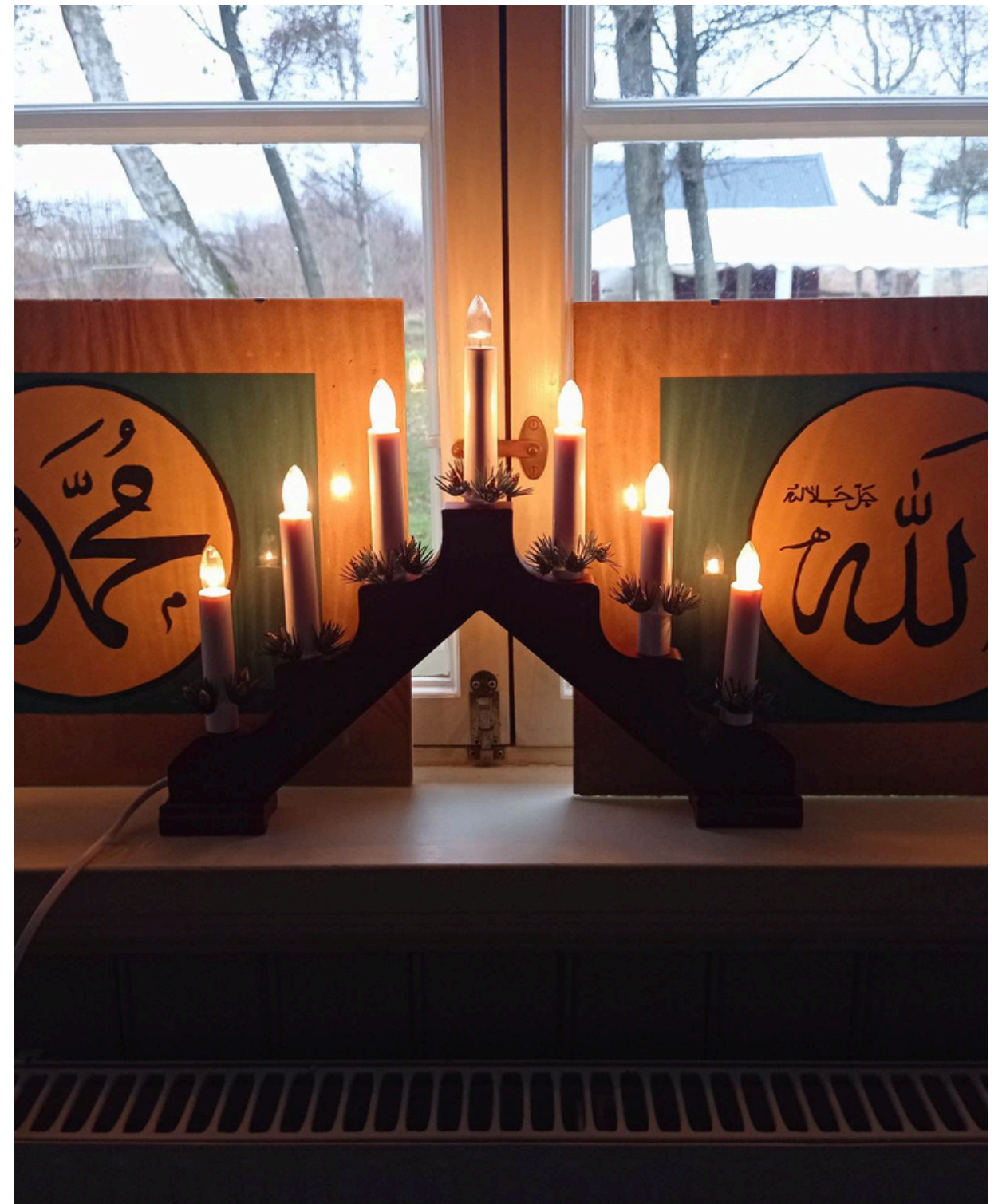
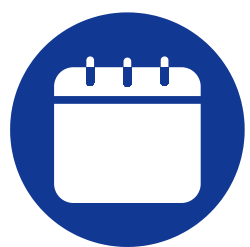


SPIRITUAL PRACTICES OF SUFIS IN THE WEST

I will present ideas and preliminary findings related to my forthcoming CAS-E research project (2025–2027) that aims at exploring spiritual practices in Western Sufi communities, analyzing how practitioners interpret and legitimize it amid changing cultural contexts. Sufism in the West exemplifies cross-cultural exchange (Malik and Zarrabi-Zadeh 2019) and is prone to cultural and epistemological hybridization expressed in discourses and practices (Piraino 2024). Spiritual practices in Western Sufi communities encompass traditional ones such as dhikr, semā', ḥaḍrah, murāqabah, as well as entangled practices like breath-work (Yarosh 2021; Selim 2024), Chi Gong, various meditation techniques, Enneagram (Sedgwick 2021; Piraino 2024), and a range of healing practices (Selim 2015). My research, in particular, focuses on entangled practices that have emerged in perennialist/universalist and hybrid Sufi communities (Hermansen 1997). Since 1980s Sufism in the West gradually underwent re-/Islamization, conforming to the global norm to identify Sufism primarily with Islam (Sedgwick 2019), or the 'turn to authenticity' when followers embrace more 'authentic' forms of 'Sufi life', imitating Sufism that is traditional for their Shaykh's homeland (Klinkhammer 2009). Despite this 'turn', some practitioners utilize these entangled spiritual practices at both the communal and individual levels (Yarosh 2018; 2021).



Oleg Yarosh is a Religious Studies scholar who recently joined CAS-E as a DFG-funded associated scholar. He specializes in Sufism in the West, conversions to Islam, and Islam in Central and Eastern Europe, and has published widely on these topics. His recent papers address post-tariqa Sufism "The Vision of Spiritual Perfection in Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri and Post-Tariqa Sufism in Western Europe". *Journal of Muslims in Europe*, 13 (3), 2024 and post-Islamist ideologies and activism "Negotiating Wasatiyyah: Soft Securitization and Civic Activism in Ukraine". *Religions* 2025, 16 (1).



Date:
Tuesday - 15 July, 2025



Time:
6.15 - 7.45 PM

**Location: Big Seminar room,
Hartmannstr. 14, Building D1, Erlangen**

Link for virtual attendance: <https://fau.zoom-x.de/j/62556506187>



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Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective

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