

James Edmonds  
Summer Research Grant Proposal  
U.S. Citizen  
PhD Student at ASU

I am applying for a Summer Research Grant to complete preliminary research on the Naqshbandi *tariqa* (Sufi order) in Lahore, Pakistan. I will focus on gaining contacts, building relationships, and the initial theoretical framings for a comparison of Sufi practice from one of the centers, Pakistan, and periphery, Indonesia, in the global Islamic world. This AIPS Summer Research Grant will enable me to spend an additional few months to deepen my knowledge of Sufi practice in order to challenge the contemporary perceived distinction between Sufism and orthodoxy to reveal the embedded and embodied nature of religion in context, along with the common features of the vibrant and dynamic resurgence of Sufi practice.

Many scholars have traced the convergence of multiple Islamic influences to reflect a complicated picture of Indonesian Islam (Ricklefs 2007, 2012, Laffan 2011, and Bowen 2005). This scholarship is invaluable in helping understand the multiple Islamic, social, cultural, and economic factors that have coalesced to form the boundaries of what is Islam in Indonesia. However, Sufi practice currently pervades the Indonesian Islamic zeitgeist in the form of *zikir* (recitation of the ninety-nine names of Allah), *pengajians* (meetings to discuss Islamic philosophy and practice Quranic recitation), and mass pilgrimages to saint's tombs across Java.

I have already completed four months of fieldwork in Indonesia, and I will complete further fieldwork and advanced Indonesian language training this summer in Central Java, Indonesia. My fieldwork focuses particularly on the Naqshbandi *tariqa* because it was one of the first and most active *tariqa* in Indonesia. I will study and practice with several Naqshbandi pirs, but I will also spend extensive time with initiated practitioners. The focus on practitioners rather than leaders allows for a different understanding of the way Sufi practice operates. The pir may teach the proper form of *zikir*, but the way that society uses these teachings transcends the intention and control of the sheikh. Sufi practice spreads between regular people rather than just through the sheikh to his initiates.

Pakistan is a perfect comparison because it is within the bounds of the Middle East, and Indonesians refer to Pakistan as the opposite of Indonesia. Indonesian officials, Sufi practitioners, and Naqshbandi pirs refer to Pakistan as the opposite of Indonesian Islam. However, I believe that Pakistan has a vibrant Sufi tradition that can help explain the way Sufi practice infiltrates everyday Muslim lives whether they are Sufi, Sunni, Shia, or Salafi. This summer trip would be a foray into Pakistan to determine the similarities and explicate differences between Naqshbandi Sufi practices in Indonesia and Pakistan. This evaluation and comparison will be critical to my dissertation.