



ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

Sufi Studies Week

1st International Sufi Studies Graduate Student Symposium

Üsküdar University, Institute for Sufi Studies

9 - 11 March 2018

Today, scientific studies and research are quickly distancing themselves from an understanding of “vocational focus.” Many disciplines are engaging more and more with the topics and methodology of religious studies. Sufi Studies, aside from fundamental Islamic studies, comprises a large area of interest ranging from literature to philosophy, history to sociology, psychology, from music to architecture, to other areas of science and art, and from political philosophy to popular culture. The Sufi Studies Week has been planned in order to take up this wide net of interests and to bring together those who work on and are interested in these areas by carrying out activities of research and art.

Organized for the first time as part of this event, the 1st Sufi Studies Graduate Symposium aims – by bringing together subject experts and graduate students from various countries – to increase the multidisciplinary interaction among those conducting academic studies on Sufism in various fields and to create new opportunities of thought. This approach can contribute not only to the widening of areas of academic interest in Sufism but also deepen comparative studies about the field. The symposium will not only be able to provide a snapshot of the current research topics, content, and methodology conducted on the topic throughout the world, but it will also be a guide in terms of researchers’ orientation in the future as per its results. The symposium is organized by the graduate students of the Institute for Sufi Studies and with the support of the Institute and Kerim Foundation.

Sufi thought and works from the Ottoman period – foremost among the Institute for Sufi Studies’ areas of interest – have carried the essence of Islamic tradition that has been ongoing for centuries in a wide swathe of cultural geography. An important part of this cultural geography is at the bottom of the politicized tensions that are prevalent throughout the world today. Once centers of science and culture, these places are slowly losing their value, with their rare structures and resources getting wrecked, all in plain sight of the entire world. On the other hand, the perception of Islam and Muslims in this conjuncture is highly problematic. There are many internal and external reasons behind this problematizing. Typically, a large part of the works that are published these days are about Islam’s societal and political expression. At this point, not only are adequate solutions not being produced, the understanding of Islam is slowly worsening. It is of course necessary to study Islam, which continues to deeply effect humanity, from these perspectives as well. However, it should also not be forgotten that Islam embraces the human within her/his own conditions of creation and presents her/him with a worldview of individual, societal, metaphysical, and esthetic dimensions. Just as with every religion, so it is for Islam that there exist external expressions caused by internal dimensions and principles. It is for all of these reasons that there exist important questions which those who conduct Islamic and Sufi studies must ask themselves. What should not be ignored is the need to embrace the original, distinguished language required by a true “core-

form” relationship. We believe that every new study done in Sufi studies will have an additional impact and contribute to the establishment of the sought-after balance.

This symposium hopes that it will help in the maturation of value-adding studies, and thanks its participants for their contribution.