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On:
Persian Sufi Allegories: from Philosophy to Mysticism

Time: Wednesday, January 31st 2007, 6:10 pm

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Middle East Institute, SIPA Building
420 W 118th St.
New York, NY 10027

Abstract: Ibn Sina wrote several allegories in Arabic and thereby influenced, directly or indirectly, later mystical writings in the Persian language. Authors such as Aḥmad Ghazzālī, Sanā'ī of Ghazna, Mobārakshāh Marverūdī, Sohravardī, 'Aṭṭār, and not least Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, all came under Ibn Sīnā's influence in composing various kinds of philosophical-mystical allegories in order to express their Neo-Platonic idea of the return of the Soul to its Origin. Ghazzālī's *Tale of the Birds* is most evidently inspired by Ibn Sina's *Treatise of the Bird*. His *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* influenced both Sanā'ī's *Sayr al-'ibād* and 'Attar's *Moṣībat-nāma*. Sohravardī's several Persian treatises also exhibit clear influence of Ibn Sina.

On the speaker: Nasrollah Pourjavady, an Iranian scholar, studied philosophy in the US, and completed his studies in the University of Tehran where he now teaches philosophy and mysticism as a full professor. He has also taught Colgate University (2002) and the Gregorian University in Rome (2005). Professor Pourjavady has more than twenty published books and numerous scholarly articles in the fields of Islamic mysticism, philosophy, and Persian literature to his credit. These include a critical edition of Ahmad Ghazzali's *Sawanih* (1980) and its English translation (1986), *La vision de Dieu en theologie et mystique musulmane* (1996), *Eshraq va 'erfan* (2001) and *Do mojjaded* (2002). He also served as the general editor of a monumental three-volume book on Iranian art and culture, *The Splendour of Iran* (2001). As the founding-director of Iran University Press, the largest academic publishing house in Iran, he supervised the publication of more than 1,200 academic books and 11 periodicals in Persian, English, French, and German. In 2005 Professor Pourjavady received the Alexander von Humboldt Award for excellence in research.