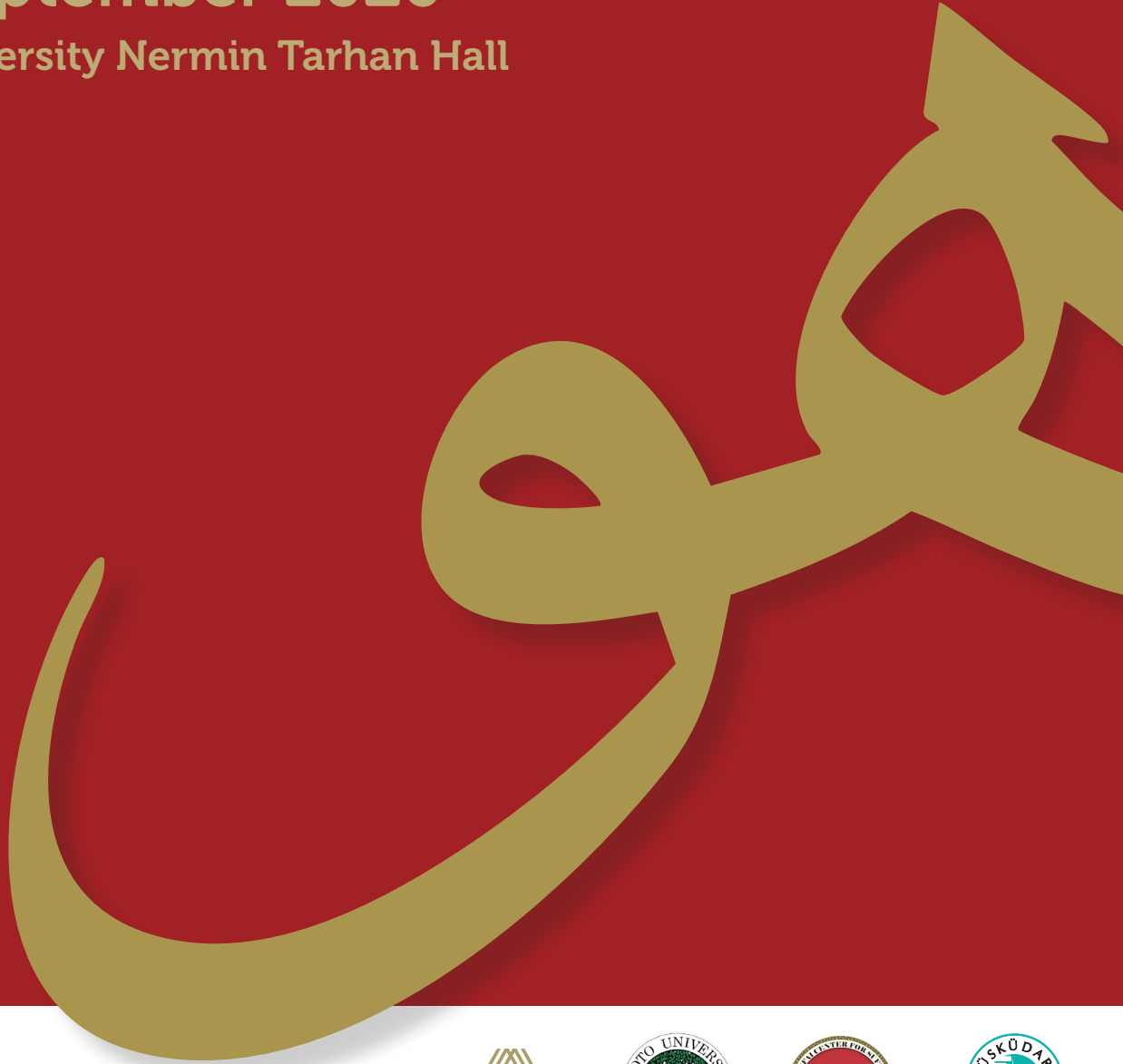


Commemorative Symposium of the 10th Anniversary of
KENAN RIFAI CENTER for SUFI STUDIES at Kyoto University

Concluding International Joint Seminar of
Bridging Mystical Philosophy and
Arts in Sufism:
Poetry, Music, and Rituals

13-14 September 2026

Üsküdar University Nermin Tarhan Hall



Bridging Mystical Philosophy and Arts in Sufism: Poetry, Music, and Rituals 13-14 September 2026

ABOUT

It is our great pleasure to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Kenan Rifai Center for Sufi Studies. It was inaugurated in March 2016 with the kind donation of Kerim Foundation. This symposium was organized to look back on the academic progress made over the past 10 years and to celebrate our 10th anniversary together.

We, Kenan Rifai Center for Sufi Studies at Kyoto University, have conducted six-year joint research titled, "Bridging Mystical Philosophy and Arts in Sufism: Poetry, Music and Rituals" granted by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) in collaboration with our Turkish partner, the Institute for Sufi Studies at Üsküdar University in Istanbul. We already held the interim joint seminar in 2023. This is also the concluding event for this project.

Conventionally, the mystical philosophy cultivated among intellectual elites and the practices of mystical orders developed among ordinary people have been studied separately in research on Sufism (Islamic mysticism). The former has been studied in Islamic studies, and the latter in anthropology, and the two kinds of approaches have never been linked. In order to overcome the division, this project focuses on poetry, music, and rituals including dances, all of which express mystical experiences, side by side with metaphysics. Sufi poetry, written by intellectual poets, is widely known among people. It has often been chanted with musical instruments and has fascinated people. In addition, dances are performed with the music as a part of rituals in some Sufi orders.

Music, side by side with literature, is an essential component of ritual practices and plays a central role in many religions, both historically and in contemporary contexts. The relationship between music (and related artistic expressions) and religion is shaped by a variety of often contradictory aesthetic ideas, normative claims, and theological perspectives introduced by scholars, believers, religious and spiritual leaders, and musicians over time. This dialectical nature of music reflects the culture and musical perceptions of its respective era in diverse ways.

Organizing Institutions

Kenan Rifai Center for Sufi Studies at Kyoto University
Institute for Sufi Studies at Üsküdar University
Kerim Education, Culture and Health Foundation

Supporting Research Projects

Research on Moderate Islam in the Non-Arab World: From the Cases of Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey - (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A), Japan Society for the Promotion of Science)
Comprehensive Study of Sufism: Through Metaphysics, Literature, Music and Rituals (Fund for the Promotion of Joint International Research (B) - (International Collaborative Research), Japan Society for the Promotion of Science)
Toward an "Anthropology of Grace" in Islam: Case Studies in Egypt and Beyond - (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (B), Japan Society for the Promotion of Science)



Bridging Mystical Philosophy and Arts in Sufism: Poetry, Music, and Rituals 13-14 September 2026

Steering Committee

Emine YENITERZI (Üsküdar University)

Cangüzel GÜNER ZÜLFİKAR (Üsküdar University)

Yasushi TONAGA (Kyoto University)

Masayuki AKAHORI (Sophia University)

Co-organizers

Yasushi TONAGA (Kyoto University) and Elif ERHAN (Üsküdar University)

PROGRAM

September 13, 2026/ 9:30-11:45

Commemorative Ceremony Celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of Kenan Rifai Center for Sufi Studies at Kyoto University and Opening

- The History of the Sufism Research Institute at Üsküdar University, Elif ERHAN
- The History and Future Prospect of Kenan Rifai Center for Sufi Studies at Kyoto University, Yasushi TONAGA
- Special Remarks from the Japanese Members of the Joint Research, Masayuki AKAHORI & Manami SUZUKI
- Complimentary Addresses from the Distinguished Guests, Cemalnur SARGUT, Nevzat TARHAN

Plaque Ceremony

- Complimentary Addresses by those who are recommended by the Institute for Sufi Studies, Emine YENITERZI, Cangüzel GÜNER ZÜLFİKAR, Reşat ÖNGÖREN, Hatice Dilek GÜLDÜTUNA
- Complimentary Addresses from the Cooperative Institutions with Kenan Rifai Center for Sufi Studies, Alexandre PAPAS (CNRS, France); Oman FATHURAHMAN (State Islamic University, Indonesia); Mona FAROUK (Institute for Mediterranean Studies, Busan University of Foreign Studies, Korea); Tuba IŞIK (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany)

Greetings from Tatsuro FUJIKURA, the New Director of Kenan Rifai Center for Sufi Studies (video message)

Lunch: 12.00-13:15 (Lunch at Üsküdar University)

Concluding International Joint Seminar of “Bridging Mystical Philosophy and Arts in Sufism” Part 1: The Rifai Order Spreading Across the World, 13:15-17:30

Introductory Session 13:15-13:30

Explanation of the Symposium’s Purpose, Yasushi TONAGA



Bridging Mystical Philosophy and Arts in Sufism: Poetry, Music, and Rituals 13-14 September 2026

Session 1/ 13:30-15:00

Chair: Masayuki AKAHORI

- Reşat ÖNGÖREN, "The Rifā'īs in Ottoman Anatolia"
- Oman FATHURAHMAN, "Traces of Rifa'i Sufi Order in Indonesian Manuscripts: A Preliminary Study"
- Emine YENITERZI, "Istiḳāma/Steadfastness on the Straight Path in Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī's Burhān al-Mu'ayyad: The Making of the Sufi"

Session 2/ 15:15-17:15

Chair: Oman FATHURAHMAN

- Rohman al-BANTANI, "Beyond the Tariqa: The Transmission and Transformation of Rifa'iyya Tariqa in Bantenese Debus"
- Manami SUZUKI, "Rifā'ī Dhikr in European Muslim Society: Sound, Body, and Religious Belonging in Prizren, Kosovo"
- Esin TÜMER KURNAZ, "A hermeneutic reading of the Newly Edited Ādāb-i Ṭarīqat-i Rifā'iyya"
- Mona FAROUK M. AHMED, "Between Spiritual Discipline and Popular Belief: The Development of the Rifai Order in Egypt"

September 14, 2026, 9:30-11:45

Concluding International Joint Seminar of "Bridging Mystical Philosophy and Arts in Sufism" Part 2: Sufi Theory, Literature, Music and Rituals 09:30-11:30

Session 3/ 09:30-11:30

Chair: Mona FAROUK M. AHMED

- İlahe KURŞUN MEMMEDOVA, "Ahmad al-Rifa'ī's Conception of Ahl al-Bayt and Its Socio-Religious Impact in Contemporary Iraq"
- Alexandre PAPAS, "Debating dhikr in the early Khwajagan -Naqshbandiyya. Reading 'Ali Ramitani's Mahbub al-'arifin"
- Vasfi Emre ÖMÜRLÜ and Hatice Dilek GÜLDÜTUNA, "Rhythmic Flow and Structure in Classical Kiyam Zikir in Rifā'ī Dergāhs of Istanbul"
- Yasushi TONAGA, "Music according to Ibn 'Arabi"

Lunch: 11:30-12:45 (Lunch at Üsküdar University)

Session 4/ 12:45-14:45

Chair: Alexandre Papas

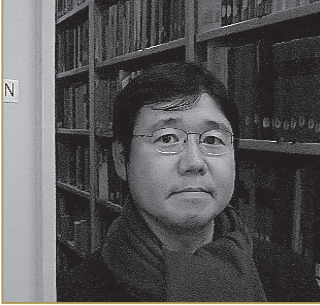
- Kotoko MADONO, "When Yunus Emre Speaks through Niyâzî-i Mısrî: Re-voicing and Sufi Poetic Authority in the Ottoman Early Modern World"
- M. Baha TANMAN, "Rifai Tekkes in Ottoman Sufi Architecture"
- Masayuki AKAHORI, "Anthropological Approach to Philosophy-Art Complex" (tentative)
- Arzu Eylül YALÇINKAYA, "Representing the Rifā'ī Tradition in Early Twentieth-Century Istanbul: Ken'ān Rifā'ī and the Socio-Cultural Functions of the Ümmü Ken'ān Sufi Lodge" (via Zoom)

Session 5/ General Discussion of the Joint Seminar and Closing Session 15:00-16:00



Bridging Mystical Philosophy and Arts in Sufism: Poetry, Music, and Rituals 13-14 September 2026

PANELISTS



Yasushi TONAGA

Yasushi TONAGA is a professor emeritus of Kyoto University. Ph.D. (Area studies, Kyoto University). His speciality is Islamic studies, especially Sufi studies. He graduated from the University of Tokyo as one of the inaugural students of the Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Letters. He studied in Cairo University in 1986-88. He has also stayed many times in Türkiye and Indonesia for his research. He is the former president of the Japanese Association for Middle Eastern Studies and a director of the Japan Association for Middle Eastern Studies and the Japan Association for Religious Studies. Beyond Japan, he holds a position as the President of Asian Federation of Mediterranean Studies Institutes (AFOMEDI) from 2018 to 2021, as an advisory board member of Journal of the Institute for Sufi Studies (Türkiye), and as an editorial board member of international journals such as Journal of the History of Sufism (France), Mediterranean Review (Korea), Journal Insaniyat (Indonesia), and The Journal of Islamic Research (Pakistan). He is also a Council member of the World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES) and an Honorary Fellow of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society. He is the Founding President of Kenan Rifai Center at Kyoto University and served as the Director between 2016-2026. He is still a member of the Advisory Board of the Center.

Dhikr and Samā' as Spiritual Transformation, Collective Practice and Philosophical Ontology

People engage in spiritual practice to refine their souls. Through this practice, the thick layers of the superficial consciousness—based on discriminative knowledge—are gradually peeled away. When one reaches the depths of consciousness and the distinction between I and others disappears, a new horizon opens up. Dhikr and samā' are spiritual practices that Muslims have performed in pursuit of this state of enlightenment. However, these practices were not merely means to an end. Dhikr, which was meant to be a practice of invoking God's name, transforms into the reality that God is constantly calling out to humanity the moment the practitioner reaches the state of enlightenment. This is the manifestation of God and God's creation of this world. In this presentation, I will examine dhikr and samā' and demonstrate how they span a broad spectrum, ranging from personal spiritual transformation to collective spiritual practice within the tariqa, and even to philosophical ontology.

Bridging Mystical Philosophy and Arts in Sufism: Poetry, Music, and Rituals 13-14 September 2026

PANELISTS



Reşat ÖNGÖREN

Professor Reşat Öngören, graduated from Marmara University Department of Theology. He earned his master's degree in the same university in the field of History of Tasawwuf in 1990, and he received his PhD in 1996. He worked as a researcher, specifically on the field of Tasawwuf, between 1996 to 2000 in the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation for Islamic Studies (ISAM). He was assigned as Assistant Professor to Istanbul University Department of Theology. He was promoted to an Associate Professor position in November 2001 and a Professor in November 2007. He worked as a guest lecturer in Higher Islamic Institute in Sofia, during 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 academic calenders. Among many academic and encyclopedia articles, papers, and book chapters he wrote on Tasawwuf, Öngören also has written books named Tasawwuf in Ottomans: Sufis, State and Scholars in Anatolia (printed in 2000, 2003, 2012, 2016), Zayniyyah: A Sufi Order in the History (printed in 2003), and A Popular Tariqa Among Scholars: Zayniyyah (printed in 2012). He also wrote articles for the 44+2 volume Encyclopedia of Islam (DIA) published by ISAM and the encyclopedia of Mevsūatu a'lāmi'l-ulemāi ve'l-udebāi'l-'Arabi ve'l-muslimin published in Tunisia. He is still working as a lecturer at the Institute of Sufi Studies in Uskudar University, where he was appointed in June 17th, 2019.

The Rifā'īs in Ottoman Anatolia

Members of the Rifā'iyya order were active across various regions of Anatolia, notably in cities such as Izmir, Bergama, and Amasya, during the foundational years of the Ottoman Empire. The first influential representative of the Rifā'īs in the Ottoman realm was Sheikh al-Islām Mollā Fanārī (d. 1431), who received a khilafah (spiritual authority) in the last quarter of the 14th century from Sheikh 'Abdurrahmān b. Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī of Antioch; subsequently, a branch known as the Fanārīyya emerged within the order. Although the manner and location of Fanārīyya's continuation remain unknown, a lodge (tekke) was established under the name of Rifā'iyya in Amasya in 1433 (836 AH), known as the Darphaneci Tekke. Another prominent figure associated with Rifā'ī identity in the Ottoman context was Sarı Saltuk. Although Sarı Saltuk lived prior to the establishment of the Ottoman state and was renowned for his impactful activities in Anatolia and the Balkans, during the second half of the 15th century, state elites actively reintegrated his legacy into Ottoman social and cultural life. Initially, a three-volume work (Saltukname) was compiled about him at the request of Cem Şultān, son of Şultān Mehmed the Conqueror. Following Mehmed II, his other son, Şultān Bāyezīd II, commissioned a tomb over Sarı Saltuk's grave in Babadağ (Romania) in 1484, alongside a mosque, a madrasa, and a lodge, thereby transforming the site into a complex (kulliye). The Rifā'iyya's influence in the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, materialized following the establishment of the Rifā'ī Āsitāne in Uskudar in 1732, after which the order spread across Anatolian and Balkan cities through newly founded lodges. Beginning in the early 19th century, the Rifā'iyya was represented in Anatolia and Istanbul by its Şayyādiyya, Mar'ifiyya, and Ulwāniyya branches, expanding into cities such as Edirne, Bursa, Kütahya, Manisa, Kastamonu, Sivas, Erzurum, and Diyarbakır, and remaining active through the late Ottoman period. In this late era, Sheikh Abu al-Ḥudā Muḥammad al-Şayyādī al-Rifā'ī (d. 1909), in particular, played significant roles in supporting Şultān Abdulḥamīd II's Pan-Islamic (Ittihad-i Islam) policy.

PANELISTS



Oman FATHURRAHMAN

Oman Fathurahman is Professor of Philology at the Faculty of Adab and Humanities and a senior researcher at the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta. His primary research interest lies in the study of Islamic manuscripts from the Indonesian archipelago, with particular attention to those written in Arabic and Malay. Within this field, he has devoted special focus to manuscripts pertaining to the Shattariyyah Sufi order in the Malay-Indonesian world. Since 2017, in collaboration with Jan van der Putten and, subsequently, Elsa Clavé (Hamburg University), he has led the DREAMSEA project (Digital Repository of Endangered and Affected Manuscripts in Southeast Asia), an initiative aimed at digitizing Southeast Asian manuscripts and making them freely accessible online (<http://dreamsea.co>). In addition to his academic work, he hosts a popular live program on social media entitled Ngariksa (Ngaji Manuskrip Nusantara), which is broadcast via the Ngariksa Channel on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/@ngariksaTV2019>.

Traces of Rifā'ī Sūfī Order in Indonesian Manuscripts: A Preliminary Study

This paper presents and discusses the findings of a preliminary manuscript survey conducted to trace the presence and influence of the Rifā'īyyah Sūfī order in the Nusantara archipelago. The order is attributed to Shaykh Aḥmad Rifā'ī al-Kabīr (d. 1118 CE), and the study focuses on manuscripts dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries, composed in both Arabic and Malay (Jawi). In contrast to other Sūfī orders that emerged and flourished in Indonesia—such as the Shattāriyyah, Naqshabandiyyah, Qādiriyyah, Sammāniyyah, and Khalwatiyyah—the existence, spread, and impact of the Rifā'īyyah order in the region have thus far received only limited scholarly attention. Preliminary evidence suggests that Shaykh Yūsuf al-Maqāsīrī (d. 1699 CE) is the sole figure whose chain of transmission (sanad) can be linked to the Rifā'īyyah order, through his teacher Shaykh Nuruddīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1658 CE). Several manuscripts preserved in the Leiden University collection further corroborate that the dhikr formulae of the Rifā'īyyah order were known and practiced alongside those of other orders, including the Akmalīyyah and Shattāriyyah. In contemporary Indonesia, the Rifā'īyyah order is most frequently associated with the debus practice in Banten, although a detailed discussion of this falls beyond the scope of the present paper.

PANELISTS



Emine YENİTERZİ

Emine Yeniterzi is a Professor and Deputy Director at Üsküdar University's Institute for Sufi Studies. She received her MA and PhD in Classical Turkish Literature from Selçuk University, where she began her academic career in 1981. She later taught at Istanbul Medeniyet University before joining Üsküdar University in 2015. Her research focuses on Classical Turkish poetry, textual commentary, religious, ethical, and Sufi masnavis, verse religious genres, and Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi.

Istiqāma/Steadfastness on the Straight Path in Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī's Burhān al-Muʾayyad: The Making of the Sufi

Sayyid Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī (d. 578/1182) was one of the foremost Sūfīs in the history of Islamic mysticism and the founder of the Rifāʿiyya order. Having studied the religious sciences and undergone Sūfī training, he became known as "Abū al-ʿAlamayn" due to his mastery of both the exoteric and esoteric sciences. Al-Burhān al-Muʾayyad, compiled from his sermons, is a book of counsel that reflects his principal Sūfī teachings. The work addresses the foundations of genuine Sufism and the qualities required of both the spiritual master and the disciple. Rather than emphasizing his exceptional attributes, such as his lineage, spiritual rank, and miracles, Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī foregrounds the religious and ethical principles that a Sūfī must observe. According to him, a Sūfī should adhere to the Sharia and the Sunna and embrace such principles as asceticism, spiritual poverty, humility, generosity, and service to others. Genuine Sufism is founded not on claims of superiority but on servitude to God, moral excellence, and devotion to the Prophet Muḥammad. The fundamental criterion of a Sūfī's worth is steadfastness, not miraculous deeds. Drawing on Al-Burhān al-Muʾayyad, this paper examines Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī's understanding of Sufism, particularly in relation to the principles of the spiritual journey and the relationship between miraculous deeds and steadfastness.

PANELISTS



Rohman al-BANTANI

Rohman al-BANTANI was born in Serang, Banten, Indonesia, on 30 May 1981. He is a lecturer at the Faculty of Sharia, Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia. He earned his Master's degree in Islamic Studies from Leiden University, the Netherlands in 2011, and pursued his doctoral studies at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta with a concentration in Religion and Politics. His research lies at the intersection of Islamic studies, religion and politics, Sufism, religious authority, and local Islamic traditions in Indonesia, with particular attention to Banten. His scholarship has examined Debus, a Bantenese tradition of invulnerability performance, its historical and ritual relationships with Sufi *ṭarīqas*, and its changing position within Bantenese Islam. He has also investigated the politics of religious authority through the Indonesian Council of Ulama's (MUI) fatwa on Debus. His current research focuses on the transmission and transformation of Rifā'ī ritual repertoires within Debus communities, particularly the relationships among ritual knowledge, Sufi genealogies, institutional affiliation, embodied practices, and local cultural identity. More broadly, his work explores how Islamic traditions and religious authority are transmitted, contested, negotiated, and reconfigured within changing sociopolitical contexts.

Beyond the *Ṭarīqa*:

The Transmission and Transformation of Rifā'iyya *Ṭarīqa* in Bantenese Debus

The relationship between the Rifā'iyya *Ṭarīqa* and Debus, a popular performance art in Banten characterized by invulnerability rituals, martial arts, and traditional music, is often understood through narratives of origin and derivation. While historical studies have established a significant link between Rifā'ī ritual repertoires and Debus, conceptualizing Debus merely as a "branch" of the Rifā'iyya Sūfī order risks overstating institutional and genealogical continuity. This article shifts the analytical focus from institutional origins to the transmission and transformation of Rifā'iyya ritual knowledge. Drawing on historical-ethnographic evidence, the article traces how Rifā'ī-linked ritual repertoires have spread across diverse institutional environments and shifting cultural settings. The evidence reveals neither direct continuity nor the disappearance of the Rifā'iyya order, but rather the emergence of varied developmental trajectories. Rifā'ī litanies (*wird*), supplications (*munājāt*), fasting disciplines, and invulnerability practices have persisted in diverse forms: remaining within explicit Sufi lineages, circulating selectively as specialized ritual technologies, or combining incantations with Quranic verses and *jangjawokan* (ancient Sundanese mantras), martial arts practices, and local Debus teacher networks. Contemporary Debus communities also exhibit varying degrees of Rifā'ī identification, ranging from explicit acknowledgment of the *Ḥizb al-Rifā'ī* to orally transmitted practices with limited awareness of the Rifā'iyya lineage. The article conceptualizes this process as ritual differentiation, arguing that ritual repertoires, institutional affiliations, lineages, embodied efficacy, and cultural identities can operate independently of one another. The case of Banten demonstrates that the transregional history of Sufism cannot be reconstructed solely through institutional expansion and lineages; it must also account for ritual knowledge that circulated, transformed, and acquired new forms of authorization outside the *ṭarīqa*.

PANELISTS



Manami SUZUKI

Manami SUZUKI is a Research Fellow at the Kenan Rifai Center for Sufi Studies at the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University. She received her PhD in Musicology from Kunitachi College of Music in 2020 and studied at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna in 2016–2017. Her research explores music and bodily movement in Islamic religious practices, particularly among Sufi and Alevi communities in Turkey, the Balkans, and Austria. Her doctoral research examined Alevi ritual music and its intergenerational transmission within migrant communities in Austria. Her current research focuses on the roles of music and bodily practice in transmitting religious knowledge and shaping communities within Sufi orders, the social roles of Sufi music beyond ritual contexts, and gender and the musical practices of women in Sufi traditions.

Rifā'ī Dhikr in European Muslim Society: Sound, Body, and Religious Belonging in Prizren, Kosovo

This paper examines Rifā'ī dhikr in Prizren, Kosovo, focusing on how a transregional Sufi tradition has become embedded within a historically established Muslim society in Europe. Prizren, a former Ottoman urban center characterized by religious and linguistic plurality, provides a distinctive setting in which Sufi orders have remained closely connected to Muslim communal life. Rather than treating dhikr primarily as a mystical or ecstatic experience, this study analyzes it as a collective religious practice through which sound and bodily movement organize social and religious belonging. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and musical transcription, the paper examines the sonic and embodied structure of Rifā'ī dhikr, with particular attention to low-register vocalization, repetitive formulae, restrained melodic motion, synchronized breathing and bodily movement, and the regulatory role of the shaykh. These elements generate collective intensification while maintaining bodily synchronization within a carefully structured ritual framework. The paper argues that Rifā'ī dhikr in Prizren functions not only as a technique of individual spiritual discipline but also as a means through which collective Muslim belonging is enacted and renewed. By situating ritual sound and embodied practice within the historical and social landscape of Prizren, the study highlights one trajectory through which the Rifā'iyya tradition has taken root in Europe and acquired meaning within a local Muslim community.

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PANELISTS



Esin Tümer KURNAZ

Esin Tümer Kurnaz graduated from the Department of Architecture at the Middle East Technical University Faculty of Architecture in 1989. She completed her first master's degree in 1994 and her PhD in 2001 in the field of Energy Efficiency and Intelligent Buildings Design. Professionally, she worked as a "Project and Construction Manager" for various companies also served as an academic at various universities. During her tenure at Üsküdar University, she completed both the Master's Program in Sufism Studies (2019) and the PhD Program (2025) at the Institute for Sufi Studies of the same university. Following her doctoral dissertation titled Stories in Religious, Moral, and Sufi Mathnawis in 16th Century Turkish Literature: Identification, Analysis, and Research on Their Origins, she has published articles in national and international journals, also presented papers and publications related to her field of specialization at symposiums and conferences. She is also the translator of the book Cosmology and Architecture, originally edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and written by Samer Akkach. She is currently teaching the course titled "Prophetic Truths in Stories from the Sufi Perspective" at the Institute for Sufi Studies at Üsküdar University in İstanbul, Turkey.

A Hermeneutic Reading of the Newly Edited Ādāb-i Ṭarīqat-i Rifā'iyya

This study presents an edition of the Ottoman Turkish treatise entitled Ādāb-i Ṭarīqat-i Rifā'iyya, registered in the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Atatürk Library under the shelfmark (BEL_Yz_K0543), while preserving the historical language and distinctive features of expression found in the manuscript. The work reveals a process that begins with şūra (outward form) and is reflected in sīra (inner meaning). The semantic world of the text is examined through three fundamental spaces. The first is the lodge of the body, the dwelling place of the disciple's heart. The second is not the physical lodge constructed of stone and walls, but rather the presence of the spiritual master (murshid), in whom the al-Insān al-Kāmil, the Perfect Human Being, is embodied. The third consists of the actions that continuously operate between these two spaces that is, ādāb itself. When these three spaces are read together, Ādāb-i Rifā'iyya emerges not merely as a collection of rules governing conduct, but as a holistic model of spiritual formation that constructs the disciple's sayr wa sulūk step by step. Ādāb teaches not only how one should behave, but also how the human journey toward God and how that journey is to be sustained. The culmination of this teaching and, at the same time, the conclusion of the present study is what makes possible the birth of Ādam: the emergence of the human being.

Bridging Mystical Philosophy and Arts in Sufism: Poetry, Music, and Rituals 13-14 September 2026

PANELISTS



Mona FAROUK M. AHMED

Dr. Mona Farouk Mohamed Ahmed is an Associate Professor at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies, Busan University of Foreign Studies (BUFS), South Korea. She serves as the Director of the Center for North African Studies and Chief Editor of the Journal of African Studies. Her academic expertise spans Mediterranean civilization exchanges, religious diversity, and Islamic studies, with a regional focus on North Africa and South Korea. Dr. Farouk earned her Ph.D. in Comparative Studies with top honors from the Institute of Asian Studies at Zagazig University (2016), following an M.A. in Islamic Studies (2013) and a B.A. in Political Science from Cairo University (1995). Her practical career includes roles as an HK Assistant Professor at BUFS and a political researcher at Cairo University's Center for Asian Studies. She has authored and co-authored several key works, including *Diversity and Plurality among Muslims of North Africa* (2023), the *Mediterranean Civilization Exchanges Dictionary* (2020), and core Arabic language textbooks tailored for Korean learners. Beyond her academic tenure, she has contributed to language education as a radio announcer for KBS Radio's "Let's Learn Korean" program.

Between Spiritual Discipline and Popular Belief: The Development of the Rifā'ī Order in Egypt

Known as Al-Rifā'iyya, the Rifā'ī Order is one of the oldest and most influential Sūfī traditions in Egypt. This study summarizes the development and transformation of the Rifā'ī Order in Egypt since its early establishment and till the present day. Like other Sūfī orders, developments of Rifā'ī order can be observed through its spiritual lineages, religious lodges, shrines, local communities, collective remembrance, and annual celebrations. Its spiritual identity is also expressed through dhikr, devotional poetry, chanting, music, and bodily forms of ritual performance, which connect Sūfī ideas with lived religious experience. On the popular level in Egypt, the Rifā'ī order has also become associated with certain popular practices, including stories of miraculous powers, bodily endurance, and snake handling. These practices have contributed to its public image but have also created debates concerning the relationship between formal Sūfī teaching and popular religious belief. The study draws on previous literature of historical and academic studies together with official institutional materials, Egyptian newspaper coverage, and publicly available digital content. The main argument of the study is that the Rifā'ī Order has maintained continuity through its spiritual lineage, devotional practices, and sacred places, while adapting to changing political, social, and cultural conditions. The study concludes that the contemporary identity of the Rifā'ī Order in Egypt reflects an ongoing effort to preserve its religious heritage, respond to criticism of popular practices, and present itself within Egypt's regulated and increasingly digital religious environment.

PANELISTS



İlahe KURŞUN MEMMEDOVA

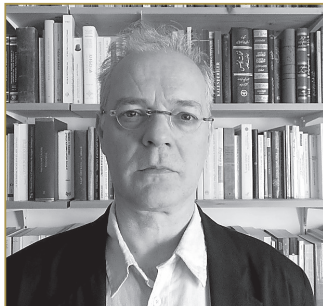
İlahe M. Kurşun completed her undergraduate education in 2009 at Khazar University, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. In 2012, she graduated with a master's degree from Istanbul Aydın University, Department of Human Resources Management. In 2019, she completed her second master's degree at Üsküdar University, Institute for Sufi Studies, with her thesis titled "The Life and Works of Meşkûre Sargut." She completed her doctoral degree at the same institute in 2024 with her dissertation titled "Sayyid Yahya al-Shirvani's Love for Ahl al-Bayt and Understanding of Sufism." She is fluent in Azerbaijani Turkish, Turkish, Persian, English, and Arabic. Since 2021, she has been conducting training programs alongside expert academics at the "Hikmet İlimler Merkezi" (Wisdom Sciences Center), an educational institution she founded in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, as of 2026, she teaches the undergraduate course "History of Islamic Civilization" at the Faculty of Engineering, Üsküdar University. İlahe M. Kurşun has authored books and published articles in international journals on female Sufis, the History of Islamic Sects, and Sayyid Yahya al-Shirvani, the founder of the Khalvati order. Her research interests include oral history, female Sufis, Sufi orders, history of sects, and history of religions.

Sayyid Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī's View of Ahl al-Bayt and Its Socio-Religious Impact in Iraq

This study examines the 12th-century Sūfī master Sayyid Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī's perspective on the Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's family) and its socio-religious impact on Sunnī-Shi'ī relations in Iraq. Living in the Batai'h marshes during the Abbasid Era—a period marked by heightened sectarian tensions—al-Rifā'ī developed a unifying discourse rooted in prophetic morality. Based on primary texts, interviews with family representatives, and field observations from the restoration of his shrine in Umm 'Abida, this paper demonstrates how al-Rifā'ī harmonized deep devotion to the Ahl al-Bayt with profound respect for all Companions (Sahaba). The paper highlights his balanced methodology, which revered the Ahl al-Bayt while honoring the first three Caliphs as exemplary guides. Furthermore, it explores the practical manifestations of this legacy, from Ottoman Şultān Abdülhamīd II's reconstruction efforts to the recent restoration by the NEF and Kerim Foundations. By employing inclusive architectural choices, the shrine avoids theological controversy and continues to serve as a shared sanctuary for both Sunnī and Shi'ī visitors in a Shi'ī-majority area. Ultimately, this research underscores how the Rifā'iyya tradition offers a viable historical and contemporary model for fostering social cohesion and overcoming sectarian divides in the Islamic world.

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PANELISTS



Alexandre PAPAS

Alexandre Papas is a historian of Islamic mysticism in the Turko-Persian area. He is Senior Research Fellow at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), Professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE), Director of the Centre for Ottoman Studies at the Collège de France in Paris, and Editor-in-Chief of Brill's Journal of Sufi Studies. He has published monographs, edited volumes, articles, and encyclopaedia entries. His recent publications include: *Thus Spake the Dervish: Sufism, Language, and the Religious Margins in Central Asia, 1400-1900* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); *Handbook of Sufi Studies 1: Sufi Institutions* (Leiden: Brill, 2020); *Mystiques et penseurs du Bosphore au fleuve Jaune* (Paris: Claire Maisonneuve, 2025); *Sufi Allahyar. La Fermeté des faibles. Traité versifié de soufisme centrasiatique*, translated from Chaghatay Turkic, with annotations and an introduction (Paris: Cerf, 2026, with Marc Toutant); *Handbook of Sufi Studies 4: Sufi Material Culture*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2026, ed. with Thierry Zarcone). He is currently working on an intellectual biography of Bahauddin Naqshband.

Debating Dhikr in the Early Khwājagān-Naqshbandiyya: Reading 'Alī Rāmītanī's Maḥbūb al-'ārifin"

This article presents the first English translation of the *Maḥbūb al-'Ārifīn*, an early Persian treatise attributed to the Khwājagān master 'Alī Rāmītanī (d. 715/1316 or 721/1321), based on the critical edition published by Maryam Hosseini and Mahmud Alizade Kashani in 2022. After reconsidering Rāmītanī's authorship and situating the work within early Khwājagān textual production, the article examines its contribution to debates over dhikr. Rāmītanī's exchange with the Kubrāwī master 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī reveals that the familiar opposition between vocal and silent remembrance inadequately captures the positions at stake. Organized around ten conditions for the spiritual wayfarer, the *Maḥbūb al-'Ārifīn* presents *lā ilāha illā Allāh* as the supreme formula of remembrance while making its efficacy dependent primarily upon presence (*ḥuḍūr*) and sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), whether recited aloud or quietly. More broadly, the treatise develops an embodied ethics of dhikr: purity, fasting, silence, seclusion, regulation of the senses, watchfulness, wakefulness, companionship, and lawful food all participate in the cultivation of remembrance. Its symbolic language extends this conception further: the "bird of remembrance" gives dhikr a cosmic dimension, while the "Jesus of the heart," born from the Mary-like silence of the body, suggests that silence is not the absence of speech but the condition for the emergence of an inner spiritual voice. The treatise thus witnesses the diversity and fluidity of early Khwājagān understandings of remembrance before their later codification within the Naqshbandiyya.

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Vasfi Emre ÖMÜRLÜ
Hatice Dilek GÜLDÜTUNA

Vasfi Emre Ömürlü is a Full Professor of Mechatronic Engineering at Yildiz Technical University, having earned his Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from The Ohio State University in 2002. Raised in a family of professional musicians, he developed a lifelong dedication to Turkish Classical and Sufi Music. He studied the ney under Ömer Erdoğan, taught at the Kubbealtı Culture and Art Foundation, and refined his expertise in music theory and improvisation under grandmasters like Hafız Kazım Büyükkaksoy, Alaaddin Yavaşca, Doğan Ergin, Yusuf Ömürlü and Cinuçen Tanrıkorur. Over his career, he has performed in numerous TRT radio broadcasts and have been in several albums, including “Suite in Makam Şedd-i Saba & Sufi Hymns”, “Aziz Mahmud Hüdâî in the Sufi Music of Cinuçen Tanrıkorur”, and the 4-CD collection “İlahiyat-ı Ken’ân” alongside his sister. Currently pursuing a second Ph.D. at Uskudar University’s Institute for Sufi Studies, Ömürlü conducts the Lâ Edrî Sûfî Music Chorus, performing both nationally and internationally in countries such as Germany, India, and Tanzania. He is married and has twin children.

H. Dilek Güldütuna graduated from Istanbul University Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine and completed her residency in Anesthesiology at Koşuyolu Research Hospital in Istanbul. She then spent three years at Professor Fuat Sezgin’s Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science in Frankfurt, where she completed her Arabic language education. Between 2005 and 2011, she pursued her academic studies at J.W. Goethe University Frankfurt in the fields of Islamic Religious Studies, Jewish-Christian Religious Studies, and Philosophy. She completed her Master’s degree at the same university with a thesis entitled Buchstabensymbolik bei Ibn Arabi (Letter Symbolism in Ibn Arabi). She subsequently completed her PhD in 2017 at the same university with a dissertation entitled Konstruktionen des Weiblichen bei Ken’ân Rifâî: Das Weibliche als Spiegel der göttlichen Wirklichkeit (Constructions of the Feminine in Ken’ân Rifâî: The Feminine as a Mirror of Divine Reality). Since 2017, she has been affiliated with the Institute for Sufi Studies at Üsküdar University, where she continues her academic work on Sufism, Islamic thought, and related intellectual traditions.

Rythmic Flow and Structure in Classical Kıyam Zikir in Rifâ’î Dargâhs of Istanbul

As one of the classical dhikr (zikir) traditions of the Ottoman dervish lodges (dergâhs) in the late period of the Ottoman Empire and its global capital, Istanbul, the Rifâ’î Kıyam Kalima-i Tawhid dhikr (Rifâî Kıyam Kelîme-i Tevhîdi zikri) stands before us as a monumental value that was entirely preserved through great devotion amidst the cultural fractures during the transition to the Republic of Türkiye in the early 20th century. This study examines the rhythm, wordings, and pitch transitions of this zikir method, which exhibits pinnacle features in terms of visuality, music, literature, composition, balance, and harmony. First, the general characteristics of the zikir will be outlined. After discussing the flow of the zikir along with the musical structures (makams) and musical forms employed, the study will analyze the different vocalization styles of the Kelîme-i Tevhîd throughout the process, addressing where and why these variations occur, how the rhythm evolves during the flow, and how pitch changes develop through specific examples. Given that the impact of the zikir relies on the precise execution of rhythm and musical compositions, particular emphasis will be placed on rhythmic progressions and their functional application.

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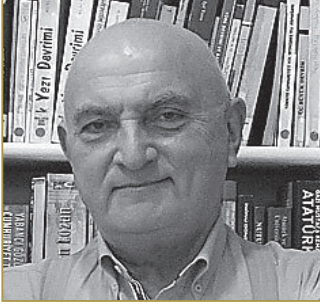
Kotoko MADONO

Kotoko MADONO is a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Osaka University and the Faculty of Letters at Kansai University. She received her master's degree from the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University, in 2018. In 2021–2022, she participated in the JSPS Overseas Challenge Program for Young Researchers as a visiting researcher at the Institute for Sufi Studies, Üsküdar University, Turkey. Her research interests include Ottoman Sufism, Sufi literature, and the intellectual and literary history of the Ottoman Empire. She is currently working on her doctoral dissertation on the Sufi thought and reception history of poets in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire, particularly Niyâzî-i Mısrî. Drawing on her fieldwork experience, she has also pursued research beyond the study of Ottoman history, recently contributing to discussions on the activities and social roles of Sufis in contemporary Turkish society and its changing religious landscape.

When Yunus Emre Speaks through Niyâzî-i Mısrî: Re-voicing and Sûfî Poetic Authorship in the Early Modern Ottoman World

Niyâzî-i Mısrî (d. 1105/1694), one of the foremost Sufi thinkers of the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire, is widely regarded as belonging to the intellectual lineage of Muḥyî al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabî (d. 638/1240) and his followers, and as an author whose works are grounded in the doctrine of the Unity of Existence (Ar. Waḥdat al-Wujūd). At the same time, however, his poetic corpus has frequently been characterized in terms of its continuity with that of Yunus Emre (d. 720/1320?). The extent of Yunus's influence on Mısrî has long been recognized by readers of his Dīvân, as evidenced by poems composed in the same meter and passages that appear to paraphrase Yunus's verse. Yet a fundamental question remains insufficiently addressed: what did Yunus Emre represent to Mısrî? Taking this question as its point of departure, this paper examines Mısrî's commentary on Yunus Emre's celebrated poem beginning with "Çıktım Erik Dalına (I Climbed onto a Plum Branch)." Through a close reading of this commentary, it explores the figure of Yunus who, in a sense, speaks through the tongue of Mısrî, while reconsidering the nature and boundaries of Mısrî's authorship. It further considers how the relationship between these two poets has been articulated and reconfigured since the modern period. By doing so, it aims to situate Mısrî within the broader reception history of Yunus Emre and examine his shifting position in the transmission and reinterpretation of Yunus's legacy from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic.

PANELISTS



M. Baha TANMAN

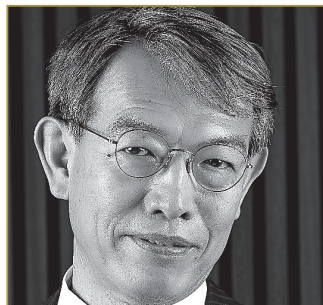
M. Baha Tanman received his PhD from Istanbul University Faculty of Literature, Department of Turkish and Islamic Art, with his thesis titled “İstanbul Tekkelerinin Mimari ve Süsleme Özellikleri” (“Architectural and Decorative Features of Dervish Lodges in Istanbul”), under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Semavi Eyice. Tanman, who has published widely on architecture in the Ottoman and beyliks periods, regional styles in Ottoman architecture, and art of the Ottoman dervish lodges, teaches at Istanbul University Art History Department and Kadir Has University and serves as the Chair of the Scientific Committee of Istanbul Research Institute.

Rifā’ī Tekkes in Ottoman Sufi Architecture

The aim of this paper is to discuss the place of Rifā’ī tekkes within Ottoman Sūfī architecture by examining surviving examples found in Istanbul and the Balkans, built or assumed their final form in the 19th century. In the tekkes in question, we find no trace of influence from the tekke housing the tomb of the order’s founder near Basra, neither from early Ottoman-era Sūfī structures, or from Rifā’ī tekkes of the pre-Ottoman Anatolian Turkish architecture. But almost all of them reflect the characteristics of a building type prevalent in Sūfī architecture during that period, where all functions were housed within a single mass. And mostly being built with wood their mass and façades resemble late Ottoman domestic buildings. On the other hand, we can find in Istanbul examples of 19th-century tekkes from various Sūfī orders that share the same characteristics. It appears that the only element distinguishing the Rifā’ī tekkes from their contemporaries is their mihrabs, furnished in a manner unique to this order, and called “Rifā’ī mihrabs”.

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Masayuki AKAHORI

Masayuki AKAHORI is an anthropologist specializing in Islam and the Middle East. He is Professor of Anthropology and Islamic Area Studies at Sophia University, where he has also served as Vice President for Academic Research Affairs. He was the founding director of Sophia University's Institute of Islamic Area Studies (SIAS). His research, based on long-term fieldwork among Bedouin communities in Egypt's Western Desert, has focused on tribal organization, saint veneration, and the relationship between Sufism and popular religious practices. He has published extensively on these subjects in Japanese and English. His major publications include *Sufism and Saint Veneration in Islam* (University of Tokyo Press, 2005, co-edited), *Popular Islam: Sufis, Saints and Spirits* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2008, ed.), and *Anthropology of Saint Veneration in Islam and Christianity* (Tokyo: SIAS, 2022, ed.). His recent research explores the dynamic relationship between Sufism and saint veneration, while developing an "anthropology of grace" as a broader comparative framework.

Masters and Disciples, Saints and Venerators: Parallels and Reversals in Sufism and Saint Veneration

Sufism and saint veneration in Islam are closely related yet analytically distinct systems of belief and practice. This presentation examines their relationship by comparing two relational modes: that between master and disciple in Sufism and that between saint and venerator in saint veneration. Drawing on anthropological fieldwork in Egypt, it focuses on Sīdī Aḥmad al-Badawī of Tanta, one of Egypt's best-known Sūfī masters and saints. Interviews with members of the Aḥmadī order and other visitors to his shrine reveal contrasting ways of relating to the same religious figure. While both Sūfī masters and saints mediate between human beings and God, the relationships display a significant reversal. Sūfī disciples seek to emulate the master as a model on the path toward spiritual transformation, whereas venerators approach the saint as an exceptional other, seeking access to divine grace (baraka) without aspiring to become like the saint. These parallels and reversals help explain why Sufism and saint veneration so often converge while remaining analytically distinct.

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Arzu Eylul YALÇINKAYA

After completing her master's degree with her thesis titled "Mathnawi Conversations of Kenan Rifai" at Istanbul University in 2012, Yalçinkaya pursued another master's program at Harvard University Extension School of Religious Studies in 2013. As of the foundation of Üsküdar University Institute for Sufi Studies in 2015, she was assigned as a lecturer, which she currently carries out. In the meantime, she received her PhD at Uludağ University in 2020. Yalçinkaya knows Arabic, English and Persian. For the 2022-2023 academic year, she was accepted as a visiting fellow at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies and she is the author of "The Role of Sufi Thought as the Bridge between the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Republican Turkey: Attitudes of Sufi Intellectuals during the Transitional Period". Some of her academic studies can be listed as follows: "Key Concepts in Ahmad al-Rifai's Understanding of Sufism: Humility, Helplessness, Servility, Fragility, Destitute, Poverty"; "Kenan Rifai, One of the Late Ottoman Sheikhs: His Life, Works and Understanding of Sufism"; "On the Concept of Asceticism in Early Sufi Classics". She has been participating in both national and international symposiums, and giving open public conferences and seminars in different cultural centers.

Representing the Rifā'ī Tradition in Early Twentieth-Century Istanbul: Ken'ān Rifā'ī and the Socio-Cultural Functions of the Ümmü Ken'ān Sufi Lodge

This paper examines the Ümmü Ken'ān Sūfī Lodge, founded by Ken'ān Rifā'ī in Istanbul in 1908, as a significant locus for the representation of the Rifā'ī tradition in the early twentieth century. At Ümmü Ken'ān, this representation took shape through ritual practice, spiritual pedagogy, sacred music, communal gatherings, hospitality, and intellectual exchange. The lodge offers a particularly rich setting for understanding how a Sūfī tradition acquired visible, social, and cultural forms within the changing urban world of Istanbul. Friday gatherings brought together Masnavī commentary, Rifā'ī dhikr, prayer, sacred music, and spiritual conversation. Ramadan, holy nights, and other religious occasions created further forms of collective observance, while charitable giving, the reception of visitors, and interaction with members of different Sūfī circles extended the lodge's social reach. Its close relationship with Ken'ān Rifā'ī's adjoining mansion also fostered gatherings devoted to religious, literary, and intellectual conversation, connecting Sūfī life with wider forms of learned sociability in late Ottoman Istanbul. This presentation argues that Ümmü Ken'ān represented the Rifā'ī tradition through a lived synthesis of ritual discipline, ethical formation, cultural production, and social engagement. Viewed through these intersecting practices, the lodge offers a lens onto the place of Sūfī thought, practice, and sociability in the religious, intellectual, and social life of early twentieth-century Istanbul.