

THE STUDY OF ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL'S SPIRITUAL HERITAGE BY WORLD RESEARCH SCHOLARS

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Abstract:

This article highlights the study of the spiritual heritage of the German Islamic scholar Annemarie Schimmel by world researchers. Some parts of scientific research and scientific articles about the life and work of Annemarie Schimmel are analyzed and discussed, and appropriate conclusions are made.

Keywords: Islam, mysticism, Muslim, research, scientist, pedagogy, translation.

Introduction

Research into the pedagogical and theoretical legacy of Annemarie Schimmel has revealed that her rich heritage and scientific activities have been studied in many countries. This relates to Annemarie Schimmel's life, pedagogical and creative activities. Schimmel conducted her scientific and pedagogical work in various countries, traveling to gather information on specific topics, such as the history of Sufism. By immersing herself in these cultures and visiting sacred sites, she gained a profound understanding, which is reflected in her works. Consequently, her writings hold unique historical significance and have been studied in Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Central Asian countries. Let's explore this information further.

Main Part

Iranian scholar Burzine K. Waghmar has written articles about Annemarie Schimmel's life and work, focusing on her studies of India and Pakistan. He notes that she enriched Harvard University during the last quarter of the 20th century and is recognized worldwide as a leading expert in Sufism, classical and folk Islamic poetry, Indian literature, and calligraphy. Schimmel authored and translated 105 works, including numerous scholarly and popular articles.

Schimmel's influential lectures were not only rooted in the Islamic "tripos" of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish but also in Urdu, Pashto, and Sindhi. Additionally, she incorporated Czech and Swedish, alongside Latin, English, French, Spanish, and Italian, into her linguistic repertoire. She conversed in seven languages and delivered lectures in four, often speaking calmly and quoting extensively to captivated audiences for an hour or more.

Schimmel was respected as an insider who appreciated the piety and achievements within the Muslim world. She was the first female president of the International Association for the History of Religions (1980) and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Iranian scholar Hamidreza Ayatollah discusses Professor Annemarie Schimmel's views on women from an Islamic perspective in his article. Annemarie Schimmel spoke about Muslim women and their roles in Islam, calling for a reassessment of these issues while highlighting the superficiality of Western perspectives. She initially criticized the Western viewpoint.



Research indicates that many of the spiritual leaders of Sufism in later periods received their initial religious inspiration from their pious mothers. Most Western thinkers have been men, and some of them have never lived with women in Muslim households, nor visited Turkey, India, or Pakistan. These thinkers should read the biographies of some Muslim queens like Razia Sultan or learn about noble women who were the best among their contemporaries in poetry, calligraphy, or religious activities.

German researcher Danya Bergmann, in her study, mentions that less than a year before Annemarie Schimmel's death, her memoir "Morning and Evening Land. My West-Eastern Life" was published, depicting the life of one of the 20th century's most notable Islamic scholars. At the core of her complex scientific work was the study of Sufism and its representations in poetry, art, and calligraphy. Her works include translations of poems from many Eastern languages, studies on Islamic names, the secrets of numbers, and travel diaries.

Turkish scholar Ibrahim Sarijan, who studied Annemarie Schimmel's views on the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), describes her as one of the most important academics known for her scientific work and efforts to promote intercultural understanding. Schimmel had profound research on Islamic culture and Sufism, and her works served as bridges between different cultures, significantly contributing to the promotion of peace and tolerance.

In her book "Und Muhammad ist Sein Prophet - Die Verehrung des Propheten in der islamischen Frömmigkeit" ("And Muhammad is His Prophet - The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety"), Schimmel expresses her constant concern about the Western world's misunderstanding of the Prophet Muhammad. She notes that not only laypeople but also many Orientalists have tended to highlight Muhammad's negative traits, perpetuating medieval myths that depict Islam as a corrupted religion threatening Western and Christian cultures. Schimmel asserts that Muslims see the Prophet Muhammad as a model to emulate, reciting blessings upon him and visiting his grave in Medina, which spiritually elevates millions and inspires Muslim poets of various ethnic backgrounds. Modern politicians also view him as a cultural founder, a powerful leader promoting equality and brotherhood. Schimmel concludes her work by urging a respectful understanding of other people's religious feelings without arrogance and fundamental disrespect, suggesting that her book might help introduce the image of Muhammad and Islamic values to the largely uninformed Western intellectuals.

Another Turkish researcher, Senail Özgen, discusses the theoretical foundations of studying Annemarie Schimmel's legacy. He provides information about her life and pedagogical activities, including her invitation to work at Ankara University in Turkey in 1954, where she was appointed as a professor of the History of Religions at the Faculty of Theology.

German Arabist and Orientalist Wolfgang G. Schwanitz¹, speaking about Annemarie Schimmel's life, highlights her long and distinguished academic career, noting that she taught Indo-Muslim culture as a professor at both Bonn and Harvard. Many prominent figures are proud to have known her. Schimmel's main achievement lies not only in her numerous disciples worldwide but also in her extensive works. Her scholarship spans from the works of the Caliphs

¹ Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, born in 1955 in Magdeburg, is a German Arabist, economist, and Middle Eastern historian who conducts research and teaches in Germany and the United States. He is well-known for his publications on international relations between Arabs, Jews, and Germans, as well as on Germany and the United States.



and judges in Egypt to the poetry of the East and the spiritual masterpieces of the 13th century, including the great Mavlana Rumi, who also inspired Friedrich Rückert².

Turkish researcher Ömer Faruk reflected on Annemarie Schimmel's life and work in his journal article, emphasizing that she dedicated her life to exploring the subtleties of Islam, particularly Sufi culture. Schimmel's studies encompassed poetry, music, architecture, miniature painting, and calligraphy derived from this culture, successfully capturing her knowledge and impressions in her books. Faruk mentions some of Schimmel's works translated into Turkish: "Mystical Dimensions of Islam. The History of Sufism," "Rumi: I Am Wind and You Are Fire. The Life and Work of the Mystic," "The Caliph's Dreams: Dreams and Their Interpretation in Islamic Culture," "And Muhammad is His Prophet: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety," and "Wanderungen mit Yunus Emre."

Ömer Faruk notes that Annemarie Schimmel, who knew Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Pashto, Sindhi, Gujarati, Marathi, Kashmiri, Bengali, Sanskrit, Czech, Hebrew, Ancient Greek, Latin, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Dutch, French, and English, also translated works from many of these languages. He writes that her retirement years were equally productive, with several books published annually. Annemarie Schimmel, one of the most significant researchers in her field, passed away in Bonn on January 26, 2003, shortly after publishing her memoir "Morgenland und Abendland. Mein west-östliches Leben" ("East and West. My West-Eastern Life"). Her tombstone bears the inscription of a Hadith in German and Arabic, which greatly influenced her since childhood and remained in her memory throughout her life: "People are asleep; when they die, they wake up."

Marmara University academician Sine Demirkiviran has conducted research on Annemarie Schimmel's interest in Turkish culture and Sufism. In his article, he highlights Schimmel's translations of the Turkish mystic poet Yunus Emre's poems into German. He emphasizes that Schimmel should not be seen merely as Yunus Emre's translator; she found solace in his poems and preferred to see the world through Yunus's eyes. Demirkiviran discusses how Schimmel conveyed the essence of "true" Sufism to German readers through Yunus Emre. He explores how Sufi poems were received in the West through translations and how Schimmel's translation of Yunus Emre's poems into German differed and held significance. According to Demirkiviran, what made Schimmel successful was her ability to comprehend the profound meanings of Sufi poetry. She was not just a scholar of Sufism but also considered herself a dervish on the path of Allah, striving to do everything required on this path. Schimmel's faith influenced her work, giving her a unique perspective on Sufi texts compared to other Western scholars. This perspective was communicated to German readers through her translations.

Indonesian scholar Umar Faruq Tohir, who has conducted research in Islamic studies, particularly in the fields of Sufism and Islamic ethics, has explored Annemarie Schimmel's Sufi perspectives as an Orientalist. In his article, Tohir explains that although Schimmel did not convert to Islam, her profound interest in the concept of love within Sufism led her to conduct extensive research. He considers the study of Schimmel's works and her Sufi thoughts to be of significant importance.

² [http://www.trafoberlin.de/pdf. Der Überblick. Besprechung. 39\(2003\)3, 115. Pionierleistung. Das west-östliche Leben Annemarie Schimmels.](http://www.trafoberlin.de/pdf. Der Überblick. Besprechung. 39(2003)3, 115. Pionierleistung. Das west-östliche Leben Annemarie Schimmels.)



Another Indonesian researcher, Ahmad Purwanto, in his article titled "Annemarie Schimmel's Views on Femininity in Sufism," examines Schimmel's perspectives on femininity within Sufism. Schimmel views Sufism as the mystical path within Islam, emphasizing the importance of realizing the ultimate truth and loving the Absolute. She highlights feminine qualities in Sufism such as love, compassion, obedience, and patience, and points out that these qualities are not exclusive to women but are also present in male Sufis.

Turkish researcher Abdullah Kushlu, in his article, studies Annemarie Schimmel's views on the Turkish Sufi poet Yunus Emre's Sufi thought, based on her works. According to Kushlu, Schimmel is not only an academic and a Western researcher of Sufism but also a well-known figure for her observations and unique analyses within the Islamic region. Particularly, her interest in Anatolia and Anatolian culture formed the basis of some of her scholarly works. Consequently, Schimmel translated some of Yunus Emre's poems into German in her work "Ausgewählte Gedichte von Yunus Emre" ("Selected Poems of Yunus Emre"). Furthermore, Schimmel's book "Wanderungen mit Yunus Emre" ("Wanderings with Yunus Emre") presents her analysis of Yunus Emre's Sufi thought and a selection of his poems, further connecting with the Sufi culture of Anatolia.³

Turkish researcher Gulnur Chelebi, in her dissertation, sees Annemarie Schimmel as a highly respected Orientalist in Turkey and other Islamic countries. Schimmel's warm regard for Islam, her travels to the places where Muslims live, her friendships with many Muslims, and her efforts to learn their languages to the extent of creating works in these languages demonstrate her dedication to understanding Islam correctly. She aimed to build a spiritual bridge between East and West, and her most significant endeavor was to know, recognize, and love Islam.

What made Schimmel famous was not just her understanding of Sufism or her rigorous historical research, but her application of the phenomenological method to Islam and her success in this regard.⁴ Her many works testify to this effort. She worked to understand Sufism through this method, believing in its necessity even if it seemed impossible. By understanding the mystical aspects of Islam, she aimed to grasp the religion in its most accurate form. Schimmel's life exceeded the bounds of ordinary academia. She pursued her goals with dedication, never shying away from any sacrifice for the sake of learning and sharing knowledge. Her loyalty, humility, determination, and love for learning and teaching continued until her death. This made her an exemplary figure not only for historians of religions or those interested in Sufism but for everyone.⁵

Conclusions

Based on the literature review, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Annemarie Shimmel's scientific and creative heritage has been widely studied in many countries, including Turkey, Iran, India, Pakistan, and Indonesia. Her works are highly valued by many researchers, and her rich spiritual and scientific legacy is appreciated by scholars worldwide.

³ Kuşlu, Abdullah. "Batı'da Bir Yunus Emre Yorumcusu: Schimmel'e Göre Sûfî Düşüncenin Kurucusu Olarak Yunus Emre ve Anadolu'da Tasavvuf Kültürü". *Tasavvur: Tekirdağ İlahiyat Dergisi* 7/2 (Aralık 2021): 1521-1545.

⁴ Çelebi Gülnur. Annemarie Schimmel'in İslâm Fenomenolojisi (Yüksek Lisans Tezi). Bursa / 2022

⁵ Çelebi Gülnur. Annemarie Schimmel'in İslâm Fenomenolojisi (Yüksek Lisans Tezi). Bursa / 2022



2. She was proficient in many languages and translated works from these languages. She conducted her scientific work in numerous languages, could converse in seven languages, and delivered lectures in four languages.

3. Shimmel made significant contributions not only to science and literature but also to the development of intercultural understanding. She acted as a bridge between different cultures and languages.

4. Shimmel's works on Sufism, classical and folk Islamic poetry, Indian literature, and calligraphy are particularly noteworthy.

5. Her views on Sufism and Islamic values are internationally recognized and have promoted peace and intercultural understanding.

6. Annemarie Shimmel's research has significantly influenced Turkish, Iranian, and Arab scholars' work. Additionally, she criticized Western scholars' misconceptions about Islam and Muslim women, calling for a deeper study of these issues.

7. While Shimmel's pedagogical activities have been studied by global scholars, her legacy from a pedagogical perspective remains largely unexamined. (The goal of this research is to study Annemarie Shimmel's legacy from this perspective.)

The results of this research demonstrate the importance of preserving and continuing to study Annemarie Shimmel's spiritual and ethical heritage. It emphasizes the necessity of translating her works for Uzbek readers and utilizing her views on spiritual and ethical education in teaching pedagogical subjects at our country's higher education institutions.

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