

Metinlerle Günümüz Tasavvuf Hareketleri [Contemporary Sufi Movements Through Texts], by Mustafa Kara, (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayıncılık, 2002), 613 pp., ISBN: 9756611251.

Despite its general title, Mustafa Kara's book offers the story of Sufism and Sufi orders (*tariqas/turuq*) during the nearly 150 years from *Tanzîmât* (1839, Ottoman Reform Movement, literally re-organization) to the last decade of the 20th century. The First and Second Constitutional Periods as well as the Republican Period, though the year 1925 (and the ban on Sufi orders) are of central importance. Although the book focuses mostly on Istanbul and its surroundings it occasionally sheds light on Sufi movements in Sofia, Crete, Cairo, Baghdad, Baku and Crimea.

In Turkish Islamic history, Sufism and Sufi orders have always been an integral part of life. Nevertheless, they were banned in 1925 by article 677 of the Turkish Constitution on the grounds that they had degenerated. Thus, Kara seeks to answer the crucial question of how Sufi life has continued its presence and increasingly widened its area of influence despite the closing down of the *tekkes*, the ban on the *turuq* and dervish clothes and the locked shrines, the Sufi life. Why? According to the author, the answer is difficult and requires serious contemplation. Sufi life in Turkey is "blurry", and it remains difficult to obtain a close and clear picture of contemporary Sufi movements in Turkey.

In pointing out the difficulty of studying contemporary Sufi movements, the author emphasizes two main problems. First, experts in the history of Sufism do not want to enter this so-called "mine field". Events in Turkey are not yet "history". On the other hand, an objective study necessitates "disclosing" some dervishes and "making them public". While some are pleased to be exposed, others get into hot water. Rather than be perceived as "informers", historians of Sufism avoid studying these subjects. The second problem centers on recent interest in the Sufi environment and *turuq*. Many social scientists are interested in this field and seek to acquire "sensational" knowledge. However, because they are not sufficiently qualified, their research does not go beyond "groping". They sometimes consider well-known facts in this field as new discoveries (p. 18). While the author touches on some scholarly works that pose obstacles to

understanding Sufism and Sufi orders correctly, he also provides examples from administrators, politicians, researchers, writers, journalists and government officials whose understanding might be derived from false information.

The author deals particularly with the silenced *turuq*, especially the *Baktāshiyya*, which was abolished along with the Janissary corps in 1826; the ban on all orders 100 years later; the events of the Sheikh Saʿīd rebellion (1925) and Menemen incident (1930); and the ideas, ways of life, and survival of sheikhs and dervishes in the period leading up to the National Security Council meeting on February 28, 1997.

The book consists of an introduction, thirteen chapters and a conclusion. Its main subjects include: the legislation of Sufi life following the *Tanzīmāt* administrative reforms (pp. 28-47), the First and Second Constitutional Monarchies and their effects on dervishes, mystical communities and periodicals of the time (pp. 51-78), the sheikhs elected to the first Turkish Grand National Assembly and their efforts to revive Sufi life (pp. 81-99), the Menemen incident and the banning of orders in its aftermath (pp. 185-207), an easing up due to democracy (1950) (pp. 209-239), the effects of military coups, the debate on whether *tekkes* should be re-opened (pp. 311-353), *turuq* in the Islamic world and the West (pp. 455-488), Muslim orientalist, criticisms of Sufi life and thought (pp. 543-551), and potential solutions to the problems of Sufism and Sufi orders (pp. 601-607).

The informative work depicts the *tekkes*, *turuq* and adventures of Sufi life in the last century. With its rich bibliography, the book is a significant source for academics, journalists and historians. The quoted texts –presented in double columns– not only prove the scholarly quality of the work but also serve as a valuable archive. It would not be an overstatement to say that the book is the first of its kind in the field. Chronologically covering Sufi movements up to 1990 in a quite objective manner, this volume may be regarded as the harbinger of the highly anticipated second volume, which will address the 21st century.

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