

THREE -DAY INTERNATIONAL

Sultan Bahoo Rumi

CONFERENCE

PREACHERS OF HUMAN FRIENDSHIP,
PEACE, LOVE AND HARMONY

22 April, 2025



MUSLIM Institute



DAY 1 – DIALOGUE SESSIONS



MUSLIM Institute, in collaboration with the National Language Promotion Department, Islamabad, organized a three-day international conference titled "Mevlana Rumi and Hadrat Sultan Bahoo: Preachers of Human Friendship, Peace, Love, and Harmony." The conference took place from April 22 to 24, 2025, and featured the participation of national and international scholars who presented their research papers. A large number of attendees from diverse walks of life took part in the event.

The following distinguished guests participated in the dialogue sessions held on the first day.

FIRST DIALOGUE SESSION:

- DR. UMAIR MAHMOOD SIDDIQUI
(Tasawwuf & Spiritual-Revelation: Overview of Mohay ad-Din Ibn al-Arabi's Thoughts)
- PROF. DR. MUHAMMAD ZAHID MUGHAL
(Mohay ad-Din Ibn al-Arabi's Concept of Finality of Prophethood)
- MR. NURLAN SMAGULOV
(Guest of Honor)
- PROF. DR. MUHAMMAD SALEEM MAZHAR
(Chair of the Session)

SECOND DIALOGUE SESSION:

- DR. KHURRAM ILAHI
(Iqbal, Rumi & Javed Nama)
- PROF. DR. MUHAMMAD FEROZUDDIN SHAH KHAGGA
(A Study of Mathnawi Ma'nawi's Volume)
- PROF. DR. AKRAM VIRK
(Impact of Sufi Thoughts on Pakistani Culture: An Overview)
- MS. ALEXANDRA BAPTISTA
(Guest of Honor)
- BRIG. MUNIR SHEHZAD
(Chair of the Session)

THIRD DIALOGUE SESSION:

- MR. IDREES AZAD
(Between Reason and Revelation: Philosophical Influence of Ghazali & Kant on Science & Society)
- PROF. DR. ALTAF KAREEM
(Fundamental Aspects of Existence: Piecing Together Insights from Science and Sufism)
- HON. DILSHAD SENOL
(Guest of Honor)
- PROF. DR. ALIA SOHAIL KHAN
(Chair of the Session)

BRIEF SUMMARY OF REMARKS SHARED BY THE SPEAKERS:

In linguistic terms, Ilham (spiritual revelation) refers to the placement of an idea into one's heart without any apparent medium. Technically, it denotes a form of knowledge or insight bestowed by Allah directly upon the heart of an individual. Shaykh al-Akbar Ibn al-Arabi explains that the divine command through the names of Allah, spiritual manifestations (Tajalliyat), and divine words continuously act upon every atom of the universe. As stated in the Qur'an: "And your Lord revealed to the bee..." this form of (non-prophetic) revelation extends not only to humans but also to animals, plants, and even inanimate objects.

Every spiritually awakened person understands that this divine force of Ilham operates throughout all of existence. However, Nubuwwah (Prophethood, particularly in the sense of delivering divine law) is exclusively for Prophets and last Prophet is Exalted Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (SAWW).



Knowledge is traditionally categorized into three types: rational knowledge, experiential knowledge (Zauqi), and esoteric knowledge (Asrar). The communication of secret or esoteric knowledge (Akhbar al-Asrar) can occur in two ways: if the source is infallible (i.e., a Prophet), the message is to be fully accepted; if the source is fallible (e.g., a Sufi or saint), it may be accepted conditionally so long as it does not conflict with Shariah, reason, or established scriptural texts.

The fundamental distinction between a Prophet and a Muhaddath or Sufi (one who receives spiritual revelations) lies in the nature of obligation. A Prophet ﷺ is divinely commanded to convey the message (Taklif), while a Muhaddath is not under such obligation. Thus, while a Sufi may receive divine insights or spiritual inspiration, he is not necessarily required to preach or implement them publicly.

Sometimes, angels bring spiritual revelation even to saints (as evident from Qur'an, 41:30). Angels spoke to Lady Maryam and also to the wife of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). Thus, although the chain of Prophethood ended with the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, dreams, being a part of Prophethood, still serve as a means of divine grace for the Ummah. Ilham continues.



The Qur'an states that those who affirm Allah as their Lord and remain steadfast will have angels descend upon them with glad tidings. The Prophet ﷺ also said: "Satan places a thought in a person's heart, and so does an angel. Satan invites toward evil and denial of truth, while the angel calls toward good and affirmation of truth."

Shaykh Ibn Arabi holds a remarkable position in the Sufi tradition. All Sufi orders regard him as Shaykh al-Akbar (Greatest Mentor). Thus, to criticize him is akin to casting doubt on the intellectual foundations of Sufism. Defining a prophet solely on the basis of receiving revelation is problematic. To resolve this, scholars distinguished between prophetic revelation (Wahi Tashri'i) which includes legislation and other forms of spiritual inspiration, classified as Ilham. Shaykh Ibn Arabi follows this tradition by maintaining a clear distinction between Prophethood and Ilham. However, his terminology is based on a unique Sufi epistemology which, if interpreted through conventional theological frameworks, may lead to misunderstanding.



Many objections to Ibn Arabi's thought arise from confusion over terminology. In essence, he affirms the same distinctions that classical scholars made, albeit with different expressions and philosophical nuances. His terms must be understood within his metaphysical framework; otherwise, a profound tradition is misrepresented as incompatible with orthodox religion.



In *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, Imam Ghazali notes that students of science and mathematics become accustomed to concreteness. When they apply this expectation to spiritual matters, such as comprehending God, they become disillusioned when certainty eludes them. Immanuel Kant's intellectual journey parallels to Ghazali's in some extent. Newton had died when Kant was a child, and science was then believed to have all the answers. Like Ghazali, Kant challenged this worldview in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, which—much like Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifah*—revolutionized philosophical thought.

Kant argued that although we observe the universe, each person perceives it differently, according to individual faculties and consciousness. One might focus on color, another on dimension, another on time or space. Some might lack such concepts altogether. Thus, we cannot know the universe as it truly is. What appears to us is not how it exists in itself. Human perception cannot grasp the thing-in-itself.

Allama Iqbal largely agrees with Ghazali and Kant. He observed that when Ghazali became disillusioned with rationalism, he declared: “I cannot find God through these senses.” The Qur'an affirms: “Eyes cannot perceive Him,” and when Moses asked to see God, he was told: “You cannot see Me.” Iqbal believed that Ghazali's retreat into Sufism was correct in spirit, but he critiqued the implied duality: that God can only be found through the spiritual, not material, realm. In *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Iqbal emphasizes that the material and spiritual worlds are one continuum.



Kant's first principle is this: when performing a moral action, ask yourself, if this became a universal law, would it still be acceptable? If not, the action is immoral. Morality, therefore, becomes constructed through reason. Iqbal warned that this approach birthed utilitarianism: the idea that the morally correct action is the one that produces the greatest good for the greatest number. Utilitarianism justifies disturbing conclusions such as dropping atomic bombs to end a war by appealing to a greater good. “Collateral damage” becomes rationalized through this lens. Reason then permits extremes: to eliminate one perceived threat, an entire nation may be destroyed.

Thus, reason, having exceeded its moral limits, arrived at the idea of absolute freedom where. Kant's trajectory, Iqbal argued, ultimately expelled religion and spirituality from the public domain.



Material things, due to their incompleteness, point toward a greater perfection. Just as every particle has an antiparticle, humanity seeks its own perfection in a complete Being that is, God. Physicists such as John Wheeler, through quantum mechanics, suggested that observation influences existence. If a particle is

unobserved, it behaves unpredictably; once observed, its state collapses into reality. Consciousness, therefore, shapes reality. This convergence of spiritual insight and modern physics affirms the deep interconnectedness of perception and creation.

The universe, as revealed through quantum entanglement, operates non-locally what affects one particle instantaneously affects another, regardless of distance. Such discoveries challenge the notion of physical realism and suggest that the material world is illusory. If the world is an illusion, then what is the ultimate reality?

At the moment of the Big Bang, all states were unified. Over time, these unfolded into diverse forms what physics calls entropy. Like the stages of a human life, the universe's history is a cascade of unfolding possibilities. These states also reside within the human self. To access them, one must illuminate the lata'if (spiritual faculties), or unlock the heart through La ilaha illallah. When those locks are broken, divine secrets are revealed.

Hadhrat Sultan Bahoo (R.A) said: “*The heart is deeper than oceans.*”



Only those who become intimate with their own hearts can recognize God. One path to this recognition is inward through contemplation of what God has placed within. Another is through divine light, for Allah is “the Light of the heavens and the earth.” This light is not physical, but an inner faculty bestowed by God. When this light is directed outward, it resonates with the universe and reveals meaning. Even our perception is not truly our own—it is granted by the Divine.

If the world is not real, then the ultimate reality is the Being of Allah. We must plunge into the ocean of knowledge to reach Him. Hadhrat Sultan Bahoo (R.A) cautions that one who mistakes the mirror for reality can never reach the truth:

"Ishq-e-majazi tilkan bazi, peer oley turday hoo"
(False love is but a game; only the spiritually enlightened can transcend it.)

To avoid mistaking illusion for truth, we must attach ourselves to the Awliya (friends of God), the Sufis, and above all, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ—for it is through them that divine light reaches us. Allah revives the dead through His saints, irrigates barren lands, and breathes life into hearts through His radiant light. That light manifest fully in the Perfect Human, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. If human faculties fall short of perceiving the Divine directly, then the Prophet ﷺ becomes the mirror through which we come to know God.



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