The City and Sufism: A 19th Century Istanbulite Sufi Ken‘ân Rifâ‘î’s (1867-1950) Perception and Experiences of Istanbul

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The individual experiences of a city, opens a rare glimpse of the urban history and the socio-cultural dynamics of a specific time and place which is not always visible in general historical narratives. The significance of Ken‘ân Rifâ‘î’s (1867-1950) experiences of Istanbul, derives from his multi-faceted personality, having a high-profile career as a bureaucrat, belonging to a royal family from Plovdiv and being a registered Sufi Sheik (Sufi Teacher) in Ümmü Ken‘ân Dergâh (Sufi Lodge) in Istanbul, Fatih.

The richness of Ken‘ân Rifâ‘î’s experiences derives from the significant areas and institutions of the city he experienced, the highly varied segments of the society he had engaged with, and his experience of the city as a Sufi, as an educated, elite bureaucrat and as a local learned man of his time.

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