

Kongress 2014

Horizonte der Islamischen Theologie

Abstract – Sektion 1, Panel 7

Referent	<i>Stille, Max</i>
Thema	<i>Sermon as Prayer and Prayer as Sermon: du‘ā’ and Bengali wa‘z maḥfils</i>

Next to Friday sermons, Islamic Sermons held outside of mosques and the time frame of Friday rituals, so-called oḃāj maḥfils (wa‘z maḥfils), are a ubiquitous aspect of religious life in contemporary Bengal. While the ideological, religious and political goals of individual sermons vary greatly, the most important ritual aspect of the gatherings seems to lie in seeking God's mercy by 'prayers of request' (du‘ā’). The participation in such supererogatory gatherings is often described as pleasing God more than obligatory rituals can do. Addressing God to ask him for forgiveness and as well as for the intercession of the prophet on the day of judgement is a fixed element of the sermons' introduction and closure, irrespective of the preacher's theological school of thought. On top of these general characteristics, there are extreme cases of smudging the line between sermon and prayer: here the whole sermon is an amplification of the configuration and emotion of the final prayer which, on the other hand, also contains narrative digressions which are repeating and emphasizing motives from the sermon. Both aspects are thus intricately linked in building up emotional and ritual efficacy.