

A History of the Islamic Studies Library: 60th Anniversary



The Islamic Studies Library (ISL) was founded in 1952 in conjunction with the Institute of Islamic Studies (IIS). Dr. W.C. Smith, founder and first Director of the IIS sought to give greater definition to the field of Islamic studies. The library has grown from a collection of 250 books to 125,000 volumes. On display are some of the treasures from its collection and history. For example in 1959 the former President of Tunisia, Habib Bourghuiba visited the IIS and ISL and donated a Qur'ānic leaf, in 1971 the former Shah of Iran sent a personal invitation to then Director of the IIS, Dr. Charles J. Adams. We also have on display one volume from the complete holdings of the journal of al-Azhar in Cairo. Dr. W.C. Smith's Ph.D. dissertation was an analysis of these publications.

The image of this poster is 'tea time' which was regularly held in the early years of the IIS & ISL. This weekly event aided both the students and faculty in determining the course of the newly developing field of Islamic Studies. This community spirit encouraged one student to state that: "He had learned more of Islam from his experience of washing tea cups with a Muslim fellow-student than he had in his classroom experience."

Exhibition held from 8 February-31 August, 2013
Free entrance, Islamic Studies Library



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