# English Abstracts

## Modernist Identities: Sufis and Wahhabis in Northern Nigeria

**Irit Back**

Since the 1970's, northern Nigeria has been torn by many conflicts between organizational and ideological currents influenced both by the Wahhābīyah and the Sufi tarīqas. Some of these conflicts were bitter and even violent, leading to a considerable change in the affiliations of Muslims, who, until that period, were considered to be adherents of the Sufi tarīqas (mainly the Qādiriyya and the Tijāniyya). This article will review the development of the relations between Wahhābīsts and Sufis, taking into consideration the international and internal circumstances of the last three decades. The article will argue that current scholarly literature takes an overly dichotomous view of the matter, ascribing radicalization and politization to elements associated with the Wahhābīyah, as opposed to moderation, and even defeatism, to elements associated with Sufism. The author suggests to view the relations between the different organizational and ideological currents in northern Nigerian Islam as dynamic relations, and to discuss not only clashes, but also recent attempts of Sufis and Wahhabis to create dialogue between them.

## Looking into *Majalat al-Islam wal-Tasawwuf*: Islam and Modernity in Revolutionary Egypt

**Moshe Albo**

From the days of Muhammad Ali (1805-1848), all the Sufi orders in Egypt were united under one organization: The Sufi High Council. From 1958 to 1961 the head of this organization, Sheikh Muhammad Mahmud 'Alawān, published a new periodical titled: *Al-Islām wa-l-Tasawwuf*. This periodical represented a junction between the traditional voice of the Sufi tarīqas and the revolutionary-nationalist voice of the regime. This article illustrates the twofold ways by which

the High Sufi Council tried to retain its hold and influence in the public sphere by supporting the revolutionary regime on the one hand, and expressing loyalty to the Sufi heritage, custom and unique history, on the other hand. The multiple contributors from the Sufi High Council, al-Azhar, the regime and the intellectual elite created an influx of ideas in which modernity, revolution and Sufism were mingled. This article shows the relevance of Sufism to Egyptian society in the revolutionary era, and after.

# The Lotus and the Nightingale:
# Jalal al-Din Rumi and Chinese Buddhist Thought

## Danny Orbach

The following article is a comparative analysis of the perception of the relationship between the partial or mundane truth and the absolute truth underlying the universe, within two religious systems. The first is Sufi mysticism, as manifested in the works of the thirteenth century poet, Muhammad Jalal al-Din al-Rumi. The second is Chinese Mahayana (large vehicle) Buddhism, as manifested in one of its most prominent texts, the suth century *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*. These two religious systems are very different and yet there are similarities in their approach to the question of truth. At first glance, both Rumi's work and *The Awakening of Faith* seem to be monistic, because both mention an absolute truth present throughout the universe. However, at the same time, there is a substantial gap between them. Rumi's Sufism is part of the Islamic monotheistic tradition, the adherents of which believe in one god, external to the universe. In contrast, *The Awakening of Faith* belongs to the Mahayana Buddhist tradition, which, does not propose the concept of one supreme being, and puts forward the ideal of an internal truth. It is worthwhile to attempt this comparison as a test-case of whether or not it is possible to bridge the gap between monotheistic and non-monotheistic traditions by regarding partial similarities in ideas and terminology.

# God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period (chapters 1 and 3)

**Ahmet T. Karamustafa**

In their deviation from socio-religious norms of dress, looks, behavior and piety, the mendicant dervishes of Islamdom in the Later Middle Period (thirteenth to sixteenth centuries) have been regarded, both by contemporaneous observers and by modern scholarship, as a vulgar expression of popular religion. Karamustafa, who attempts a historical study of deviant religiosity and dervish groups, examines them in the wider context of the study of renunciation in Islam. His argument is that renunciatory dervish piety emerged from within Sufism as a new synthesis of two of its most powerful sub-currents: asceticism and anarchist individualism.

# Urban Space and Ethno-National Politics: Elements of Control and Resistance in Contemporary Writing on the City

**Erez Tzfadia**

In recent decades, urban studies have recruited ideas from critical theories such as Marxism, feminism and postcolonialism, with the goal of interpreting the phenomenon of the city. By ascertaining the symbolic meanings behind the planning of the city and its architecture, these approaches examine the hierarchies of power within the urban context. This article reviews the evolution of urban studies, with focus on the postcolonial approach, which assumes that city planning and management are strategies in political projects of surveillance and control. These strategies produce class, ethnic and national stratifications, and also generate protest and resistance. Inspired by this approach, the author reviews three books about cities in Israel and Palestine (published in 2005 in Hebrew). He identifies three elements that operate in political projects. The first is the narrative element, namely the methods of constructing urban narratives and the ways in which these narratives reflect and reproduce power relations in

the city. The second is segregation, namely the construction of ethnically divided urban space in order to advance control, thus inadvertently producing resistance. The third element is the military, that brings about the occupation and destruction of the city.