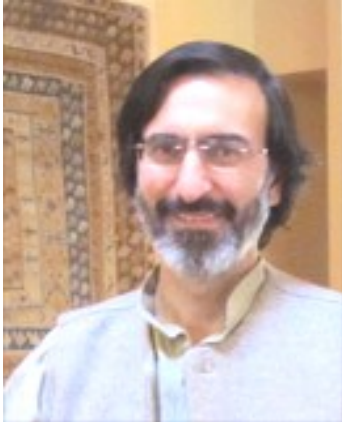




Chester Ronning Centre
for the Study of Religion and Public Life

From Theological Dogma to Spiritual Mystery: Esoteric Muslim Perspectives on Christian Doctrine



Reza Shah-Kazemi

Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellow 2012

Dr Shah-Kazemi will explore two central articles of Christian faith from perspectives opened up by esoteric interpretations of key Qur'anic verses and passages. Whereas a whole series of verses in the Qur'an appears to refute and indeed condemn dogmas propounded within Christian theology, it is nonetheless possible to affirm the metaphysical or mystical realities to which these dogmas allude, such affirmation being derived from an esoteric reading not just of the verses in question but other verses in the Qur'an, ones which make clear the distinction between empirical facts and metaphysical principles.

The starting point of Dr Shah-Kazemi's argument is that the Qur'an itself affirms the spiritual validity of the Bible, going so far as to refer to the Qur'an as a 'confirmer' and a 'protector' of *all* scripture preceding itself (5:48). How, then, can a Muslim accept the truth of dogmas rooted in the Bible, when the Qur'an itself apparently refutes these dogmas? The key to resolving this and other such paradoxes is, according to Dr Shah-Kazemi, an appreciation of the distinction between theological exposition, which evaluates the data of revelation according to reason, and metaphysical discourse, which grasps the essential principles of revelation according to spiritual intuition.

Dr Reza Shah-Kazemi is Managing Editor of *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, and Research Associate at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. He is the author of many articles and several books in the field of Islamic mysticism and comparative religion.

“Considering the Incarnation”

Monday, 29 October, 6:30 pm
C014 Classroom Building
Augustana Campus, Camrose

“Considering the Crucifixion”

Tuesday, 30 October, 7:00 pm
First Church of Christ, Scientist
10810 – 100 Ave, Edmonton

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