and Christian sects will be explored for what they tell us about the Khurramdiniya both as a religious and a political protest movement.

Khodadad Rezakhani is a researcher at the Institute for Area Studies (Leiden University). He is a historian of Global Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages, with a focus on Central and West Asia from 500-700 CE. He holds a Ph.D. in Late Antique and Near Eastern History from UCLA. His Princeton research focuses on the Sasanian and Early Islamic economy of the Near East. His latest book, *ReOrienting the Sasanians: East Iran in Late Antiquity*, offers a narrative history of Central Asia after the Greek dynasties to the early Islamic period. While at Princeton, Dr. Rezakhani’s teaching has spanned a graduate seminar on Late Antique problems and sources, an undergraduate seminar in Conquerors and Conquests in Middle Eastern History and reading courses on medieval Persian texts, as well as Middle Persian/Pahlavi. In spring 2018, Dr. Rezakhani conducted primary research on various projects related to medieval Persian historical sources and source material, including coins, in European and Iranian collections.