

# Changing generation

By Meeri Koutaniemi/Echo







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## Sufism in Georgia

**T**he small village of Duisi has a group of women maintaining the old tradition of Sufism which includes their sacred Zikr ritual. The Chechens have settled in the Pankisi Valley in Georgia for 200 years and they have been engaged with Sufism since, but on this day the people coming from Chechnya to Georgia are increasingly preferring to follow the fundamentalist way of Islam. The old women's Sufism is not pleasing the newcomers in the village and it has caused a tensed fight between the liberal elder and conservative youth. Six thousand inhabitants of Duisi has divided into two.

**F**or decades the old women have enjoyed the respect from all the villagers, as well as the status of authority. Now they have started to act as mediators between the two groups following two different ways.

**S**o far, old women are not being attacked, but as in other Muslim countries, they are considered as a big threat for the Conservatives on Islam. Caucasus, the situation has been unstable since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and all this time young people have been recruited into the guerrilla forces. Even from Duisi the young learners are often sent on a journey to Saudi Arabia, so that they "can get to the right path of Islam." As in many other Muslim countries, the younger generation is much more conservative than their parents.

**A**rticle's of the main characters is a twenty-year-old Melsi, whose family carries liberal Sufism, but from which herself has moved away to follow the path of the right conservative Islam. Melsi's grandmother, 80-year-old Makvala forms the old women's meetings and rituals, but Melsi's view, this is not part of the real Koran. The main Sufi woman Makvala and 11 other women tell their story and why Sufism would guarantee peace and understanding in Caucasus. The group has managed to draw international attention to the issue of peace in the Caucasus by bringing the zikr ritual to western cultural events. This is the only group in the world, which has brought the religious ritual of women's zikr to the public seeing.





































































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