

Our Activities

The Sema A Spiritual Journey

The Contemporary Lovers of Mevlana Society

was formed under the leadership of Hasan Çıkar with the title Preservers of the Galata Mevlevi Temple Association. In 1998 we took on a broader platform with the identity of The Universal Lovers of Mevlana Foundation.

For over 15 years our association has twice a month presented Sufi/ mystic music concerts and the Sema Ceremony at the Galata Mevlevi Temple (now close because of renovation) with the permission of the Ministry of Culture. Since 30 September 2006 we have been also offering services in the Silivrikapı Mevlana Cultural Center which we founded and built ourselves.

In the Sema Ceremony, The Contemporary Lovers of Mevlana Association brings men and women together in service; the colorful robes bring to mind a rose garden. As a cornerstone of Turkish culture the Divine message of the Exalted Mevlana Rumi also represents contemporary Turks. Our dedicated young congregation is working to pass this Divine message on to people of today, and of future generations.

Our association is of the line of contemporary and universal defenders of the beauties springing from the common source of all the prophets and saints. Like the Exalted Mohammet, the Exalted Ali, the Exalted Mevlana Rumi, and the Headmaster, the Honorable Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, great leaders, who devoted themselves to cultural and philosophical values, the men and women of our group have given their hearts to be worthy representatives of the identity of those great ones.

In the field of Turkish music our association, made up of men and women from various backgrounds, continues to produce both new works and also contemporary interpretations of older works. With our musicians and choir we have produced 15 Mevlevi Sema Ceremonial Pieces, and close to 500 hymns in Turkish; we have 4 CD and cassettes. Both within Türkiye and abroad we have introduced these through Sufi/ Mystic Concerts and the Sema Ceremony.

Through concerts, the Sema Ceremony, conferences and seminars, both in Türkiye and abroad our association has become the voice of the message of the Exalted Mevlana Rumi's way of enlightened philosophy and love. We have introduced the Mevlana's Way in: United States of America, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Croatia, Bulgaria, Austria, Greece, Japan, and other counties. We continue to put our efforts into furthering this way of life.

Silivrikapı Mevlâna Cultural Center
Prayer and Sema Ceremony

ŞEHREMİNİ MAH. KÜÇÜK SARAY MEYDANI
CAD. NO 21-A/8 FATİH/İSTANBUL



THURSDAY AT 20.45
Reservation is necessary.

(KIND ATTENTION: Amateur photography is acceptable but professional ones are forbidden based on copyright laws. Please require permission from our board of directors of our foundation before the event)

www.emav.org info@emav.org @emavofficial

+0552 524 34 94 - +0212 588 57 80

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Mevlana and The Mevlevi Way

The Mevlevi Brotherhood is founded entirely on love and tolerance. Mevlana Jelaleddin Rumi is a saint of love. He gave his heart to the Creator, and in turn taught us to love all of creation and see it as being all from the One. How does one assimilate the love and words of a saint? Mevlana asks this; "If you fill a jar from the ocean how much can it hold?" A jar holds a day's supply. In the same way, Mevlana's love fits into our words and perceptions according to our heart's capacity. In truth, Mevlana is beyond our highest and finest of conceptions. "Be a lover", he says, "and choose love, so that you in turn become a chosen one."

The most direct path to God, that is, to bind one's heart completely to God, is through giving up one's existence and reaching non-existence. Whoever has given his heart to the Divine Truth has no "self" left and the Divine moves every particle of him or her. In this way, this person is no longer at the mercy of his or her ego and refrains from hurtful words or actions. He or she has become enfolded in the moral principles of the Divine. The Prophet Mohammed and Mevlana are exemplary of these sublime qualities.

Mevlana is a limitless being, unable to be contained by this world. He is the Voice of good news for those seeking truth, beauty, and goodness. He is the Voice of mercy offering consolation to those under tyranny. He is the breath of healing to those crying out in separation. He teaches humanness to humans. He teaches that everything is within the human being and that the whole universe is under man's command.

To those who asked him what it is to be a master of love, Mevlana answered thusly; "You must be like me, whether it be in light or darkness, until you have been like this you cannot completely know love."

Mevlana Jelaleddin Rumi is an illustrious being, a spiritual sun who brought an innovative message to human thinking; who offered the ideas and system of Islamic thought and faith within the triangle of spirit, mind and love. He opened new horizons to man by adding excitement to the way of morals, religion, wisdom and knowledge. The greatest message he brought to human thinking is Love, Divine Love and Unity.

Rumi brings fresh enthusiasm to our souls, rescuing us from pessimism and dualistic thinking by cleansing our hearts and minds of impurities. He rejects nothing but rather unites, perfects, and brings out love in everything. He is prejudiced towards none because he knows that everything is the manifestation and actualization of God which he reflects as a spiritual state to the mind and heart of man.

As a superior and saintly master, Mevlana is a system in himself. He is a monument to spirituality who through his sublimity, displayed high moral values, knowledge, wisdom, love, intelligence, and an exalted perception of God. He is a true representative of the prophets, the highest element and realization of love and intelligence.

"Man is the most honourable of all Creation" is one of his maxims. The Exalted Mevlana embraced those of every language, creed, colour, and race; he is the vibrant symbol of Love, Peace, Brotherhood, and Tolerance.

The Sema

Everything in the universe is revolving. From subatomic particles to the solar system, to the blood circulating in our bodies. The Sema is a spiritual voyage, a prayer from the soul to the Divine, which in the process of dying achieves Unity. After this voyage, the soul returns to the body and is ready to serve humanity.

In the music ensemble, the musicians and choir are developed into the "Mutrip". The Mutrip is found in the front part of the Sema chamber. Directly across the entrance to the chamber is the sheepskin (called the post) of the sheikh or spiritual master. The line between the sheepskin and the entrance is called the equatorial line. This is the shortest path to Unity, reaching Reality. It is never stepped on by anyone but the sheikh.

The sheikh represents Mevlana. During the ceremony, the sheepskin is the greatest spiritual level. Its red colour signifies birth and existence.

After the mutrip concert, the dervishes and the sheikh have taken their places and the Naat-ı Şerif- a hymn in praise of the prophet Mohammed- is recited by the chanter. This is followed by the sound of the drum or bendir, representing the Divine Command "Be!" After this comes a flute or ney improvisation which represents the soul that is given to the universe.

When the improvisation finishes, the Cycle of Veled begins. In time with the prelude, the sheikh and the semazens circle the Sema chamber three times. The first cycle tells of God creating the sun, the moon and the stars and all inanimate creation. The second cycle signifies the creation of the vegetable world, the third, of the animal world. During the Cycle of Veled the dervishes bow to each other in front of the sheepskin post in acknowledgement of the center of Divine Truth within the heart of each.

After the Cycle of Veled, the sheikh takes his place at the sheepskin. The semazens remove their cloaks, pay their respects to the sheikhs, and begin turning. This represents the birth of humanity.

The semazen (whirling dervish) wears a special costume indicating the death of the ego. The sikke is a slender earth-coloured headdress which symbolizes the tombstone of the ego. The hirka is a long black cloak representing its tomb. The tennure is a full-skirted long gown depicting the shroud.

As the dervishes enter the circle, their arms are crossed across their chests. In this position they resemble a "One", signifying the Unity of God. During the Sema, their arms are extended with the right hand opened upward, and the left hand turned downward. The meaning of this is: "From God we receive, to man we give, we keep nothing to ourselves."

Just as the moon and planets revolve both around their own axes and also around the sun, the semazens revolve while circling the chamber.

The Sema is a means for humans to reach Divine Reality! It is an intoxication of the soul! During the first cycle of the Sema, the dervishes are viewing all the worlds. In this way they reach the grandeur and majesty of God. The lovers are freed from doubt and testify their faith in the Unity



Hasan Dede



Silivrikapi
Mevlana Cultural Center

of God. In the second cycle their whole existence is dissolved within this Divine Unity. During the third cycle, the lovers cleanse themselves and reach the level of maturity. In the fourth cycle they arrive at the junction of non-existence within Divine Existence.

The sheikh also enters the Sema during the last cycle. While opening one edge of his cloak with his right hand and clasping the two edges of the cloak together with his left, he turns along the equatorial line in the center of the dervishes. This shows that he has opened his heart to all people.

With the lone sound of the flute, the sheikh returns to his post. As he reaches the post, the ceremony ends with a reading from the Koran. And thus the spiritual voyage comes to a close. But in truth this was only one phase in the spiritual journey which continues every minute in the lives of the followers of the Exalted Mevlana, of all who take the path of love, of all who seek the Divine within themselves. In the words of Mevlana: "If you have entered the Sema you will leave both worlds, because the Sema is outside these two worlds."