

Lecture Series

Humanity,
Sufi Thought
and Healing II

23-27 July 2025
The Institute for Sufi Studies
Üsküdar University


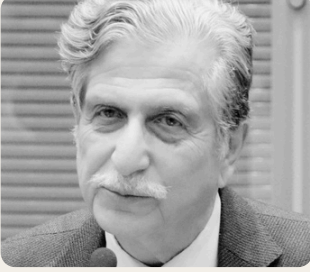




INSTITUTE FOR
SUFİ STUDIES

July 23-27, 2025

The Institute for Sufi Studies, Üsküdar University

HEALING, SUFI THOUGHT AND HUMANITY SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM





23.07.2025 WEDNESDAY Person in Charge Omneya Ayad	10.00-11.00	11.20-12.20	15.00-16.00	16.20-17.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An outstanding atmosphere with the contribution of distinguished guests• 16 lectures by 16 scholars• Lectures in English and Turkish• Simultaneous translation in English and Turkish• A paid certificate program• Online access• 6 months availability to the video recordings• Contact: lectureseries@uskudar.edu.tr
					
	SPEAKER	Yasushi Tonaga	Kenan Gürsoy	Emine Yeniterzi	
	TITLE OF THE LECTURE	Sufism as a Kaleidoscope	A Book Published about the 20th Century Sufi Kenan Rifâi Büyükkaksoy and Its Reflections on the Turkish Intellectual Public of 1951, II	The Sufi Foundations of Na't-i Sherifs	
				All Muhammad, All the Time: The Prophetic Poetics of Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse	

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HEALING, SUFI THOUGHT AND HUMANITY SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM




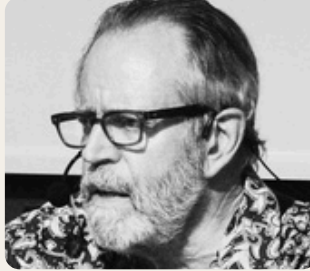
24.07.2025 THURSDAY Person in Charge Tûbâ Işık	10.00-11.00	11.20-12.20	15.00-16.00	16.20-17.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An outstanding atmosphere with the contribution of distinguished guests• 16 lectures by 16 scholars• Lectures in English and Turkish• Simultaneous translation in English and Turkish• A paid certificate program• Online access• 6 months availability to the video recordings• Contact: lectureseries@uskudar.edu.tr
					
	SPEAKER	Omneya Ayad	Mahmud Erol Kılıç	Mohammed Rustom	Cyrus Ali Zargar
	TITLE OF THE LECTURE	The Spirituality of Prophet Muḥammad in the Thought of Aḥmad ibn 'Ajlba	Understanding a Sage with Another Sage: The Case of Mevlana	Ghazali's Book on Pride and Self-Admiration	The Transformative Potential of Love in the Poetry of Farid al-Din Attar

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25.07.2025 FRIDAY Person in Charge Aslı Yıldırım	10.00-11.00	11.20-12.20	15.00-16.00	16.20-17.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An outstanding atmosphere with the contribution of distinguished guests• 16 lectures by 16 scholars• Lectures in English and Turkish• Simultaneous translation in English and Turkish• A paid certificate program• Online access• 6 months availability to the video recordings• Contact: lectureseries@uskudar.edu.tr
					
	H. Dilek Güldütuna	Reşat Öngören	Youssef Carter	Carl W. Ernst	
	The Role of Annemarie Schimmel's Annual Letters in Islamic Studies	Sufism and Healing: Medical Methods of Healer Sufis	Heavy Rock Gets Lifted from Both Sides: Tasawwuf, Healing and Remembrance in the Black Atlantic	The Mystical Meaning of Revelation in the <i>Kitab al-Tawasin</i> of Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj	
	TITLE OF THE LECTURE				

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26.07.2025 SATURDAY PUBLIC PROGRAMME Person in Charge F. Cangüzel Güner Zülfikar	09.00	09.45-11.15	11.35-13.05	13.30-14.10
				
	SPEAKER	Welcome Speeches	Alumni Panel 1	Alumni Panel 2
TITLE OF THE LECTURE	Welcome Speeches: Cemâlnur Sargut Nevzat Tarhan Keynote Speaker: Mahmud Erol Kılıç	Chair: Emine Yeniterzi İlâhe Kurşun Kerim Güç Sinem Hürmeydan Sibel Yel Özlem Okkalı Doğan	Chair: Reşat Öngören Feyza Başgöze Gülsüm Yağcıoğlu Emine Azdiken Saadet Mammadova Esin Tümer	Elif Ömürlü Uyar Sevda Asqarova V. Emre Ömürlü

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27.07.2025
SUNDAY

Person in
Charge
H. Dilek
Güldütuna

10.00-11.00



Cemâlnur Sargut

Unity is Spiritual
Healing

11.20-12.20



Tûbâ Işık

The Interplay of
Ahlâq and Health
in Classical
Islamic Ethics

15.00-16.00



Arzu Eylül Yalçinkaya

Mystical Poetics of
Union: Tracing
the Symbolic
Evolution
of the Lover in Rûmî's
Masnavî-i Manavî

16.20-17.20



Cangüzel Güner
Zülfikar

Sâmiha Ayverdi's
Understanding of
Tawhid (Unity) in her
book *Mülâkatlar*
(Conversations)

- An outstanding atmosphere with the contribution of distinguished guests
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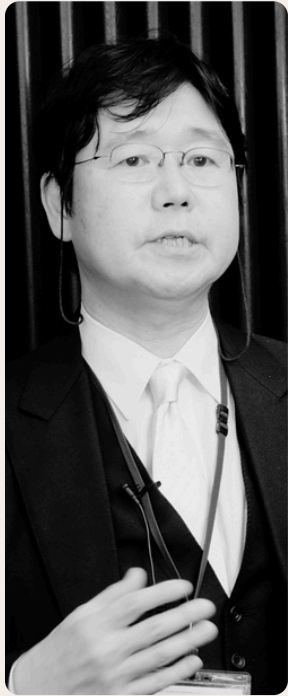
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HEALING, SUFI THOUGHT AND HUMANITY **SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM**

Sufism as a Kaleidoscope



Sufism (taṣawwuf) has been translated as “Islamic Mysticism” and studied as a kind of philosophy. This lecture questions this definition and aims to draw a new picture of it.

It is divided into two sections. The first section examines the history of Sufi studies which has explained Sufism as an Islamic version of mysticism in general. Sufism includes not only mystical philosophy but also ethical theories. At the same time, it has not only developed among elites but also has been broadly welcomed by the common people. I propose the new idea that Sufism can be expressed in the four quadrants which are composed of two opposites, namely “mysticism–ethics” and “elite–people.”

The second section tries to introduce many possible approaches for Sufi studies. It includes philosophical truth of Sufism and its artificial expressions. The truth can be expressed as a form of mystical philosophy in prose at times. The same truth is expressed in a form of poetry at other times. The poetry is sometimes accompanied by music, and then dances. I am afraid that Sufi studies up to now have been stressing only the philosophical aspect and have forgotten to draw a more inclusive picture of Sufism, which should be understood as a gradation from philosophy to poetry (literature), music and dances (rituals.)

**Yasushi
Tonaga**

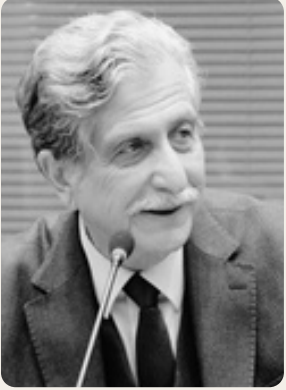
Yasushi Tonaga is a professor at the Institute of Asian and African Field Studies, in Kyoto University. He is also the current director of the Kenan Rifâi Centre for Sufi Studies and the Centre for Islamic Studies at Kyoto University. He graduated from the University of Tokyo, and received his doctorate from Kyoto University. His major field of interest includes Ibn ‘Arabî and Akbarian school. He is also the president of the Japan Association for Middle Eastern Studies.

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HEALING, SUFI THOUGHT AND HUMANITY SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM

A Book Published about the 20th Century Sufi Kenan Rifâî Büyükaksoy and Its Reflections on the Turkish Intellectual Public of 1951, II



In this lecture, the evaluations of a group of intellectuals about the book *Kenan Rifâî and Islam in the Light of the Twentieth Century*, written by Kenan Rifâî's (1867-1950) close students, will be discussed. The interpretations and approaches of the ideas and descriptions brought up in the work will be examined. These evaluations contain clues regarding the perception of this Sufi figure within the framework of the conditions of modern Türkiye on the 26th anniversary of the banning of dervish lodges in Türkiye, when this book was published. These concepts will contribute to the understanding and lifestyle that Kenan Rifâî Büyükaksoy represents in response to cultural and spiritual needs.

Kenan
Gürsoy

Kenan Gürsoy graduated from the University of Rennes and the University of Paris Sorbonne (Paris IV) in France. He started working as an assistant at Atatürk University, Faculty of Literature, Department of Philosophy. He received his PhD in 1979, became an Assistant Professor in 1982 and an Associate Professor of Systematic Philosophy-Logic in 1983. In the meantime, he was assigned to do research for another year (1981-1982) at the Department of Philosophy of Paris-Ouest-Nanterre-la-Défense (Paris X) in France. In November 1984, he joined the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Languages and History-Geography at Ankara University as an Associate Professor in the History of Philosophy Department, where he became a Professor in January 1989. He was a faculty member at Galatasaray University between 1997 and 2009, first at the Faculty of Communication, then at the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and finally as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Galatasaray University from 2000 to 2009. Professor Gürsoy, who was the Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the Holy See (Vatican) between 2009 and 2014, served for a while on the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after his return to Turkey in 2014, and retired from the Embassy in 2015. From 2015 to June 2017, he served as a faculty member and director of the Center for Western Studies at Istanbul Aydın University. Professor Gürsoy has been the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Cenani Foundation since 2013. His works are mainly on ethics.

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HEALING, SUFI THOUGHT AND HUMANITY SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM

The Sufi Foundations of Na't-i Sherifs



Na't-i sherifs are poems in the Islamic literary tradition that express profound love for the Prophet Muhammad and articulate his superior qualities. In this course, the Sufi foundations of na'ts, whose primary sources are the Qur'an and hadiths and whose rich content extensively incorporates Sufi poets' interpretations of verses and hadiths, will be examined. The course will focus on the poets' conceptions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) under the themes of existence, knowledge, and ethics.

**Emine
Yeniterzi**

Emine Yeniterzi graduated from the Department of Turkish Language and Literature at Selçuk University Faculty of Letters in 1981. She received her master's degree with her thesis, "The Names of Prophet Muhammad in Classical Turkish Literature" in 1983 and PhD degree with the thesis of "Praising Poetry of the Prophet Muhammad [Na't] in Divan Poetry" in 1989, both in the field of Classical Turkish Literature. She continued her academic life at Selçuk University between 1981-2011, and Istanbul Medeniyet University between 2011-2015. She is a professor at the Institute for Sufi Studies of Üsküdar University. Her major areas of study are: Classical Turkish poetry, text commentary, religious-moral-mystical masnavis, various types of religious poetry and Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî. She is the author of nine books and many articles published in scholarly journals.

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HEALING, SUFI THOUGHT AND HUMANITY **SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM**

All Muhammad, All the Time: The Prophetic Poetics of Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse



This talk examines three short treatises and poems of Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse (d. 1975), founder of the the Fayḍa Tijāniyya, currently the most popular Sufi movement on the African continent, in order to outline Niasse’s prophetic poetics of spiritual realization: the closely-linked cosmology, epistemology, and anthropology converging on the Muhammadan Reality (al-ḥaqīqa al-Muḥammadiya) that animates and structures his literary oeuvre and shapes the spiritual, social, and intellectual lives of Tijānī murīds. Building on earlier studies of the Tijānī tradition and Maghrebi/West African Sufism, this article concludes with an examination of the implications of this prophetic poetics for the conception of the “human,” and the intervention literature such as Niasse’s has made and can make in contemporary debates surrounding the ethics of knowledge and the re-evaluation of the modern, “Western” category of the “human.”

**Oludaminni
Ogunnaike**

Oludaminni Ogunnaike is an Associate Professor of African Religious Thought at the University of Virginia specializing in the intellectual and artistic dimensions of West and North African Sufism and Yoruba oriṣa traditions. He received his PhD from the department of African and African American Studies at Harvard University and his A.B. in Cognitive Neuroscience and African Studies from the same institution. He is the author of Deep Knowledge: Ways of Knowing in Sufism and Ifa, Two West African Intellectual Traditions (Penn State University Press, 2020) winner of the ASWAD's (Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora) Outstanding First Book Prize, Poetry in Praise of Prophetic Perfection: West African Madīḥ Poetry and its Precedents (Islamic Texts Society, 2020), and The Book of Clouds (Fons Vitae, 2024). He is currently working on a podcast and book manuscript on Sufi poetry and poetics as well as a book on Yoruba Mythology.

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HEALING, SUFI THOUGHT AND HUMANITY SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM

The Spirituality of Prophet Muḥammad in the Thought of Aḥmad ibn ‘Ajība



This lecture will discuss the spiritual fatherhood of Prophet Muhammad as he is considered the seed of existence. This theme leads to exploring the famous concept of the Muhammadan light and prophetic mercy along with its relationship with the Prophetic ethical character. Ibn ‘Ajība further explains that if the All-Merciful had a son, then it would be Prophet Muhammad who is the most entitled of this affinity because he is the first who worshipped God in pre-eternity as his light was the first thing to appear in existence. Many more themes of Prophetic spirituality are discussed in detail along with the opinions of two of the most influential Sufi scholars, Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī and Rūzbihān al-Baqlī al-Shīrāzī, who both left an indelible impact on Ibn ‘Ajība’s Qur’anic commentary.

Omneya
Ayad

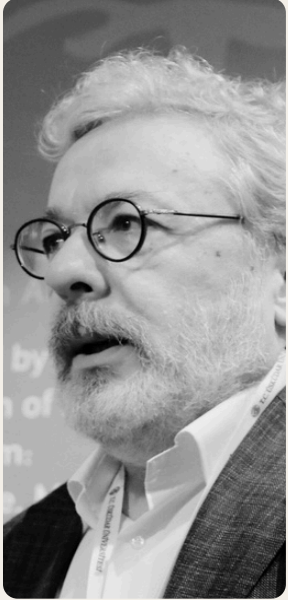
Right after she earned her bachelor degree in Journalism and Mass Communications from the American University in Cairo, she started pursuing a bachelor degree in Islamic studies in the Sufi Academy of Arabic and Islamic Studies – a college affiliated with Al Azhar University. After earning her Master’s degree on “The Contemporary Sufi Heritage of Shaykh Ahmed Ibn Mustafa al-‘Alawī and His Elements of the Sufi Path towards the Divine” from the American University in Cairo, she had pursued a doctoral degree in the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, UK where she finished her doctoral thesis on “Ibn ‘Ajība (d. 1224/1809) and His Oceanic Exegesis of the Quran: Love in the Moroccan Sufi Tradition”. During her postgraduate studies she has worked as a teaching assistant of Islamic history while pursuing her Master’s degree in the American University in Cairo and during her doctoral studies she spent two years teaching the Arabic language in the University of Exeter. She is a faculty member of the Institute for Sufi Studies of Üsküdar University.

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HEALING, SUFI THOUGHT AND HUMANITY SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM

Understanding a Sage with Another Sage: The Case of Mevlana



Trying to understand one sage with another sage is a sacred method. Referred to as “qabla man shara’a” (the one who was explained before), there is also the attempt to understand a verse with another verse, or to make sense of a verse in the Qur’an by way of a verse in the Books that came before it like the Bible or the Torah. There is a method of trying to make sense of a verse with a saying of the Prophet, that is, with the Sunnah. After the explanation of methods such as trying to make sense of a verse or a saying of the Prophet with the words of a Companion, the method of trying to understand a sage with another sage will be explained. This can be called annotating each other.

In this sense, a method can be applied to try to understand/interpret Mevlana with Ibn al-’Arabī. There have been those who have opposed this method throughout history. For example, when Abdülbâkî Gölpınarlı opposed Ahmed Avni Konuk’s commentary on the *Fusus* and his commentary on the *Masnavi*, he tried to separate them from each other by saying, ‘He interprets Mevlânâ from an Ibn ‘Arabian point of view, it is not relevant, both men are saying different things.’

Mahmud Erol
Kılıç

Mahmud Erol Kılıç was born in Istanbul. Following his graduation from the Faculty of Political Science of Istanbul University (1985), he obtained his masters’ degree in Islamic Philosophy at Marmara University (1989), then defended his doctorate on Ibn Arabi’s thought (1995). He was the President of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in Istanbul (2005–2008) and was then appointed as the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC, Tehran) from 2008 to 2018. Following this, he was appointed as the Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the Republic of Indonesia (2019–2021). He is currently the Director General of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), the cultural subsidiary of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

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HEALING, SUFI THOUGHT AND HUMANITY **SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM**

Ghazali's Book on Pride and Self-Admiration



In this lecture we will explore the Sufi understanding of the quintessential virtue of humility (tawāḍuʿ). Rooting our inquiry in the Qurʾan and Hadith, we will engage with a variety of classical Islamic ethical sayings and texts on humility and its antipodes, namely pride (kibr/takabbur) and self-admiration (ujb). This exposure will allow us to come away with a clearer picture of Sufism's unique perspective on human selfhood and the pursuit of its perfection.

**Mohammed
Rustom**

*Mohammed Rustom is Professor of Islamic Thought and Global Philosophy at Carleton University and Director of the Carleton Centre for the Study of Islam. An internationally recognized scholar whose works have been translated into over ten languages, Professor Rustom's research focuses on Islamic philosophy, Sufism, Quranic exegesis, and cross-cultural philosophy. He is the author, translator, and editor of thirteen books, the most recent of which are *Inrushes of the Heart: The Sufi Philosophy of 'Ayn al-Qudat* (SUNY Press, 2023) and *A Sourcebook in Global Philosophy* (Equinox, 2025). Professor Rustom is also Editor of Equinox Publishing's Global Philosophy series and Editorial Board member of the Library of Arabic Literature (NYU Press).*

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HEALING, SUFI THOUGHT AND HUMANITY **SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM**

The Transformative Potential of Love in the Poetry of Farid al-Din Attar



Cyrus
Zargar

The poetics of love in the Sufi tradition is often understood in symbolic or literary terms, primarily as an artistic expression of spiritual longing and divine union. This lecture, however, explores how Sufi poets—especially Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār—engage directly with Islamic theology and philosophical traditions through meditations on love. That is, it examines how love functions not only as a poetic or mystical-ethical theme, but as a serious mode of theological and philosophical reflection within Islam more broadly. Themes such as the willingness to risk everything, as well as the abandonment of the intellect, emerge powerfully in the work of ‘Aṭṭār, who represents the culmination of a trajectory in Sufi love poetry shaped especially by the earlier Persian poet Sanāī. These themes are evident in ‘Aṭṭār’s ghazals as well as in his *Asrār-nāma*, or, *Book of Secrets*, wherein love appears as a kind of elixir and the lover as an antihero—one who often shows deeper theological insight than the ascetic or the formal scholar. In ‘Aṭṭār’s poetry, nonconformity becomes a response to both the spiritual and ethical crises of his time, and to the intellectual conditions that gave rise to them.

Cyrus Ali Zargar is Al-Ghazali Distinguished Professor of Islamic Studies and Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Central Florida. Zargar’s research interests focus on the metaphysical, aesthetic, and ethical intersections between Sufism and Islamic philosophy. His most recent books include Religion of Love: Sufism and Self-Transformation in the Poetic Imagination of ‘Aṭṭār (2024); The Ethics of Karbala: Myths, Modernity, and Virtues of Nobility (2024); and The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy and Sufism (2017). He is currently associate editor of the Journal of Sufi Studies, as well as Islamic Intellectual Traditions, both with Brill. He is also Director of Research at the Institute for Advanced Islamic Studies in New York.

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The Role of Annemarie Schimmel's Annual Letters in Islamic Studies



Annemarie Schimmel was undoubtedly the most recognized representative of her field in her time. She brought the colors of Islamic culture in every field to an important, interested and international-level audience; her work was not limited to only German-speaking circles. She expanded the boundaries of Islamic studies that existed at the time and were too narrow for her; India and Pakistan had an important place in her research.

Beyond the traditional approach of an academic to Islam, she emphasized not only the rational but also the emotional and aesthetic aspects in her research. The main subject of our study is Schimmel's letters to her colleagues at the end of each year, almost like an annual report. In these letters, Schimmel's rich comments and statements about the studies she did or supported, the conferences and meetings she attended, the relationships she established, the countries and places she visited, etc., all of which contain important clues about her role in Islamic and Sufi studies, her approach and style, her own spirituality, and her contributions to the field.

H. Dilek
Güldütuna

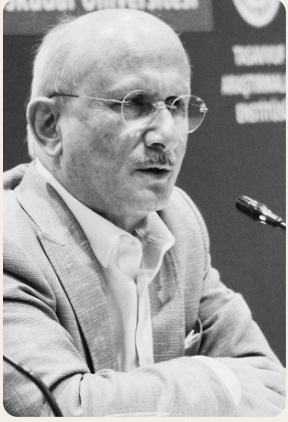
Güldütuna graduated from Istanbul University Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine. She completed her residency in Anesthesiology at the Koşuyolu Research Hospital. She spent three years at the Professor Fuat Sezgin's Arab-Islamic History of Science Institute in Frankfurt to complete her Arabic education. Between 2005 and 2011, she first received her master's degree at the Department of Islamic and Religious Sciences in Johann Wolfgang Goethe University with her thesis titled "Buchstabensymbolik bei Ibn Arabi" (Letter Symbolism in Ibn Arabi) and then her PhD at the Department of Islamic Studies on "Konstruktionen des weiblichen bei Ken'ân Rifâi: Das weibliche als Spiegel der göttlichen Wirklichkeit" (Women as a Miracle of Truth). She is currently giving lectures on Sufism at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt. Her main areas of interest are symbolism in general, symbolism in Ibn Arabi, the role of woman in Islamic mysticism and femininity and symbolism as symbols, the role of Islamic culture in the history of thought and science, and the effects in the West. She is a faculty member at the Institute for Sufi Studies of Üsküdar University.

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Sufism and Healing: Medical Methods of Healer Sufis



In the path of Sufism, which expresses the spiritual and internal aspect of Islam, it is seen that different treatment methods have been developed for a number of physical and spiritual ailments. For this reason, some pīrs have been recognized as physicians in addition to being people of guidance. As is known, the Prophet treated the sick both with medicines and by reciting prayers (rukya). In the following periods, Sufis inherited these methods and made extensive use of *rukya* in particular. In this lecture, after briefly mentioning the Prophet's treatment methods, the practices of Sufis will be discussed through fundamental works and exemplary physician Sufis.

Reşat
Öngören

Professor Öngören graduated from Marmara University Department of Theology. He earned his master's degree 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 assigned to Associate Professor in November 2001 and Professor in November 2007. He worked as a guest lecturer in Higher Islamic Institute in Sofia, during 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 academic calendars. Among many academic articles, papers, and book chapters he wrote on Tasawwuf, he is also the author of the books 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 and reprinted in 2025). He also wrote articles for the Encyclopedia of Islam (DIA) published by ISAM and the encyclopedia of Mevsūatu a'lāmi'l-ulemāi ve'l-udebāi'l-'Arabi ve'l-müslimīn published in Tunisia. He is currently working as a professor at the Institute for Sufi Studies in Uskudar University.

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Heavy Rock Gets Lifted from Both Sides: Tasawwuf, Healing and Remembrance in the Black Atlantic



In this presentation, I illustrate how the collective performance of founder-Shaykh Mustafa's qasidas on the part of Muslims of varying African-descent set in motion a shared consciousness and transmits a West African Islamic tradition of embodied knowing as they also are engaged in remembrance of Allah. Dhikr, in this sense, functions as a devotional practice that aids in the formulation of diasporic consciousness (self-remembrance) as they seek to draw closer to God. By studying the religious connections amongst Africana Mustafawiyya Muslims in and around Moncks Corner, South Carolina, I move the prevailing narrative of Black American Muslim histories and politics beyond the urban north in order to illumine the legacies of Black Muslim presence in the American South. Yet, quite vibrant relationships also emerge between Black Muslims in the American South to a broader global South—Senegal in particular—in which Africana Muslims have experienced coloniality and racism quite differently. As I show, the Muslims of the Mustafawiyya Tariqa do not merely seek to found relationships with the living—they also seek to relate to their noble ancestors, shuyukh in particular, who have passed on by visiting them and to honor the legacy of their labor. This ancestral connection, through transmission of a West African Sufi tradition, also paves the way for establishing and accessing locations of refuge in the American South and in West Africa. In this regard, kinships are less about familial connection and more about how people establish deep and lasting connections founded upon a spiritual / religious heritage of remembrance.

Youssef
Carter

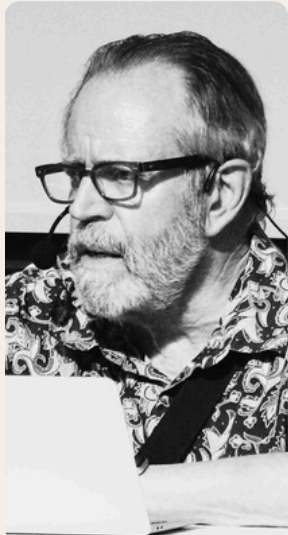
Youssef Carter is an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Kenan Rifai Fellow in Islamic Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is an advisory board member of the 'Black American Muslim Internationalism Project', facilitated in part by the Center for Global Islamic Studies at George Mason University. He also serves as faculty advisor for the Muslim Student Association and the newly-formed Black Muslim Collective at UNC. His scholarship centers on Muslim life and networks in the Black Atlantic and is primarily interested in religious empowerment. In addition to other projects, Dr. Carter is working on a manuscript called "The Vast Oceans: Remembering God and Self on the Mustafawiyya Sufi Path" which is a multisite ethnography of a transatlantic spiritual network of African-American and West African Muslims in South Carolina and Senegal.

July 23-27, 2025

The Institute for Sufi Studies, Üsküdar University

HEALING, SUFI THOUGHT AND HUMANITY SUMMER 2025 PROGRAM

The Mystical Meaning of Revelation in the *Kitab al-Tawasin* of Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj



One of the few surviving writings of the early Sufi, al-Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 309/922), is the *Kitab al-Tawasin*, an enigmatic collection of short pieces that has been a subject of debate since it was first edited by Louis Massignon in 1913. This presentation examines the style and organization of the text (including extensive sections in rhyming prose), themes, symbols, and texts quoted from the Qur'an. I will argue that this text presents Hallaj's philosophical interpretation of prophetic revelation, with Moses' encounter with the voice of God on Mt. Sinai and the Prophet Muhammad's encounter with God in the ascension narrative of Qur'an 53 as the high points. The most dramatic section contains comparisons of Muhammad and Moses as prophets, followed by the startling appearance of Iblis, who claims to be the only true monotheist. More broadly, my point will be that the *Tawasin* is conceived as a semi-scriptural text that presents a theory of mystical knowledge that is founded on paradox, amplified by a rhetoric of mystical grammar, and illustrated by accounts of knowledge as the incomprehensible desert of annihilation. Since Hallaj asserts that only God can legitimately say, 'I am,' what is the meaning of Hallaj's own claims, and how should they be read? These are the questions to be addressed in this presentation.

Carl W. Ernst

Carl W. Ernst was recognized for his work on the comparison of religions at Stanford University in 1973. He received his PhD from Harvard University in 1981 and taught at Pomona College between 1981 and 1992. Ernst is a specialist in Islamic studies, with a focus on West and South Asia. His published research, based on the study of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu, has been mainly devoted to the study of three areas: general and critical issues of Islamic studies, premodern and contemporary Sufism, and Indo-Muslim culture. In 2005, he was awarded the "DOST Award for Service to Islam" for his book named *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World*, which was also translated to Turkish. In 2009, he founded the Ken'an Rifai Chair of Islamic Studies with the cooperation of TÜRKAD on behalf of the Department of Religious Studies at the UNC at Chapel Hill. His studies of Sufism have engaged with the literary, historical, and contemporary aspects of Islamic mysticism, particularly in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent and the Persianate cultural sphere. He is the co-director of the UNC Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies and the co-editor of *Islamic Civilization and Muslim Networks Series* of the University of the North Carolina Press.

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Unity is spiritual healing



Tawhid is to unite all differences for the sake of the Beloved, because the Beloved is the Creator, and created the creation with respect. Thus, to respect everyone is to see unity everywhere, to be one and together, to not be divided.

**Cemâlnur
Sargut**

After receiving her BSc in Chemical Engineering, she taught Chemistry for 20 years. Born into a sufi family, she was interested in philosophy and examined the lives of great philosophers when she was young. After realizing that philosophy is not a kind of knowledge that can be lived, she looked for an example who lived his knowledge and found Rumi. Upon her teacher, Sâmiha Ayverdi's request, she started to work on the Qur'an and conduct a comparative study on Rumi's Masnavi. Again on her teacher's request she started giving Masnavi lessons to youth when she was 24, and since then she has reached millions of people. Since 2000, Cemalnur Sargut has been the President of Turkish Women's Cultural Association, Istanbul (TURKKAD), (www.turkkad.org) founded by her teacher, Sâmiha Ayverdi in 1966. Under her leadership and with the belief that tasawwuf (sufism) can be the common language of humans and societies, TURKKAD has been organizing international symposiums addressing a wide range of people with a view to offering solutions to today's problems through tasawwuf, which considers knowledge as a state to be practiced and sees worship as a journey towards love. Sargut teaches at the Institute for Sufi Studies of Üsküdar University.

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The Interplay of Ahlāq and Health in Classical Islamic Ethics



In this lecture, we will explore the interplay between Ahlāq (character ethics) and health in classical Islamic thought, with a particular focus on Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī's work *al-Ṭibb ar-Rūḥānī* ("Spiritual Medicine"). In his treatise, ar-Rāzī develops a remarkable ethical-therapeutic approach in which states such as anger, grief, or greed are understood as actual diseases of the soul and are to be treated through rational means. Drawing an analogy to bodily medicine, he outlines a model of spiritual healing grounded in knowledge, self-reflection, and intellectual discipline. I will demonstrate how ar-Rāzī navigates a unique path between medical anthropology and philosophical ethics within the Islamic scholarly tradition, and how his approach contributes to a holistic understanding of human flourishing (*saāda*) as an integrative state of ethical refinement and psycho-physical well-being – also for today's thinking.

Tûbâ
Işık

*Tûbâ Işık is a professor for Islamic Education and Practical Theology in the Berlin Institute of Islamic Theology at Humboldt University zu Berlin. Her research interests include religious education and its pedagogy, Virtue Ethics, Muslim Women, and Comparative theology. Işık holds a master's degree in international public law and pedagogy from Georg-August University of Göttingen (Germany) and a Ph.D. from the University of Paderborn, Germany, meanwhile she studied Catholic Theology in Paderborn and Rome. She received further education in Islamic Education at the University of Osnabrück, as well as at the Ilahiyat Faculties of Bursa and Ankara in Türkiye. Işık is the co-editor of the first textbook (2022) on the didactics of Islamic Religious Education in German. Her monography on Character Cultivation was published in 2022. Her latest published book *Islamisch-Ästhetische Bildung* is an edited volume in which various authors explore different dimensions of learning through aesthetic experience.*

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Mystical Poetics of Union: Tracing the Symbolic Evolution of the Lover in Rūmī's *Masnavī-i Manavī*



This seminar explores the evolving relationship between the lover and beloved as portrayed in Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's *Masnavī-i Maḥnavī*, highlighting how their journey symbolizes the spiritual progression from ego-bound separation to mystical unity. Beginning with the lover's assertion of self ("I") and the beloved's rejection of duality, the *Masnavī* repeatedly dramatizes the soul's struggle toward ego-annihilation (*fanā*). Through selected episodes from the six books—ranging from humorous and paradoxical exchanges to profound allegories—this study employs a Sufi hermeneutic to analyze the pedagogical significance of love's metaphors. By illustrating how poetic imagery and symbolic narratives serve as transformative instruments, Rūmī's *Masnavī* not only depicts love's emotional intensity but also guides the seeker toward existential fulfillment and divine union. Ultimately, this presentation reveals that the path between "I" and "You" in Rūmī's poetry reflects a nuanced spiritual trajectory, culminating in the realization of essential unity.

A. Eylül
Yalçinkaya

Arzu Eylül Yalçinkaya is a faculty member at the Institute for Sufi Studies at Üsküdar University. Her research explores Sufism's intersections with modernity and secularism, focusing on late Ottoman-era Sufi movements. Yalçinkaya completed her MA thesis on the Mathnawī discourses of Ken'ān Rifāī (d. 1950) and then undertook three years of graduate courses in religion at Harvard Extension School. Her PhD thesis, examining the life, works, and Sufi thought of Ken'ān Rifāī, was published as a monograph (2020). Currently, she is a visiting researcher at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, conducting postdoctoral research on the "Bridging Role of the Sufi Intellectuals Between the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Republican Turkey." Her recent work on 19th-century Sufi soundscapes has led to events on Sufi music and poetry at Harvard Divinity School, the Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and other related venues. Her forthcoming article, "In Pursuit of Truth: Djalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's Perception of Happiness within the Mathnawī-i Ma'ḥawī," and her book on Ahmed er-Rifai's (d. 1182) monography are in publication.

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Sâmiha Ayverdi's Understanding of Tawhid (Unity) in her book *Mülâkatlar (Conversations)*



Sâmiha Ayverdi's *Mülâkatlar (Conversations)* book was first published in 2005. Ayverdi recorded her conversations right after meeting with the dignitaries of the period, academics, writers, officers and soldiers, students, and guests from different socio-economic groups who came to visit her on various occasions in the 1940s. Most of the visitors begin by speaking about the excitement, pleasure and hope they felt after reading Ayverdi's books. Furthermore, they express their admiration for the transmission of Sufism's understanding of tawhid in her novels and short stories, which she was able to communicate powerfully despite the prohibitionist policies of the period. Sâmiha Ayverdi says, "Islam has reached tawhid and has hidden the secret of creation in its philosophy of wahdat" (2015: 435); like her murshid Ken'an Rifâî, she benefits from the works of Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabi and Mevlânâ. She answers a question from a visitor by stating, "Hz. Muhyiddin also said, 'The truth of tawhid is silence.'" (2015: 442) In another conversation, she says, "The healing should be sought not in the care given to the skin tissue, but in the importance given to the inside." (2015: 448-449) In this seminar, we will examine the understanding of tawhid in this work by Sâmiha Ayverdi as someone who wrote, "Not only us, but the whole world is also sick today. There is no difference between the human body and the world." (2015: 439)

Cangüzel
Güner
Zülfikar

Cangüzel Güner Zülfikar graduated from Ankara University Faculty of Literature, History and Geography Department of History. She completed her PhD studies on the "Aziz Mahmud Hudayi's [ca. 1543-1628] Shrine Complex: Sufi Impact in the Civil Society Organizations in Ottoman Religious, Socio-Cultural History" at the Department of History of Hacettepe University. She gave courses on Tasawwuf and Islamic civilization at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University. She was the Associate Director (2006-2010) of the Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations at UNC-Chapel Hill. She established the Turkish Studies Program at UNC-CH in 2009, and served as an instructor there until December 2013. At present, she teaches at the Institute for Sufi Studies in Uskudar University.