



Syed Shiraz Ali, the 2019-2020 Eltoukhy East-West Gateway Fellow at International House, UC Berkeley



As an incoming doctoral student in Near Eastern Studies at UC Berkeley, I plan to specialize in the field of Islamic intellectual history. My interests revolve around the history of rationalist disciplines such as philosophy, astronomy, and logic during the postclassical period of the Islamic world. Before arriving at Cal I laid the groundwork for my studies in this field at Harvard University and the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi.

Having grown up between South Asia and the Middle East and lived in various American cities in recent years, I am hardly a stranger to diverse places and people. However, this experience has also helped me realize that education in today's globalizing world does not easily sensitize people to the historical bearings of their intellectual and cultural traditions. Owing to a college education that exposed me to global scholarship and afforded me committed mentors, I grew sensitive to the humanities crisis that dictates the postcolonial condition. This condition, as I understand, stems significantly from issues involving the intersection of language, theory, and historiography. Therefore, as a scholar of intellectual heritage, I seek to understand the diversity of thought that, albeit now unremembered, once thrived in the late pre-modern Muslim tradition.

Apart from these scholarly concerns I enjoy reading Urdu poetry, especially the ghazal, hoarding books, and sharing a cup of chai with kindred souls. I am grateful to the Elktouhy Family Foundation for allowing me the opportunity to live and study at International House. As the fall semester approaches, I look forward to not only joining the Cal student body, but also contributing to the vibrant resident community at this prestigious institution.



The Eltoukhy East-West Gateway Fellowship was established in 2006 by the Eltoukhy Family Foundation, with the goal of bettering and improving the relationship between East and West, and with the aspiration of furthering increased awareness of the principles and beliefs of Islam and the Moslem peoples.