

The Cultivation of Memory in the Gülen Community

by Marcia Hermansen

This paper explores the cultivation of ‘memory’ as reflected in the teachings of Fethullah Gülen and the practices of the community inspired by him. For example, it discusses how particular places, themes, and images are remembered within the movement, evoked and re-enacted so as to create community and inspire a sense of participation and allegiance.

Although the history of the Gülen movement is relatively brief—some forty years or less, practices of sharing memories inspire a collective sense of community and even sacrality.

In this paper memory within the Gülen movement will be presented in terms of its resonance with broader themes in Turkish collective memory such as Anatolian/Turkish Islam, the Ottoman cultural ideal, etc. In addition, the relationship of particular remembered symbols and experiences in the history of the Gülen movement to its current practices will be elaborated, for example ‘the Light Houses’ and ‘camps’.

All of this will be set against the background of the topography of a movement that has expanded its imagination and its practice from local to national and ultimately global contexts.

Panel:
The Gülen Movement in Redefining Turkey and Anatolian Muslimness

Venue:
Lecture Theatre,
Brunei Gallery, SOAS

26.10.07 Panels	Parellel Session 1	Parellel Session 2
9:30-11:30	Presentation: 04	
13:00-15:00		
15:10-17:00		

Marcia Hermansen: Professor of Islamic Studies in the Theology Department at Loyola University Chicago where she directs the Islamic World Studies program. She received her PhD in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Chicago and has lived for extended periods in Egypt, Jordan, India, Iran, and Pakistan. She conducts research in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Turkish as well as the major European languages. Her book, *The Conclusive Argument from God*, a study and translation (from Arabic) of Shah Wali Allah of Delhi’s, *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha* was published in 1996. She is currently writing a book entitled *American Sufis*. Professor Hermansen has contributed numerous academic articles in the fields of Islamic thought, Sufism, Islam and Muslims in South Asia, Muslims in America, and Women in Islam.

Marcia Hermansen

m.hermansen@gulenconference.org.uk