



# **International Sufi Conference**

## **The Spring of Reflection: The Living One Who Sees**

Sarajevo, 9-13 April 2025.

### **Concept Note**

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Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm

At a time when deep polarisation and division threaten our global community, this gathering seeks to rekindle unity among humanity, create deeper connections that bind us, and reimagine a future rooted in peace, harmony, and spiritual growth.

We are gathering to converse and remember the spiritual power of the Divine Name al-Hayy – The Living One – as a panacea for the current trend of the destruction of life. The main idea is the experience of seeing God and being seen by God simultaneously, which opens us to enter into a deeper communion with that which is al Hayy, the Source of All Life. In these troubling times of violence and alienation from Nature, the resounding call is to seek out the Well of Self-Disclosure in ourselves so that the Spring of Eternal Life can flow, reviving us and our harmed planet.

Creation has different degrees of livingness, but how alive we are depends on our understanding and alignment with al-Hayy. The unity of being and the Web of Life that contains and unites us calls us to come to the Well of the Living One. This brings us to Divine Names **al-Basir** (the One who sees all things by eternal seeing) and **Beer La-Hai Roe** - The Spring of the Living One Who Sees Me –first uttered by Hagar/Hajra during her moment of divine encounter.

**Beer La-Hai Roe** - Spring of the Living One Who Sees Me - a covert Divine Name in Aramaic found in the Torah, holds profound symbolic meaning as a place of divine self-revelation or self-discovery. Drawing inspiration from the term Beer La-Hai Roe, we wish to engage in a dialogue that examines its symbolic degree as the Well of Self-Revelation or Self-Discovery, where we witness ourselves in God simultaneously as God witnesses Himself in us.

In the biblical tradition, when Hagar flees into the wilderness, prompted into exile by Sarah, she draws near a spring, the water that helps sustain her, where she encounters the Angel of the Lord and receives not only physical sustenance but also divine reassurance and guidance: **“Truly here I have seen Him who looks after me.”** (Genesis 16:13). It is here that we read the desperate situation Hagar is in, **“And he said, ‘Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?’ She said, ‘I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai’”** (Genesis 16:8). The angel of the Lord tells her that she will have a son who will be a leader of his people. All she had to do was go back and submit to her mistress regardless of how she was treated. It was the only way God was going to protect her.

**“So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, ‘You are a God of seeing,’ for she said, ‘Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.’ Therefore, the well was called Beer-laHai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered”** (Genesis 16:13-14).

What are the implications of this experience of Hagar at the Well for us, the children of Abraham, who have exiled one another from their hearts?

The name “Hajra” derives from the Arabic word “hajar”, which means migrating or emigrating. She is a symbol of our migration. But where is this migration aimed? What are we fleeing from, and to what are we fleeing? The God in the Quran calls: **“Flee to Allah! I am truly sent by Him with a clear warning to you.”** (51:50).



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There is no going except towards Him. Which Well can show us our Face, the Face of God in whose Image we have been made? The well of al-Hayy/ la Hai. The Living Source in us flows with a never-ending supply of the water of eternal life, but we have forgotten to drink from it. We are victims of the sense of mortality and paucity of resources. This has imprisoned us in greed and competition. While the change that dominates outer life and our mortal bodies paralyses us in fear, the Unchanging Witness within is ever-peaceful and calm. In Psalm 46:10 of the Torah, we read: **“He says, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”**

It is only in calm stillness that water can reflect an image to us, and it is when we are still and concentrated we can see what is being reflected. The chaos and frenzy of war and conflict are not able reflectors of Truth. The calm and quiet of trust and integrity, reliance and security, as Hagar’s words echo, “I have seen Him Who looks after me”, is our panacea.

For us, the descendants of Abraham, this spring symbolises a return to the **Living Source** within ourselves, where we witness God as He witnesses Himself in us. Hagar’s story of **migration, trust, and submission** speaks to our journeys—our search for meaning, truth, and sustenance in a world plagued by scarcity, fear, and disconnection. As water—both physical and spiritual—becomes increasingly scarce in today’s world, the themes of **Truth, Credibility, and Authentic Belief** are more urgent than ever. Humanity stands at a crossroads where only the pursuit of **Haq (Truth)** can guide us forward. If we do not confront and embrace Haq/Truth, we will be swallowed up by Batil/Falsehood. As God in the Qur’an says: **“The truth has come, and falsehood has vanished. Indeed, falsehood is bound to vanish.” (Quran 17:81)**

This conference invites us to reflect on essential questions:

- What is the nature of **belief**, and what qualifies it as authentic?
- How do we move beyond fear and competition to embrace abundance and trust?
- What does “flee to God” mean in a fragmented and chaotic world?

### Themes for Exploration

Our dialogue will centre on sacred symbols and universal themes found across traditions, including:

- **Water** as the Elixir of Life and a symbol of eternal sustenance
- **Migration** as a spiritual journey toward divine connection
- **Hayat e Javidan (Eternal Life)** and its promise within us
- **The Well** as a place of divine disclosure and personal transformation

By revisiting these sacred motifs, we hope to inspire a collective renewal and deepen our understanding of **unity, faith, and the unchanging Witness within us all.**

We welcome you with peace and love!