

Aga Khan University

From the Selected Works of Walid Ghali

Spring April 29, 2024

Muhammad Abduh Workshop: Program and Abstracts

Walid Ghali



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/walid_ghali/36/



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

(International) in the United Kingdom

Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations

How Far Has It Gone?

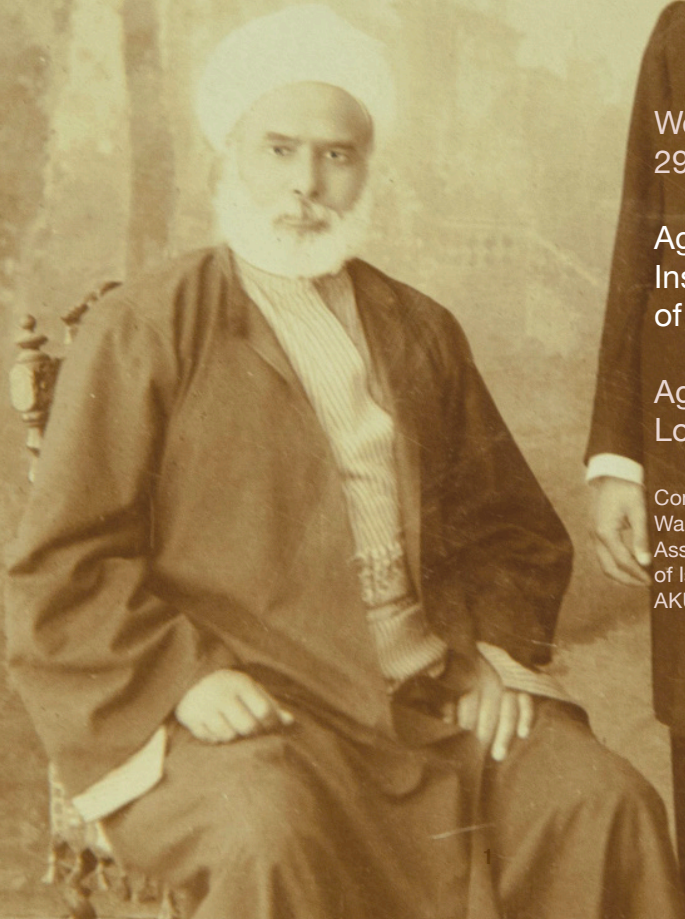
Muhammad Abduh and His Programme of Islamic Reform

Workshop
29 – 30 April 2024

Aga Khan University
Institute for the Study
of Muslim Civilisations

Aga Khan Centre
London

Convened by
Walid Ghali
Associate Professor
of Islamic Studies
AKU-ISMC



Introduction

Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) was an Egyptian philosopher, sociologist and reformer. He is ranked as one of the most remarkable figures in the contemporary Muslim world. At his death, he left numerous disciples and works of genuine interest and inestimable value. During his lifetime, he was given the epithet of ‘al-Ustādh al-Imām’ (‘The Master and Guide’) – demonstrating the esteem he was held in by his contemporaries and by those who have followed.

AKU-ISMC has organised a two-day workshop to discuss Muhammad Abduh as one of the most influential figures in the modern history of Muslim societies, and specifically of the reform movement of the Nahda (Arab Enlightenment). Although he died over a century ago at the early age of 53, his thoughts and ideas are still discussed and debated. In the chaotic political, social and religious circumstances in which we find ourselves post-Arab Spring, thinkers and scholars are increasingly turning to the work of the great late 19th century reformers like Abduh.

Muhammad Abduh tried to examine and explain the reasons for what he saw in his lifetime as the decline of Muslims and their cultures. Born in an Egypt that was then an autonomous province of the ancient Ottoman Empire, Abduh was instrumental in developing one of the first modern political parties in the region (The National Party). He also participated in a failed attempt at revolution (the Urabi Revolt of 1881) and was exiled from Egypt in 1882 by the occupying British forces. He was allowed to return to Egypt in 1888 and would – by his death – become the Grand Mufti of Egypt. He lived through extraordinary, eventful times, and the future of Arab society and governance occupied him throughout his life and his many careers – as journalist, teacher, writer, politician and judge.

WORKSHOP

Muhammad Abduh and His Programme of Islamic Reform

29–30 April 2024

DAY 1: MONDAY 29 APRIL 2024

REGISTRATION AND WELCOME

- 10:00 – 10:30 Registration and light refreshments
- 10:30 – 10:40 **Welcome to AKU-ISMC**
Anjum Halai, AKU
- 10:40 – 11:00 **Introduction to the Workshop**
Walid Ghali, AKU-ISMC
- 11:00 – 11:45 **Keynote Speech**
Abdou Filali-Ansary, AKU-ISMC
- 11:45 – 12:00 Break

PANEL 1: MUHAMMAD ABDUH: INTELLECTUAL LEGACY

CHAIR: Farouk Topan, AKU-ISMC

- 12:00 – 12:20 **Global Abduh: the localisation of reformist visions in Southeast Asia**
Khairudin Aljunied, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur
- 12:20 – 12:40 **Rereading the visit of Muhammad Abduh to Algeria, 1903**
Mahammed BouAbdalla, University of Westminster, London
- 12:40 – 1:00 **Muhammad Abduh: intellectual ambiguity in modern Islamic reform**
Oliver Scharbrodt, Lund University, Lund
- 1:00 – 1:30 Discussion
- 1:30 – 2:30 Lunch

PANEL 2: REFORM THROUGH PHILOSOPHY

CHAIR: Jonas Otterbeck, AKU-ISMC

- 2:30 – 2:50 **Muhammad Abduh's eclectic approach to the past and the present**
Mohammed Gamal Abdelnour, al-Azhar University, Cairo
- 2:50 – 3:10 **The reception of *tahdhib* philosophical traditions in modern Islamic intellectual thought: a case study of Muhammad Abduh**
Nuha Alshaar, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London
- 3:10 – 3:30 **Muhammad Abduh's Avicennism: a textual history**
Robert Wisnovsky, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal
- 3:30 – 4:00 Discussion
- 4:00 – 4:20 Break

PANEL 3: REFORM THROUGH EDUCATION

CHAIR: Karen Bauer, Institute of Ismaili Studies, London

- 4:20 – 4:40 **Muhammad Abduh: the founder of the Egyptian Revival School in the 19th Century**
Abdel Basit Salama Haykal, al-Azhar University, Cairo
- 4:40 – 5:00 **Pay it forward – educationally – or how to procure jihadists for reform**
Yasmin Amin, Orient Institut Beirut, Cairo
- 5:00 – 5:20 **Muhammad Abduh and the school of hermeneutics in Egypt**
Gamal Omar, Independent Researcher/Tafkir Academy, New York
- 5:20 – 5:50 Discussion
- 6:00 – 7:00 Display of Muhammad Abduh Collection in the Aga Khan Library
- 7:00 – 9:00 Dinner hosted by AKU-ISMC

9:30 – 10:30 **Keynote Speech**
Ahmad S. Dallal, American University Cairo

PANEL 4: MUHAMMAD ABDUH'S POLITICAL ACTIVISM

CHAIR: Mohamed Keshavjee

10:30 – 10:50 **Muhammad Abduh's attempt at restoring democratic government in Egypt, 1883**
Walid Ghali, AKU-ISMC, London

10:50 – 11:10 **Imam Muhammad Abduh and the constitutional state**
Mohamed al-Sayyad, al-Azhar University, Cairo

11:10 – 11:30 Discussion

11:30 – 11:40 Break

11:40 – 1:00 **Round Table Discussion**
led by Leif Stenberg, AKU-ISMC

CONCLUSION OF THE WORKSHOP

1:00 – 2:00 Lunch

Farewell and Group photo

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Abstracts & Biographies

حیات سید

عبدالله الشافعی و دیگر
فی عصر ابن تیمیہ الحاکم ترمذی و ابن کثیر و ابن
وسیلہ بن کثیر علی عہد المملوک

تألیفات العظیم
لمحمد بن عبد الوہاب
ابن تیمیہ بن عبد کبیر
ابن کثیر بن عبد البر
ابن قیم بن محمد
ابن حجر بن عسکری
ابن عساکر بن علی
ابن الجوزی
ابن کثیر بن عبد البر
ابن تیمیہ بن عبد کبیر
ابن قیم بن محمد
ابن حجر بن عسکری
ابن عساکر بن علی
ابن الجوزی

حیات سید

حیات سید



فی عصر حضرت الامام ابن تیمیہ و ابن کثیر و ابن حجر بن عسکری و ابن عساکر بن علی و ابن الجوزی و ابن کثیر بن عبد البر و ابن تیمیہ بن عبد کبیر و ابن قیم بن محمد و ابن حجر بن عسکری و ابن عساکر بن علی و ابن الجوزی

فی عصر حضرت الامام ابن تیمیہ و ابن کثیر و ابن حجر بن عسکری و ابن عساکر بن علی و ابن الجوزی و ابن کثیر بن عبد البر و ابن تیمیہ بن عبد کبیر و ابن قیم بن محمد و ابن حجر بن عسکری و ابن عساکر بن علی و ابن الجوزی

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Welcome to AKU-ISMC

Anjum Halai

Anjum Halai is Regional Vice-Provost Asia and UK and Founding Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences (2018-2022) at the Aga Khan University. She has a D.Phil in Education (Mathematics) Department of Education, Oxford University and a Masters in Education (Mathematics) from the Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development Pakistan. She is an international education specialist with strong experience of leading and managing large international research and development projects with partners in Low Income Countries such as Pakistan and Tanzania and those in High Income Countries such as Canada and the UK.

Keynote Speech

Abdou Filali-Ansary

Abdou Filali-Ansary is a distinguished philosopher and writer, and was the Founding Director of the Aga Khan University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC), London. Professor Filali-Ansary was educated in Morocco and France and received his doctorate from the University of Dijon in 1970 for a thesis on Spinoza and Bergson. He was a Hubert Humphrey Fellow at Boston University from 1979 to 1980. In Morocco, he taught at Mohammad the Fifth University in Rabat, where he was Secretary-General from 1981 to 1984. He was then, until 2001, the Founding Director of the King Abdul Aziz Foundation, also in Rabat. Professor Filali-Ansary's publications in Arabic, French and English have contributed greatly to our understanding of the place of Islam in the contemporary world. In 1973, he initiated *Prologues*, a bilingual Arabic-French journal devoted to promoting intellectual exchange between scholars in the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds. Professor Filali-Ansary is recognised internationally for his work and has participated in many international conferences. In 2012-13, he was Humanities Visiting Professor in Interfaith Studies at the University of Oxford's Research Centre in the Humanities.

PANEL 1: MUHAMMAD ABDUH: INTELLECTUAL LEGACY

CHAIR: Farouk Topan

Farouk Topan is Professor Emeritus at the Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations in London. Farouk Topan has taught at the universities of Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Riyadh and the School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London. He is also a writer of Swahili fiction and has published several short stories and two of his plays have been part of the school curriculum in Tanzania.

Global Abduh: the localisation of reformist visions in Southeast Asia

Khairudin Aljunied

This paper examines creative readings and localisation of Muhammad Abduh's ideas in Southeast Asia. I examine the works by Haji Abduhl Malik bin Abduhl Karim Amrullah (Hamka) and Harun Nasution, two popular and highly regarded Muslims whom Abduh deeply influenced. Abduh's thoughts on *islāh* and *tajdīd* fostered two strands of reformism in Southeast Asia. The first is critical traditionalism, as manifested in Hamka's expansive corpus of works. The second strand is rooted in rationalism spearheaded by Harun Nasution. These two strands of reformist thinking should be analysed, not as opposing ideologies or in binary terms, but as part of an Islamic reformist mosaic in a region little studied by scholars of Abduh and global Islam.

Khairudin Aljunied is Professor and Senior Fellow at the University of Malaya. Formerly he was a Professor and Malaysia Chair of Islam in Southeast Asia at the Alwaleed Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University. He has been listed as one of the 500 influential Muslims in the World in 2024. A recognised specialist in intellectual history, Aljunied's research focuses on the connections between Southeast Asia and Global Islam. He is the author and editor of thirteen books and more than thirty internationally refereed articles. Recent publications include *Muslim Cosmopolitanism: Southeast Asian Islam in Comparative Perspective* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), *Hamka and Islam: Cosmopolitan Reform in the Malay World* (Cornell University Press, 2018), *Islam in Malaysia: An Entwined History* (Oxford University Press, 2019), and *Shapers of Islam in Southeast Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2022). His upcoming book is *Contemplating Sufism: Histories of a Dialogical Tradition in Southeast Asia*.

Rereading the visit of Muhammad Abduh to Algeria, 1903

Mahammed BouAbdalla

This paper explores the underexamined visit of Muhammad Abduh to Colonial Algeria, which took place from 27 August to 9 September 1903, just two years prior to his death. Despite the historical significance of Abduh's visit, it has

received limited scholarly attention. The initial direct engagement between Abduh and Algerian scholars occurred in 1882 during his encounter with al-Amīr Abdelkader in Damascus. This paper will revisit the historical and intellectual contexts surrounding Abduh's 1903 visit to Algeria. It devolves into the objectives of the visit. Moreover, the paper examines the impact of this visit on the reformed-minded 'ulama, exploring whether it sparked any notable transformations within this group of reformists. Additionally, the paper investigates whether the visit faced resistance from anti-reformist 'ulama, shedding light on potential conflicts and opposition. And finally, it will examine how French authorities responded to and managed the visit.

Mahammed BouAbdalla is Senior lecturer in Arabic Studies, University of Westminster, London. He has taught Arabic for Specific Purposes and General Arabic at all levels at the university since 2009. He has also taught Arabic at SOAS, UCL and Kings College in the University of London. His research interests are primarily in the area of Arabic teaching (Arabic heritage learners and blended learning in Arabic teaching). He is also interested in Muslim identity and politics.

Muhammad Abduh: intellectual ambiguity in modern Islamic reform

Oliver Scharbrodt

Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) is often portrayed as an Islamic modernist who sought to rationalise Sunni 'orthodox' theology. This paper argues that that is misleading: it operates with problematic notions of what constitutes 'orthodoxy' and 'heterodoxy' in Islam and fails to fully capture the intellectual complexity of Abduh's reformist oeuvre. This paper first shifts the focus to his earliest mystical, philosophical and theological writings. Often dismissed as being without any further relevance to his later reformist work, this paper argues they are crucial to understanding Abduh's approach to Islamic reform. Engaging with his earliest writings reveals the innovations in his thought and allows for a more nuanced reading of his oeuvre. Secondly, the paper reveals important continuities of certain concepts and tropes from his earlier to his later writings. Rather than suggesting a complete re-appraisal of his earlier mystical and philosophical interests, his most prominent theological works and his Qur'an commentary, produced towards the end of his life, re-articulate similar ideas in an idiom that appears more aligned with Sunni notions of orthodoxy. Abduh engages with a variety of intellectual traditions, which he synthesises to show that in cultural and intellectual terms, Islam can find its place in the modern world. Finally, the paper argues that to fully understand the capaciousness of Abduh's thought, socialisation in an intellectual culture of ambiguity needs to be taken into consideration. This culture of ambiguity marked Islamic intellectual history, and was comfortable with contradictions and inconsistencies while developing strategies to cope with them.

Oliver Scharbrodt is Professor of Islamic Studies, Lund University, Sweden. He has published on the intellectual history of modern Islam, Sufism, Twelver Shiism and Muslim minorities in Europe in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, *Die Welt des Islams*, the *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, *Contemporary Islam* and the *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*. He is the author of *Islam and the Baha'i Faith: A Comparative Study of Muhammad Abduh and Abduh-Baha 'Abbas* (Routledge, 2008) and co-authored *Muslims in Ireland: Past and Present* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015). With Yafa Shanneik he co-edited *Shi'a Minorities in the Contemporary World: Migration, Transnationalism and Multi-locality* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020). He was editor-in-chief of the *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* (Brill) from 2015 until 2020. His latest book *Muhammad Abduh: Modern Islam and the Culture of Ambiguity* (IB Tauris, 2022) illustrates Abduh's complex engagement with Islam's diverse intellectual traditions in his reformist discourse. From 2018 until 2023, he served as principal investigator of the project 'Creating an alternative umma: clerical authority and religio-political mobilisation in transnational Shii Islam' which was funded by a Consolidator Grant of the European Research Council (grant agreement no. 724557).

PANEL 2: REFORM THROUGH PHILOSOPHY

CHAIR: Jonas Otterbeck

Jonas Otterbeck is Professor of Islamic Studies at the Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC). Over the last twenty-five years, Otterbeck has engaged in research about contemporary Islam, often with political relevance. His most recent research is on Islamic pop music and especially the media company Awakening and its artists like Maher Zain, Harris J and Raef. He also has an interest in research on music censorship and an engagement for artists' right to expression. Otterbeck has, among other things, published on the situation of Muslim pupils in Swedish schools, the identity constructions of Muslim youth and their understanding of Islam, the representation of Islam and Muslims in Sweden, Islamic revivalist discourse, active citizenship among Muslims and the relation between European states and Muslim organisations.

Muhammad Abduh's eclectic approach to the past and the present

Mohammed Gamal Abdelnour

Muhammad Abduh's intellectual legacy has often puzzled. While some historians argue that he did not depart from orthodox theology in essential content, others contend that he was not an orthodox theologian but rather a Mu'tazilite. More recently, some have come to characterise him as a 'modernist', while others see him as a staunch defender of Islam in the modern world. Consulting Abduh's own writings, including his *Risālat al-tawḥīd* (*Theology of Unity*) and his *Hāshiyah* (*Commentary*) on *Sharḥ al-Dawwānī lil-'aqā'id al-ʿaḍudiyah*, alongside his *Risālat al-Wāridāt* (*Treatise on Mystical Inspirations*), this paper critiques this either/or pattern and argues that Abduh was, so to speak, a 'critical traditionalist'. In doing so, the article draws points of resonance and dissonance between his synthetic thought and that of the renowned Muslim theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111).

Mohammed Gamal Abdelnour is a lecturer of Islamic theology and philosophy at the Faculty of Uṣūl al-Dīn, al-Azhar University (Cairo) and a lecturer at the Department of Philosophy, University of York. Gamal received his primary, secondary and undergraduate education at Al-Azhar, where he gained the qualification as *ḥāfiẓ* of the Qur'an. He studied deeply the various disciplines of the Arabic and Islamic tradition, and graduated as valedictorian of his class with a bachelor's in Islamic Studies and Philosophy in 2011. He holds an MA in Catholic Theology (Durham University) and a PhD in Comparative Theology (SOAS, University of London). He is the author of *A Comparative History of Catholic and Ash'arī Theologies of Truth and Salvation: Inclusive Minorities, Exclusive Majorities* (Brill, 2021) and *The Higher Objectives of Islamic Theology: Towards a Theory of Maqāṣid al-'Aqā'id* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

The reception of *tahdhīb* philosophical traditions in modern Islamic intellectual thought: a case study of Muhammad Abduh

Nuha Alshaar

The paper explores the engagement of Muslim reformers with the classical theories on *tahdhīb* (moral training) as an ethical framework with a focus on the Egyptian Muslim reformer Muhammad Abduh. More specifically, the focus will be on his reception of the ideas of pre-modern scholarship portrayed by Aḥmad b. Miskawayh (d. 1030) and Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (c. 927–1023). I argue that Abduh has utilised the moral framework proposed by those thinkers to address specific concerns in his reform programme. The paper will discuss the idea of civic *adab* (etiquette), *tamanduan* (civilisation), *tarbiya* (education) and *sadaqah* (charity) as social acts to facilitate changes and reform in society. The objective is to highlight continuity and change, or the new emphases and moral shifts, in utilising *tahdhīb*. It will also explore his conception of the moral self and ethical subjects. The paper will also attempt to introduce a comparison between Abduh's work and that of scholars like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's (d. 1898) *Tahzib al-Akhlaq*, produced in the context of colonised India. This work will provide a platform to discuss how and why different social agents utilise similar ethical notions for different purposes in different social and political contexts.

Nuha Alshaar is Associate Professor at The University of Lisbon and teaches Muslim Literature and Adab traditions at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. She has also been teaching Arabic Studies at the American University of Sharjah. Her research focuses on ethics and political thought in Muslim contexts, the Qur'an and *adab* literary traditions. She published *Ethics in Islam: Friendship in the Political Thought of Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī and his Contemporaries* (Routledge, 2015). With Wilfred Madelung, Carmela Baffioni and Cyril Uy, she co-authored *On God and the World: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of Epistles 49-51* (Oxford University Press, 2019). She is also the editor of *The Qur'an and Adab: The Shaping of Literary Traditions in Classical Islam* (Oxford University Press in Association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2017) and she co-edited *The Humanities in the 21st Century: Perspectives from the Arab World and Germany* (2022) and *Sources and Approaches across Disciplines in Near Eastern Studies: Proceedings of the 24th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants* (2013). Forthcoming is her edited volume *Muslim Sicily: Encounters and Legacy* (Edinburgh University Press, 2024).

Muhammad Abduh's Avicennism: a textual history

Robert Wisnovsky

Compared to his *Risālat al-Tawḥīd*, which has received massive scholarly attention and been translated into several European languages, two more

technically complex philosophical works by Abduh remain in the shadows. This paper will contextualise Abduh's composition and subsequent publication of these two understudied philosophical works. The first – *Ḥāshiyah* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al-Khayriyyah, 1905) on Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī's (d. 908/1503) *Sharḥ on al-'Aqā'id al-'Aḍudiyyah of 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī* (d. 756/1355) – is a continuous (though incomplete) supercommentary that demonstrates Abduh's command of the long tradition of post-Avicennian philosophical theology. The second – *Ta'liqāt* (alt. *Tā'ālīq*; Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al-Kubrā al-Amīriyyah, 1898) on *al-Baṣā'ir al-Naṣīriyyah fī 'Ilm al-Manṭiq* of Ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī (d. c. 566/1170) – is a set of discontinuous glosses that reflect Abduh's attempt to return to the earliest phase of the post-Avicennian logical tradition. What exactly were Abduh's motivations in composing these two commentaries? To what extent do they show him engaging with the traditions of post-Avicennian philosophical theology and logic? And to what extent do they show him stepping away from those traditions? What were the precise reasons behind their publication by these particular presses at those particular times? Who exactly was involved in their editing and publication, and who was their intended readership? This paper addresses these and related questions (including recent challenges to Abduh's authorship of the *Ḥāshiyah*) with the hope of shedding light on late-19th-century Arab modernist conceptions of the Islamic philosophical heritage.

Robert Wisnovsky is Professor of Islamic Studies, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. He received his BA (1986) in Near Eastern Languages and Literature from Yale, and his MA (1990) and PhD (1994) in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton, supervised by Prof. Hossein Modarressi. He then took up a Postdoctoral Research Assistantship (1994-1996) in Prof. Richard Sorabji's Ancient Commentators on Aristotle project, in the Philosophy Department of King's College London. His first teaching job was in the Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Department at Harvard, where he was Assistant Professor (1996-2002) and then Associate Professor (2002-2004) of Islamic Intellectual History. In 2004, he came to the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill, where he is currently James McGill Professor of Islamic Philosophy. He has also served two terms as Director of the Institute, 2005-2008 and 2016-2018.

PANEL 3: REFORM THROUGH EDUCATION

CHAIR: Karen Bauer

Karen Bauer is Associate Professor at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. Dr Bauer's research centres on the Qur'an and its reception history, the history of emotions in Islam and gender in Islamic history and thought. She is currently pursuing a cultural history approach to the Qur'an. Her most recent book is co-authored with Feras Hamza, *Women, Households, and the Hereafter in the Qur'an: a Patronage of Piety* (Oxford University Press, 2023). It applies an historical-critical method to the study of women in the Qur'an.

Muhammad Abduh: the founder of the Egyptian Revival School in the 19th Century

Abdel Basit Salama Haykal

In the words of Dr Taha Huseein, 'This great reformer's [Muhammad Abduh's] belief in progress is no less than his belief in Islam. Therefore, he worked sincerely to reconcile the Islamic doctrines and progress'. Abduh was an enemy of intellectual stagnation, and he believed that not confronting it was a sign of defeat and regression. Known as the Professor Imam, Abduh began a path to reform religious thought that has never, to this day, stopped confronting the traditional, hesitant path. His school was not confined within the walls of Al-Azhar, but from the beginning spread beyond them. It is Abduh's own students from outside the university who really succeeded in evolving his ideas – removing ambiguity from some of them, resolving his hesitancy in others. Moreover, they brought critical method to bear on Abduh's ideas, further enriching the reformist's thought. This paper seeks to show the diversity of the intellectual and cultural lives of Abduh's students and the diversity of their reforming contributions. It reveals the points of intersection and difference between their ideas and those of the Professor Imam.

Abdel Basit Salama Haykal is Professor of Arabic Sciences and Literature at Al-Azhar University. His research focuses on the religious discourse among different Muslim groups. Among his many publications are: *al-Dawlah wa-al-Muqaddas fi Fikr Muhammad Abduh* and *Ishkaliyat Qira'at al-Turath 'inda Taha Abd al-Rahman*.

Pay it forward – educationally – or how to procure jihadists for reform

Yasmin Amin

In Muhammad Rashīd Riḍā's book *Tārīkh al-ustādh al-imām al-shaykh (The History of the Professor Guide)* about his mentor Muhammad Abduh, he quoted Abduh deploring the state of ignorance of 'the Muslims'. However, Abduh also offered up a vision and a roadmap to combat this ignorance and achieve reform. His plan, in Abduh's own words, is: 'We choose ten or more intelligent

young men who are sound in *fiṭra*, raise them according to our methods and direct them to our goal. If each one of them were allowed to raise ten others, in a few years, we would have a hundred leaders of the jihadists for the sake of reform'. This paper looks at Abduh's vision and plan. It traces his students and his student's students, adding a personal element by specifically looking at my father Aḥmad Amin and his work. It further analyses the impact of Muhammad Abduh's vision to assess whether or not his plan worked and, if so, if it could be implemented again.'

Yasmin Amin, Researcher & Representative of the Orient Institut Beirut (OIB) in Cairo, is an Egyptian German who holds a BA in Business Administration, a PGD and an MA in Islamic Studies, all three degrees from the American University in Cairo. She received her PhD in Islamic Studies from Exeter University's Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, researching 'Humour and Laughter in the Ḥadīth'. Her research covers various aspects of gender, early Muslim society and culture as well as the original texts of Islamic history, law and Hadith. Since May 2022, Amin has worked at the Orient-Institut Beirut (Max-Weber-Stiftung) as their Representative in Cairo. She is co-translator (with Nesrin Amin) of *The Sorrowful Muslim's Guide* (Edinburgh University Press/AKU-ISMC 2018), and co-editor (with Nevin Reda) of *Islamic Interpretive Tradition and Gender Justice: Processes of Canonization, Subversion and Change* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2020). She has published extensively and her next book is a translation of Nazira Zeineddine's writings with Edinburgh University Press/AKU-ISMC (forthcoming 2025).

Muhammad Abduh and the school of hermeneutics in Egypt

Gamal Omar

This paper explores Abduh's perspectives and contributions to interpreting the Qur'an. In his introductory remarks in *Tafsir*, Abduh criticised prevailing interpretations of the Qur'an, characterising them as mere exercises in grammar and metaphor, disconnected from the deeper essence of the Qur'anic message. Abduh presented eight distinctive approaches to Qur'anic interpretation developed by his predecessors. These approaches encompassed various methodologies, including studying Qur'anic rhetoric, describing and explaining its words, tracking Qur'anic stories and examining the historical narratives derived from multiple sources. Abduh emphasised the need for discernment in accepting narratives, warning against indiscriminate reliance on sources. The other four approaches were studying the 'strangeness' of the Qur'an, focusing on its legal (jurisprudential) rulings, engaging in debates about foundational beliefs, exploring sermons and subtleties and introducing the concept of *al-Ishārī*, implying esoteric interpretations.

Gamal Omar is an independent researcher and founder of the Tafsir Academy in the United States. He specialises in critically studying Islamic thought in modern and contemporary times. He has published six books, including *This is How Nasr Abu Zayd Spoke in Arabic*.

Keynote Speech

Ahmad S. Dallal

Ahmad S. Dallal is the American University in Cairo's (AUC's) 13th President. Dallal is an accomplished academic leader and renowned scholar. He is the former Dean of Georgetown University in Qatar and served as Provost at the American University of Beirut (AUB) from 2009 to 2015. A prominent scholar of Islamic studies, he has taught at AUB, Stanford University, Yale University, Smith College and Georgetown University, where he also served as chair of the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Dallal has written and lectured widely on learning in mediaeval and early modern Islamic societies, the development of traditional and exact Islamic sciences, mediaeval Islamic thought, the early modern evolution of Islamic revivalism and intellectual movements, Islamic law and the causes and consequences of the September 11 attacks.

PANEL 4: MUHAMMAD ABDUH'S POLITICAL ACTIVISM

CHAIR: Mohamed Keshavjee

Mohamed Keshavjee is a lawyer, author and international cross-cultural specialist on mediation. He is a graduate of Queens University where he did his LLB, and London University where he attained his LLM and PhD. He was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn London and Osgoode Hall, Canada. He has practised law in Kenya, Britain and Ontario. A former member of the Steering Committee of the World Mediation Forum, he is also a member of the Advisory panel to the Secretary General of the International Social Service of Switzerland, and a consultant to The Hague Conference on Private International Law on the role of Mediation in addressing cases of cross-border child abduction. He was the first Canadian to receive the Gandhi King Ikeda Peace Award, conferred upon him for his work in peace and human rights education.

Muhammad Abduh's attempt at restoring democratic government in Egypt, 1883

Walid Ghali

Recently, a collection of manuscripts and rare books on Islamic topics came into the possession of the Aga Khan Library, with several items attributed to Muhammad Abduh. One of the items in the collection is a letter written together with a group of British politicians and meant to be sent to Egyptian politicians and leaders of the suppressed National Party for them to comment on and sign. Interestingly, the text of the letter appears in the middle of another manuscript that also includes a translation of three chapters from Plato's *Republic*. This paper aims to demonstrate that the content of this letter, where Abduh listed the steps needed to restore an Egyptian democratic government, brings important insights into Egyptian political life in this period. The paper

looks into the history of the political parties in Egypt of the period, including the National Party, which first emerged in 1879 and was suppressed when British troops occupied Egypt in September 1882 'to restore order' in the wake of the Urabi Revolt. More importantly, the letter throws light on the role of Muhammad Abduh in the political movement following British occupation.

Walid Ghali is Associate Professor at the Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC), London. He also leads the Aga Khan Library in the United Kingdom. He received his PhD in 2012 from Cairo University, Faculty of Arts in Arabic manuscript traditions. He completed coursework for a Master's in Islamic Studies and a diploma in Executive Management from the Institute of Management. Dr Ghali coordinates and teaches ('Paths to Sufism Course') for MA students at AKU-ISMC. He also co-teaches courses such as 'The Concept of Nation in Modern Arabic Literature' and 'Muslim Societies in the Contemporary World'. He delivers guest lectures on pre-Islamic poetry and prose culture and on Qur'an recitation at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. He is a series editor for the **Abdou Filali-Ansary Occasional Papers** series published by AKU-ISMC. In 2020, Dr Ghali was elected a Board member of The Islamic Manuscript Association (TIMA). Dr Ghali has published in different research areas, and his forthcoming publication will be on his research into personal documents belonging to Muhammad Abduh.

Imam Muhammad Abduh and the constitutional state

Mohamed al-Sayyad

This study seeks to reveal a neglected aspect of Muhammad Abduh's intellectual contribution, namely constitutional thought. I argue in this study that Abduh is one of the most important constitutional thinkers in the history of Islamic scholarship, and that he is the most important constitutional thinker in contemporary Islam, along with his mentor, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. Abduh's efforts did not stop at constitutional reform attempts in Egypt. Rather, his efforts and constitutional reform attempts extended to Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Tunisia and Algeria. He formed a scholarly network of students in Egypt who took over the reform process after him. To date, his students seem to be the only scholarly group demanding constitutional reform and establishing a state based on 'people's satisfaction and people's acceptability'.

Muhamed al-Sayyad is a member of the Faculty of Uṣūl al-Dīn, al-Azhar University, Cairo. His research focuses on Islamic political thought. He has published several books and articles, including *Thubut al-Quran bayna al-Sunna wa-al-Shi'a* (*Proof of the Qur'an among Sunnis and Shiites*) and *al-Faqih wa-al-Din wa-al-Sultah* (*The Jurist, Religion and Authority: Shiite Political Thought between Najaf and Qum*).

Round Table Discussion

led by Leif Stenberg

Leif Stenberg is Professor of Islamic Studies at the Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC). Director and then Dean of AKU-ISMC from 2017 to 2023, he received a Ph.D. in History of Religions from Lund University, Sweden in 1996 with the publication of his award-winning thesis 'The Islamization of Science: Four Muslim Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity'. From 1996 to 1997, he was an assistant professor in History of Religions at Uppsala University, and from 1997 until 1999, he was Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. In 1999/2000, Stenberg was a visiting scholar at the Institut Français d'Études Arabes de Damas (IFEAD) in Syria. In 2001, he took up a position in Islamic Studies at Lund University and became an associate professor there in 2003. In 2011, Stenberg was appointed full professor at Lund University, and subsequently was also appointed Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) which he proceeded to build up and expand before leaving in 2017 to join AKU-ISMC as its Director.

نو اوست مس

نو اوست اشعار و جلد

دلالت ان كرتيپينه

فري معده ان كرتيپ كات و روبري اشعار و جلد
و سب دلالت كيرت مع ملعليه جلد

عجله

در المجلدات كيرت ما باهنگام لنگ فلسطين
راسته بنا رابع اشعار و اشعار و اشعار
رابع ان مجلدات و اشعار و اشعار
و سب دلالت كيرت مع ملعليه جلد
و سب دلالت كيرت مع ملعليه جلد

اشعار و او نههاسته
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اشعار و او نههاسته

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و سب دلالت كيرت مع ملعليه جلد

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عنه اشعار و او نههاسته

اشعار و او نههاسته