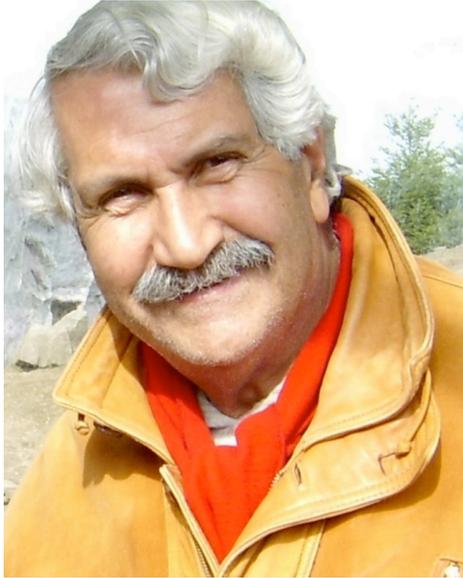


In Memoriam

Kamran Ekbal

1946-2014



Dr. Kamran Ekbal joined the initial group who started annual sessions of the 'Irfán Colloquium in 1993. During the past twenty years, he actively participated at many annual sessions of the colloquium in English, Persian and German and presented a number of research papers in those languages on various topics. He shall be remembered for his spirited presentations at the Irfan Colloquium sessions.¹ It should be noted that the idea of initiating the 'Irfán Colloquium project was the result of a friendly conversation of Dr. Iraj Ayman with Dr. Udo Schaefer and Dr. Kamran Ekbal that took place in

a sunny afternoon in the Summer of 1993 in the Garden of the Landegg Academy.

Kamran Ekbal was born on 19 March 1946 in Beirut. Paternally, he was a descendant of Muhammad Mustafa Baghdadi, one of the 19 apostles of Bahá'u'lláh. On his mother's side, he was a descendant of a noble family. His mother, Moukarram al-Muluk Sarabandi-Ekbal, was a princess of Qajar dynasty and was a direct descendant of the Qajar sovereign Fath-Ali Shah. She arranged that Persian language remained the spoken language of the family members who were living in an Arab environment, Lebanon. Thus Kamran felt more comfortable using Persian language.

In 1963 Kamran left Beirut for Germany when he was only 17 years old. He joined his two elder sisters who were already studying in that country. Kamran first started studying psychology in Graz (Austria) and Hamburg (Germany). It was in Hamburg University that he changed his field of study to history and Islamic studies. There, he had the opportunity to become a lecturer of Arabic and Persian languages. He continued his advanced studies at Cambridge and Keil universities and in 1976 he received his Ph.D. degree and continued working as a lecturer in Arabic and Persian languages. In 1979, Kamran Ekbal became a faculty member at Department of History at the Ruhr-University in Bochum (RUB) and later served as the head of the Division of History of the Near and Middle East until his retirement in 2011. During this period he also was a visiting professor at the university of Essen.

Dr. Ekbal delivered many lectures and made paper presentations at academic conferences and congresses and published many articles and research papers, both in Germany and abroad. For more than ten years, he was an elected member of the union of teaching staff (GEW) and supported the rights of his colleagues at the university of Bochum.

In 2006 he was diagnosed as having cancer and underwent several surgeries as well as years of sustained chemo therapy. But instead of giving up, he took strength and energy from his family, his wife Huda Baghdadi-Ekbal and his three sons Basil, Ramez and Cyrus, and continued teaching at the university and presenting research papers at different conferences. Even at the time when a healing was no longer in sight, he took on new projects and delivered lectures in Germany and other countries.

Up to the last moment, he worked very intensely and used his remaining strength on working to complete a volume containing 160 Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed in honour of Muhammad Mustafa Baghdadi and another volume on the memoirs of Dr. Zia Baghdadi that hopefully will be published soon. Finally, after a long struggle with cancer, he passed away on 6 October 2014.²

NOTES

¹ See *Lights of 'Irfán*, Book Fifteen, pp 426-439 and *Safíni-yi 'Irfán*, Book Seventeen, pp 467-477 for some of his articles, some of which are online at <http://irfancoolloquia.org/database/author/Ekbal> .

² This biographical summary is extracted from a short biography prepared by Ramez Ekbal.