

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:

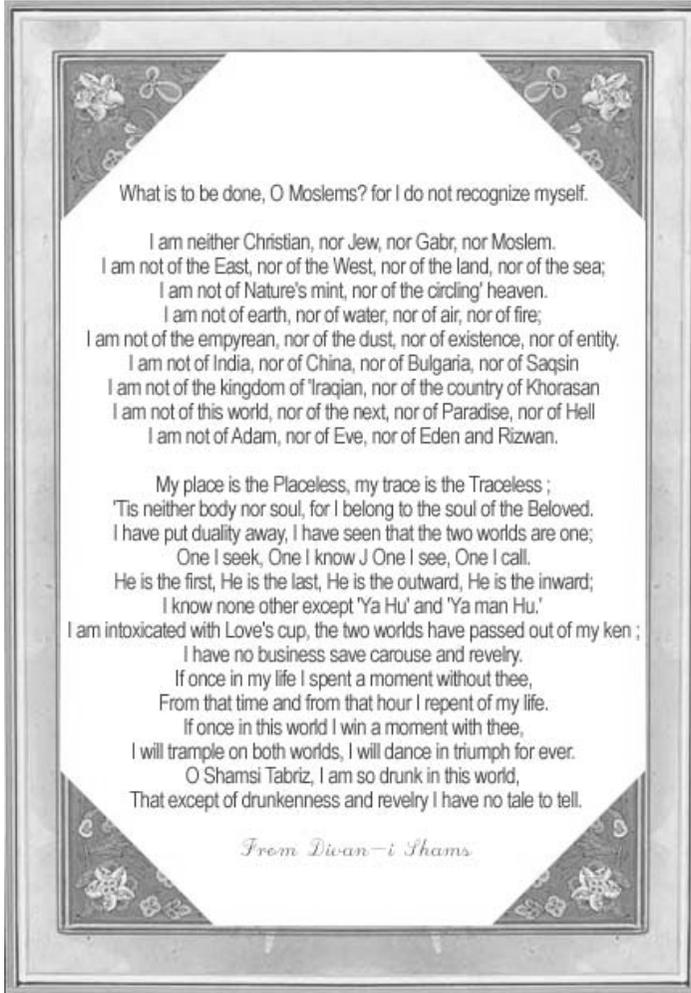
*'The 800th Anniversary of Jalalludin Rumi, and the True Spiritual
Heritage of Afghanistan and the Middle East'*

Issue Twelve

Compiled by Marilyn Hughes

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!

www.outofbodytravel.org



**Commemorating the 800th Anniversary of the Birth of Mystic Afghan
Poet Rumi (September 30, 1207 - September 30, 2007)**

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Having worked primarily in radio broadcasting, Marilyn Hughes spent several years as a news reporter, producer and anchor before deciding to stay at home with her three children. She's experienced, researched, written, and taught about out-of-body travel since 1987.

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The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:

'The 800th Anniversary of Jalalludin Rumi, and the True Spiritual
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Issue Twelve

Compiled by Marilyn Hughes

In a time of worldly turmoil and strife involving several Middle Eastern countries, it is good to take note of the 800th anniversary of the birth of Afghan Sufi Mystic and Poet Jalalludin Rumi.

This issue is dedicated to this line of Afghan Mystical Poets and the Middle East. To demonstrate that Rumi adopted his depth and clear thinking from his father, Bahauaddin, I've also included some excerpts from his writings, as well.

Are those of us in the West really so blind so as not to see that our brothers in the Middle East come from a deep spiritual heritage just as we? It is not obvious that the terrorists who may use the name of - Islam - are frauds and forgers just as many of our own traditions have used the name of our faith in years past to commit horrific atrocities?

I've gathered some of the thoughts of Afghan Mystic Poets and the Iranian Sufi's. In them, you'll find how dull we can be in our arrogance regarding our superiority to others around the world in faith, belief and culture. Arab cultures are not prehistoric, they come from a deep spiritual tradition. The Taliban do not represent the only spiritual history of Afghanistan, and Iranian extremists do not reflect the deep, inner life of their deepest thinkers and mystics.

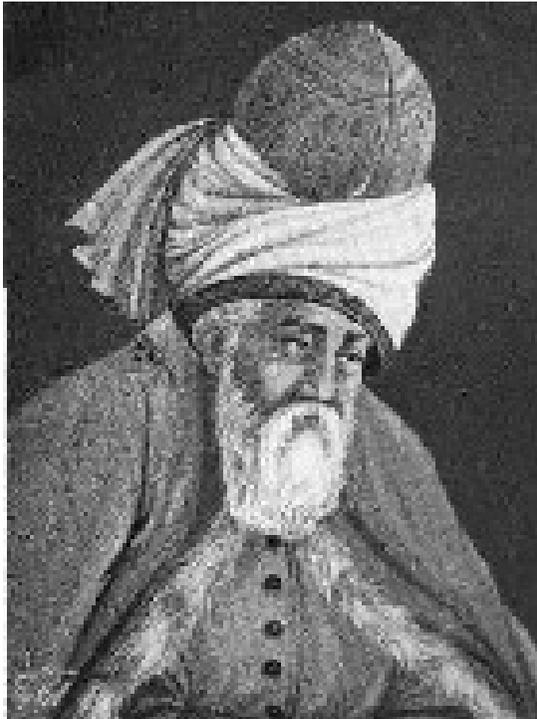
*"Ah! you who smite with your sword him beside himself,
You smite yourself therewith. Beware!
For he that is beside himself is annihilated and safe;
Yea, he dwells in security for ever.*

*His form is vanished, he is a mere mirror;
 Nothing is seen in him but the reflexion of another.
 If you spit at it, you spit at your own face,
 And if you hit that mirror, you hit yourself.
 If you see an ugly face in it, 'tis your own,
 And if you see a Jesus there, you are its mother Mary.
 He is neither this nor that--he is void of form;
 'Tis your own form which is reflected back to you."*

Rumi, Masnawi, E.H. Whinfield's Abridged Translation

*"How long will you worship at the tombs of holy men? Busy yourself with the **works** of holy men, and you are saved!" ("tu ta kay gur-i mardan-ra parasti bi-gird-i kar-i mardan gard u rasti.")*

Rumi, Masnawi, E.H. Whinfield's Abridged Translation



Jalaludin Rumi, Afghan Mystic Poet

And many followed Rumi in his mystical poetic pursuits - among them these three of the Afghan Sufi Poets.

*"O THOU, in heart ignorant concerning thine own soul!
O man, seek thou the nature of it, from the reality itself!*

*From the refulgence of religion, acquire thou comprehension:
Bear away, unto the desert, this darkness of infidelity!*

*Sin abandon; and set out towards devotion and piety!
This is the road, without anxiety, and from danger free.*

*This secret praise is the lamp of truth and orthodoxy;
Therefore, from the Immaculate's hand, the lighted lamp take.*

*Should perception's light become enkindled in thine heart,
Thou wilt, altogether, acquire life's happiness and felicity.*

*The penetrating, and the enlightened, are spectators of both
worlds; But the bat flieth about in the dark, without seeing.*

*What do I, blind that I am, know of the state of the sublime?
How wilt thou, from the deaf, ask the import of sound?*

*Thou wilt comprehend, forthwith, the language of all things,
Shouldst thou, sagacious one! make thine heart's ear to hear.*

*Err not, regarding the amount of attributes and properties;
And unto the source of the essence, bear the essence itself.*

*About their own materiality, the enlightened are in torment; But
there can be no dread of mortality from corruption itself.*

*Every attainer who hath passed beyond this nature frail,
Assuredly discovereth the signification of immortality.*

*He wandereth about in the boundlessness of infinity:
He arrived even unto his home, that he might unity behold.*

*That fruit, which on its own branch acquired ripeness,
This brief claim of its own perfection, made to the parent tree –*

*"Notwithstanding there is not much excess in thy greatness;
Still, within this body of mine, do I see thee, entirely, O tree!*

*From the first, thy root germinated from me, and flourished: The
development of thy purpose devolved, wholly, on me."*

*Answer, to this effect, on the part of the tree, proceeded –
"Colour and flavour, O fruit! whence didst thou acquire?*

*From one fruit, naught but a single tree is produced;
And the fruit of that tree is renewed, year by year."*

*The reply from the tree, however, is here sound and wise,
Though the observation of its fruit is, of attention, worthy.*

*From that, which possesseth no kernel, no corn groweth:
It is not advisable that any one should sow husked seed.*

*The reputation of the servant lieth with his master;
And without the servant, the master's dignity is not.*

*Invoke, then, within thine heart, the sayings of MĪRZĀ,
If the page of thy mind be unblotted, and unstained."*

**MĪRZĀ KHAN, ANSĀRĪ, *Afghan Mystical Poet, Selections on the
Poetry of the Afghans, H.G. Raverty***

"THE promise of the kiss, the beloved ever putteth off for to-morrow; Then how can my heart place confidence in a pledge like this?

Whoso is vain enough to depend upon the affairs of the future,
The wise and sagacious will laugh that foolish man to scorn.

My friend is not acquainted with the deceitfulness of the world;
Yet still she deceiveth, having, in her heart, naught of truthfulness.

Do not presume to this degree, upon the loveliness of the face:
Behold the autumn! doth it ever, to the rose, any bloom impart?

Thou, who through arrogance, attest thus falsely towards me;
Time will pay back unto thee the requital of these deeds of thine.

In the land of association, the appliances of pleasure will be many;
But the troops of bereavement, full speedily, lay it waste.

Never cast thou thine eyes upon the rose, O nightingale!
For separation will make those fresh wounds of thine still worse.

But is the nightingale wont, through advice, the rose to forswear?
No! 'tis the blast of autumn only that separateth them by force!

Full many have departed in sorrow, with the hope of to-morrow;
Then who will place any reliance on life's fidelity to-day?

Thou, who in the hope of existence therefrom, retest in tranquility.
Doth the empyrean ever any opportunity for continuance allow?

To-day, I perceive the crisis of a contingency on the world impending; But the future may make apparent unto it some other event.

THE SEVERED had never beheld Bijāpūr, even in his dreams; But, at last, that presenteth itself, which his destiny decreed!"

ASHRAF KHĀN, KHATTAK, Afghan Mystical Poet, Selections on the Poetry of the Afghans, H.G. Raverty

"Do not become, like the bubble, wholly vain and inflated; For, from such vanity thou wilt, to ruin and perdition go.

Ask not from the Almighty, the rank and dignity of man; Since, like the brutes, thou art occupied, in eating and drinking.

Even the beast, in the plough, goeth uniform to the furrow; Wherefore then, quittest thou, thus sinfully, the Law's precepts?

Every breath thou drawest, without remembering thy Creator; Consider, that thou swallowest a live coal, by the same computation.

Seeing that thou knowest nothing, save sleeping and eating, In what respect art thou superior to the beasts of the field?

Why writhe in agony, at the bare thoughts of Hell's pangs, When thou wanderest about tormented by carnality's cares?

Follow not, thus presumptuously, the vanities of the world; For in this, like the lightning, thou wilt soon lose thyself.

*If, in the accounts here below, there shall no errors be,
There will be none, in those, of the account-book above.*

*Be not concerned, O ḤAMĪD, regarding thy daily bread;
For that Causer of Causes, the Infinite, existeth!"*

*ÆABD-UL-ḤAMĪD, Afghan Mystical Poet, Selections on the Poetry of
the Afghans, H.G. Raverty*

In Islam, there are many texts on peace. In the Nahjul Balagha (Peak of Eloquence), sermons written by the successor of Muhammad - Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib writes that Muslims must never start a war, only fight in self-defense.

Perhaps Talib was speaking to men just like the modern day terrorists when he said these words in the same text: "They have made Satan the master of their affairs, and he has taken them as partners. He has laid eggs and hatched them in their bosoms. He creeps and crawls on their laps. He sees through their eyes, and speaks with their tongues. In this way he has led them to sinfulness and adorned for them foul things like the action of one whom Satan has made partner in his domain and speaks untruth through his tongue."

In this excerpt from an ancient text, you will find revealed the true perception of hatred, war and killing of the Islamic religion.

CHAPTER I , THE MANNERS OF KINGS *(The Gulistan of Sa'di), Sheikh Muslih-uddin Sa'di Shirazi (1258), Translated by Sir Edwin Arnold, (1899)*

"I heard a padshah giving orders to kill a prisoner. The helpless fellow began to insult the king on that occasion of despair, with

the tongue he had, and to use foul expressions according to the saying:

*Who washes his hands of life
Says whatever he has in his heart.*

*When a man is in despair his tongue becomes long and he is like
a vanquished cat assailing a dog.*

*In time of need, when flight is no more possible,
The hand grasps the point of the sharp sword.*

*When the king asked what he was saying, a good-natured vezier
replied: 'My lord, he says: Those who bridle their anger and
forgive men; for Allah loveth the beneficent.'*

*The king, moved with pity, forbore taking his life but another
vezier, the antagonist of the former, said: 'Men of our rank ought
to speak nothing but the truth in the presence of padshahs. This
fellow has insulted the king and spoken unbecomingly.' The
king, being displeased with these words, said: 'That lie was more
acceptable to me than this truth thou hast uttered because the
former proceeded from a conciliatory disposition and the latter
from malignity; and wise men have said: "A falsehood resulting
in conciliation is better than a truth producing trouble."'*

*He whom the shah follows in what he says,
It is a pity if he speaks anything but what is good.*

*The following inscription was upon the portico of the hall of
Feridun:*

*O brother, the world remains with no one.
Bind the heart to the Creator, it is enough.
Rely not upon possessions and this world
Because it has cherished many like thee and slain
them.*

*When the pure soul is about to depart,
What boots it if one dies on a throne or on the
ground?*

*The Gulistan of Sa'di, Sheikh Muslih-uddin Sa'di Shirazi (1258), Translated
by Sir Edwin Arnold, (1899)*

***Bahauddin, Rumi's father, through his own
mystical writing was the one who encouraged Rumi to
think deeply as you can see from a couple of excerpts from
his works.***

*"Whoever calls this place **home** and means it, stays lost and
unsatisfied. This plane of existence is a wild sea surface. We're in
a boat named **Quandary**, sometimes pulled partly under, then
thrown by the waves up in the air. But if your heart lives in
eternity, you will feel peaceful in what we call **islam**, the calm
depth where there is very little tidal fluctuation. You have a
quiver for the arrows you hunt with, but when you hunt for
God, is there a **quiver** inside of you? Is your search alive and
trembling? If you forget about it when you're happy, or if you
postpone it in physical pain, your hunting will be a false
pretending."*

*Bahauddin, Father of Rumi, The Drowned Book, Ecstatic and Earthly
Reflections of Bahauddin, the Father of Rumi, Coleman Barks and John
Moyné*

*"Darkness has been given as a nightshirt to sleep in (25:47
Qur'an). Remember how human beings were composed from
water and dust for blood and flesh with oily resins heated in fire
to make a skeleton. Then the soul, the divine light, was breathed
into human shapes. The work now is to help our bodies become
pure light. It may look like this is not happening. But in a cocoon
every bit of worm-dissolving slime becomes silk. As we take in
light, each part of us turns to silk. We made the night a darkness,
but we bring shining dawnlight out of that. In the same the way
the mount of your grave will bloom with resurrection. Sufis and
those on the path of the heart use darkness to go within. During*

the night vigil the universe is theirs (40:16 Qur'an). With all the kings and sultans and their learned counselors asleep, everyone in unemployed, except those wakeful few and the divine presence."

Bahauddin, Father of Rumi, The Drowned Book, Ecstatic and Earthly Reflections of Bahauddin, the Father of Rumi, Coleman Barks and John Moyne

Likewise, Iran's deep spiritual heritage cannot be understood by looking only at what exists as the exterior religion of today. Listen to the ancient words of Iranian Sufis as they explain the mystic path according to Islam.

"Natural existence is made up of four elements superimposed on one another, all of which are darkness: Earth, Water, Fire, Air; and you yourself are buried beneath them all. The only way to separate yourself from them is to act in such a way that every rightful part in you comes together with that to which it rightfully belongs, that is, by acting in such a way that each part comes together with its counter-part; Earth receives the earthy part, Water the watery part, Air the etheric part, Fire the fiery part. When each has received its share, you will finally be delivered of these burdens. The three adversaries disturb the innate knowledge of the divine; they form an obstacle between the heart and the divine Throne; they prevent the conjunction of the two rays of light. Because of them, a man finds himself at first in a state of total spiritual blindness."

Najmuddin Kobra, Iranian Sufi, The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism, Henry Corbin, Omega Publications, 1971

"When the circle of the face has become pure, it effuses lights as a spring pours forth its water, so that the mystic has a sensory perception (i.e. through the suprasensory senses) that these lights are gushing forth to irradiate his face. This outpouring takes place between the two eyes and between the eyebrows. Finally it spreads to cover the whole face. At that moment, before you, before your face, there is another Face also of light, irradiating lights; while behind its diaphanous veil a sun

becomes visible, seemingly animated by a movement to and fro. In reality this Face is your own face and this sun is the sun of the Spirit (shams al-ruh) that goes to a fro in your body. Next, the whole of your person is immersed in purity, and suddenly you are gazing at a person of light (shakhim nur) who is also irradiating lights."

Najmuddin Kobra, Iranian Sufi, The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism, Henry Corbin, Omega Publications, 1971

"Satan laughs at all of your threats. What frightens him is to see a light in your heart."

Anonymous Iranian Sufi, The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism, Henry Corbin, Omega Publications, 1971

"Know that the soul, the devil, the angel are not realities outside of you; you are they. Likewise, Heaven, Earth, and the Throne are not outside of you, nor paradise or hell, nor death nor life. They exist in you; when you have accomplished the mystical journey and have become pure you will become conscious of that."

Najmuddin Kobra, Iranian Sufi, The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism, Henry Corbin, Omega Publications, 1971

Rumi understood the mystic silence possibly better than anyone in the world, and he was born, lived and died in Afghanistan - a country many in the West see as living under prehistoric religion. But the Taliban are recent, the ancient traditions of Afghanistan are not reflected by them.

*"The story admits of being told up to this point,
But what follows is hidden, and inexpressible in words.
If you should speak and try a hundred ways to express it,
'Tis useless; the mystery becomes no clearer,
You can ride on saddle and horse to the sea-coast,
But then you must use a horse of wood (i.e. a boat).
A horse of wood is useless on dry land,
It is the special vehicle of voyagers by sea.*

*Silence is this horse of wood,
Silence is the guide and support of men at sea."*

Rumi, Masnawi, E.H. Whinfield's Abridged Translation

"How lovely" (he says), "how magnificent a state is the soul of man in, when the life of God in actuating her shoots her along with Himself through heaven and earth; makes her unite with, and after a sort feel herself animate, the whole world. He that is here looks upon all things as One, and on himself, if he can then mind himself, as a part of the Whole."

Rumi, Masnawi, E.H. Whinfield's Abridged Translation

And also more than many others, he understood that the goal of religion is merge with all else and to become void of existence and identity with any earthly thing including religion.

Perhaps only Sri Ramakrishna, the Hindu mystic and saint, understood the merging of the different religious paths as well as did Rumi.

Rumi sought after mystic union and was unafraid of the natural result; dissolution into God and becoming nothing - non-being. And because he was fearless, he was able to understand.

"Lo, for I to myself am unknown, now in God's name what must I do?

I adore not the Cross nor the Crescent, I am not a Giaour nor a Jew.

East nor West, land nor sea is my home, I have kin nor with angel nor gnome,

I am wrought not of fire nor of foam, I am shaped not of dust nor of dew.

I was born not in China afar, not in Saqsin and not in Bulghar;

Not in India, where five rivers are, nor 'Iraq nor Khorasan I grew.

*Not in this world nor that world I dwell, not in
Paradise, neither in Hell;*

*Not from Eden and Rizwan I fell, not from Adam my
lineage I drew.*

*In a place beyond uttermost Place, in a tract without
shadow of trace,*

*Soul and body transcending I live in the soul of my
Loved One anew!"*

Rumi, Masnawi, E.H. Whinfield's Abridged Translation

*"If there be any lover in the world, O Moslems, 'tis I.
If there be any believer, infidel, or Christian hermit,
'tis I.*

*The wine-dregs, the cupbearer, the minstrel, the harp,
and the music,*

*The beloved, the candle, the drink and the joy of the
drunken--'tis I.*

*The two-and-seventy creeds and sects in the world,
DO NOT REALLY EXIST: I swear by God that every
creed and sect--'tis I.*

*Earth and air and water and fire--knowest thou what
they are?*

*Earth and air and water and fire, nay, body and soul
too--'tis I.*

*Truth and falsehood, good and evil, ease and difficulty
from first to last,*

*Knowledge and learning and asceticism and piety and
faith--'tis I.*

*The fire of Hell, be assured, with its flaming limbos,
Yes, and Paradise and Eden and the Houris--'tis I.*

*This earth and heaven with all that they hold,
Angels, Peris, Genies, and Mankind--'tis I."*

Rumi, Masnawi, E.H. Whinfield's Abridged Translation



The Tomb of Jalaludin Rumi

Although there are obviously mentions in the Qur'an which can be read to incite anger or violence against people outside of their faith, we have to remember that similar passages exist in the Old Testament of the Jews and Christians and the Mahabharata of the Hindu's, as well as, many other holy books of differing traditions. And these words don't stand alone in the Islamic tradition in that like all these other traditions, they are contraindicated by many other passages encouraging peace.

In 'The Life of Muhammad - a Translation of Ishaq's 'Sirat Rasul Allah,' many instances exist where Muhammad and his followers plead with those who refuse to let them exist in peace to cease their warring with them.

There are many dialogues including this one of Abu Talib to various tribes concerning the issue of peace. This particular dialogue occurs after Muhammad and his followers have found yet another place to settle for what appears to be a time of peace, only to find themselves again thrust into battle shortly thereafter.

"Tell Lu'ayy, especially Lu'ayy of the Banu Ka'b, news of our condition. Did you not know that we have found Muhammad, a prophet like Moses described in the oldest books, and that love is bestowed on him (alone) of mankind? And that none is better than he whom God has singled out in love? And that the writing you have fixed will be a calamity like the cry of the hamstrung camel? Awake, awake before the grave is dug and the blameless and the guilty are as one. Follow not the slanderers, nor sever the bonds of love and kinship between us. Do not provoke a long drawn-out war. Often he who brings on war tastes its bitterness."

'The Life of Muhammad - Translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah'

Perhaps those of us who seek to impose our ideology upon another culture and religion should take Rumi's words to heart. 'DO NOT REALLY EXIST,' he said. And if we were all to do this, we would, too, finally understand and all war would cease.

Happy 800th anniversary Rumi! May Afghanistan and the Middle East never forget the legacy you left with your beloved country and may the rest of the world embrace the wisdom you brought forth from the realms of the spheres.

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The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:
Question and Answer Forum!

Please Send Your Questions to:

magazine@outofbodytravel.org

For Future Inclusion in this Section!

Question from Dianne, Oklahoma City, OK, USA: Hello, would your organization know of someone in my area that could visit with me briefly about events that happen sporadically and spontaneously, usually while I am entering sleep? I do not feel afraid, just confused. I do have access to a public library if you can recommend titles for reading. Thank you in advance for any assistance or guidance you can provide. Kindly, Dianne

Marilynn: I don't know of anybody in your area, but I'd be happy to hear what you're experiencing and see if I can help. Tell me about it . . . Also, feel free to download any of our books (they're all downloadable for free) at <http://www.outofbodytravel.org/>. I'd recommend starting with 'The Mysteries of the Redemption: A Treatise on Out-of-Body Travel and Mysticism,' and then going onto 'Galactica: A Treatise on Death, Dying and the Afterlife,' and 'The Palace of Ancient Knowledge: A Treatise on Ancient Mysteries.'

But tell me what's happening, I may be able to help you identify it.

With love,
MarilynnHughes@outofbodytravel.org
www.outofbodytravel.org

Response from Dianne, Oklahoma City, OK, USA: Thank

you for your timely and courteous reply. I have not yet had time to read any of the material available from your website but appreciate the link and will devote time to reading some of your writings in the near future. I am as of yet unsure as to my religious beliefs although I was raised in the Baptist Church. I do believe that Jesus was a Holy being who walked on Earth and shared some of the Secrets of the Universe with us. I also believe there have been (and will be) other Divine Ones. I do believe in a Supreme Being, who cares for us deeply and desires for us to be happy and wise. Some humans can hear or feel this message stronger than others. It seems that this is a rather short synopsis, but I wanted you to know something about myself :)

What I experience is ultimately, comforting and pleasing to me. It has occurred throughout my knowing life. I can never predict when it will happen, although I do not believe it has ever taken place during a time of complete wakefulness. The strongest of these events happen during the time as I am falling or drifting to sleep. They also are often in my dreamtime, but I feel those less physically. Or, perhaps, I just recall them in a different manner.

I will try to describe (in general) a typical event. As my breathing becomes rhythmic and I become completely relaxed, the light inside the room will begin to change; at first a gradual brightening, usually in lavender to purple hues. I then begin to feel tingling throughout my body which will eventually become almost seizure-like and a warmth will begin emitting from the palms of my hands and the soles of my feet. In time (I cannot tell the length of time) the light will brighten to a vivid electric blue and then a vibrant white. The warmth in my hands and feet becomes fiery and light emits from my body and joins the

light within the room. This light seems to then circulate within the room and course through me. My exhalations can redirect the pattern of the light. I then feel completely weightless and am no longer trapped inside my physical body. The light now will change to colors that are more difficult to explain. I now can speak with (others?) I do not know who they are. I do not think we are actually talking but there is some exchange of information. I am in other places but I do not know or recognize them. They are not "earthly" places. Very rarely, one of these events will become horrendously frightening and physically painful. The event will stop abruptly; I will awake in sheer terror and physical pain. When that happens, I always make certain to not fall asleep again that night. Ninety-nine percent of the time these events are pleasant and enticing. I always wish I can stay where I am, seem a little disappointed when they end, but have a blissful state that lasts for quite some time or until I just fall into my regular sleep. I awaken refreshed and happy and with a full recollection of what I have experienced. I also have dreams, but in these I will see earthly people. Some I know (living and dead) and places that seem earthlike. Perhaps faraway lands or just other cities or places I have never been. I also dream of regular things and places I know. These seem like the type of dreams most people experience during their sleep times.

There are other things about me that are different than most people. I see, hear and smell things that others cannot. Upon first meeting someone, their character is revealed to me, but I don't know how. I know of things of which most people are unaware. My story is long and complicated. I hope I have chosen wisely to tell some of it to you. There must be a reason I felt I should make contact at this time in my life.

Marilynn: Thanks for sharing your story. What you are experiencing is very clearly some form of mystical experience. The white, blue and purple lights are all associated with the higher energies of the psychic and mystical states. In fact, in the chakric system - your crown on top of your head which opens you to heavenly communication is purple, your psychic third eye center in your forehead is white, and the throat - communication - center is blue. The colors alone indicate that you are connecting with higher energies. Some people will begin in their emotional centers; like green, yellow, orange or red. These represent the heart, the gut - emotion -, sexual energies and root - base, energies.

This may be unfamiliar to you having been raised Baptist. I don't know. I'm Catholic. But I've also studied many, many religious paths.

Everything you're experiencing is a normal part of the mystical awakening. I believe you have some spiritual gifts - mysticism being just one of them as you mentioned seeing, hearing and smelling things that others don't and knowing the character of people. I experience these also. You may be uncomfortable with the word 'psychic' gifts, but that's what these are. In order to utilize them in the service of God, however, they will need cultivation. It seems that the Divine is already working on this within you. Communication in psychic realms is telepathic which is why you would feel that you're communicating but not 'talking' with those you meet. Thoughts are conveyed back and forth without the need of speech.

You mention the negative experiences, which also come with the territory. We do live in a world where good and evil exist side by side and you will experience both.

Again, I'm going to recommend 'The Mysteries of the Redemption,' wherein I've detailed my own journey and you'll find the parallels between your experiences and my own. Many people at this time are opening up to a higher awareness like this, but it is not non-biblical. If you look carefully, you'll see that our entire biblical history is based on people who have had mystical encounters. I can be more specific, but you may already know this.

You obviously have a natural gift, and I believe reading that book will help you to attune them and begin taking them to higher levels where you can use them in the service of God. Keep me posted, I think your journey could be a very interesting one.

You mentioned having scary and negative experiences, I'd be interested in hearing more about those. I may be able to give you some direction as to where they are coming from and the things which might help.

As a skeptic, you may have difficulty reading my books. As a person who obviously has mystical gifts, you may not. You will find reincarnation in them, and you will also find a few encounters with beings from other worlds. Hope that doesn't scare you away, I know how strange it can seem to us here - but when we realize we're dealing with a much bigger universal reality rather than just our small part of it, it's not so shocking.

There are a lot of people who share your experiences. You may be surprised if you read some of the magazines (The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journals) how many there are, but I still think 'The Mysteries of the Redemption' is the most important place for you to start.

Thanks for contacting me, and for sharing, I've enjoyed sharing your experiences.

Question from Dianne, Oklahoma City, OK, USA: Hi Marilyn, Thanks for validating my feelings. I really have never spoken (written 🗨️) to anyone about my experiences in life. These events have been a part of me since I was a child, but have steadily grown stronger throughout my lifetime.

You mention my negative experiences. Long ago, when I would travel at night, I would encounter (things, people?) that were of a bad nature. At first, I would just "poof" back home. Safe and sound in my warm bed but with fear in my heart . . . In time, I would remain longer, matching wills with these (others) but they would overcome me and I would once again, "poof". Then I learned to travel with a sword and shield. They are with me to this day (but now in a much more sophisticated form) and I always have them with me. Some of the bad (others) will just go away when I wield my weaponry. If that is the case, things go smoothly. Some of (them) want to battle and I must fight (them) to overcome. Today, I am rarely defeated in battle BUT when I am defeated, I do not sleep again that night. When I am back inside my body, my wounds are quite painful and it takes quite some time to calm myself. How I best perceive myself might be as Diana, Goddess of the Hunt but that is just an idea of how I can best describe myself to you, not who I am.

Now, I hope that it is you who is not scared away as I have never told anyone about these events.

Dianne

Marilynn: No, no, no, Dianne, not scared away. When you do read 'The Mysteries of the Redemption,' note the section called 'The Alteration Pathway.' Part of the reason I was interested in asking about these is because it is few people that I come across who are also battling such forces. Maybe this section of the book will help you to understand what seems to be happening and also energize you more to learn some of the manners of battle you can partake in. It continues into the Absolution pathway, where there is a lot of confrontation with evil spirits or actual demonic forces. You might learn a few tricks there to help you; I know how physically demanding these battles can be. You need to be careful, because you can be PHYSICALLY harmed. A lot of people don't realize this . . .

Question from Dianne, Oklahoma City, OK, USA: Thank you for sending your love and acceptance. I will have some time for reading this weekend. I am not always alone in battle. I can call on other Warriors to assist me, and at times I am called to assist them. They have names like mine that cannot be expressed in our Earthly Language. Over time, the need to draw arms has faded, but when the occasion arises, it is a mighty fight.

Most people on this planet think I am crazy (earth term), but I know I am not.

Love in Return, for Love is all there is!

Dianne

Marilynn: I'll be interested in your thoughts after you've read a bit about the 'Alteration Pathway' which involves my own work in such battles. Hopefully, you'll be able to

relate a bit to it and it will help you realize that you're experiences are shared by others around the world, it just sometimes seems a little more few and far between to those of us engaged in the experiences than I think it truly is. We are many, we are just scattered around the world.

Consider also joining our Yahoo Group, instructions for joining are at the website (www.outofbodytravel.org). You may find discussing some of your experiences with others who also have them to be helpful and confirming in your journey.

*Many Blessings,
Marilynn Hughes
MarilynnHughes@outofbodytravel.org
www.outofbodytravel.org*

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:

Different Voices!

This is our section devoted to the writings and opinions of others, which may not reflect the views of author, Marilyn Hughes. Inclusion of any author's writings or work does not denote an endorsement or recommendation in regards to their writings.

Some of these will be individual writings of others on subjects of spiritual interest, other people's out-of-body experiences - some which may agree with and/or contradict the experiences of the author, poems, journals of spiritual transformation, and critiques - both positive and negative opinions and/or analysis, of the author's work.

We choose to include ALL of these because we feel that the ability to discuss our similarities and differences openly is 'ALL GOOD' as GANDHI used to say.

We welcome and encourage your submissions for possible future inclusion in this section, although we stress that we are a non-profit organization and payment is not available:

magazine@outofbodytravel.org

We have found that some of the best critiques, analysis, writings and experiences come from people all over the world in different walks of life who are pursuing their spiritual path with passion and are completely unknown.

THANK YOU ALL, whether you agree or disagree with our work, FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO SEEK THE TRUTH IN WHATEVER WAY THAT TRUTH MAY COME TO SEEK YOU!

The Mystic Doctrine and Poetry of the Sufis

From Selections on the Poetry of the Afghans

By H.G. Raverty

THE poetry of the East, particularly that of the Muḥammadan nations, differs materially from that of the West; and when taken up by the uninitiated, would often appear to be the mere effusions of wild and voluptuous bacchanals, or worthy of Anacreon himself. These remarks, however, pertain more to Persian than to Afghān poetry, which contains less of the, often, bombastic style of the former, and approaches nearer to the simplicity of the poetry of the ancient Arabs. A general subject with the Afghān, as well as other Asiatic poets, is that of love, not *human*, but divine, and a contempt for the people and vanities of the world; whilst other Afghān poets, such as Khushhāl Khān, write on any subject that may have been uppermost in their minds at the time, after the manner of Western poets.

The general reader, who would understand many of the poems contained in the following pages, must know that most of the Asiatic poets profess the mystical doctrine of the Ṣūfis, the tenets of which, it will be necessary to explain to him; although Oriental scholars may be supposed to be sufficiently familiar with the subject.

The Muḥammadan writers state, that these enthusiasts are co-existent with their religion; and, probably, their rapturous zeal may have greatly contributed to the first establishment of Islāmism; but they have since been

considered its greatest enemies, and it is avouched that their doctrines have, for a long time, been even undermining Muḥammadanism itself. Hence the most rigorous proceedings have, from time to time, been put in practice to repress their increase, but these, as usual in such cases, have had a contrary effect; and Ṣūfi-ism is said to be still on the increase. There is no doubt, but that the free opinions of the sect on the dogmas of the Muḥammadan religion, their contempt for its forms, and their claim to communion with, or rather absorption into the Creator, are all more or less calculated to subvert that faith, of whose outward forms the Ṣūfis profess their veneration.

The tenets of the Ṣūfi doctrines appear to have been most widely diffused over Persia; and, indeed, the great reputation acquired by one of the priests of the sect, enabled his descendants, for above two centuries, under the name of the Ṣafawīan dynasty, to occupy the throne of that country.

The general name by which this sect of enthusiasts is known, is Ṣūfi, implying *pure*, a term probably derived from the Arabic word **صَفَه** (*Ṣafah*), signifying purity; and by this name all are known, from the venerated teacher, or spiritual guide, followed by crowds of disciples, to the humble *kalandar*, *darwesh*, or *fakir*, who wanders about almost naked, or only clothed in his *khirkah* or cloak of rags, subsisting upon scanty alms, to support this, voluntarily adopted, life of prayer and religious abstraction.

In India, more than in any other country of Asia, from remote ages, these visionary doctrines appear to have flourished, much after the same manner as in Egypt and

Syria, in the early days of Christianity, as testified to by the early ecclesiastical writers, who trace to those countries the mystic, the hermit, and the monk; for there the propensity to a life of austerity was quite a disease. In the Hindū religion also, as well as in the people themselves, there is much that tends to foster a spirit of religious abstraction; and we may thus, with some justice, suppose that from India other nations have derived this mystic worship of the Deity, but without adopting the dreadful austerities and macerations, common among the Hindūs, and deemed necessary for attaining unto this state of beatitude.

To give a full account of the doctrines of the Şūfis, would be almost a useless attempt; for traces of it may be found, in some shape or other, in all countries; alike, in the sublime theories of the philosophers of ancient Greece, and in those of modern Europe.

The Şūfis affirm, that their creed is adverse to superstition, scepticism, and error; but "it exists by the active propagation of all three." The doctrines of their teachers are given to their disciples in place of the outward forms and observances of the faith they profess. They are invited to embark upon the ocean of doubt, piloted by a sacred teacher, or spiritual guide, whom they must consider superior to all other mortals, and deem worthy of the most pious and spiritual confidence—in fact, of almost adoration itself. They are devoted to the search after TRUTH, and are constantly occupied in adoration of the Deity. He, according to their belief, is diffused throughout all created things; and they consider, that the soul of man, and the principle of existence, is *of* God (part of Him), not *from* Him. Hence their doctrine teaches that the soul of man is an exile from its Creator, who is its home and source; that the body is its cage, or prison-house; and the

term of life, in this world, is its period of banishment from Him ere the soul felt it had seen the face of TRUTH, but, in this world, it merely obtains a partial and shadowy glimpse, "which serves to awaken the slumbering memory of the past, but can only vaguely recall it; and Sūfi-ism undertakes, by a long course of education, and moral discipline, to lead the soul onward, from stage to stage, until, at length, it reaches the goal of perfect knowledge, truth, and peace."

According to this mysterious doctrine, there are four stages through which it is necessary man should pass, prior to attaining unto the highest state, or that of divine beatitude; where, to use their own words, "his corporeal veil, which had previously obscured his sight, will be drawn aside, and his soul, emancipated from all material things, will again unite with the divine and transcendent essence, from which it had been divided, for a time, but not separated for ever."

The first of these stages is termed *nāsut*, or humanity, in which the disciple is supposed to be living in obedience to the *sharæ*, or orthodox law, and paying due observance to the rites and ceremonies of religion; for these things are allowed to be necessary and useful in regulating the lives of the vulgar and weak-minded, and in restraining within proper bounds, and guiding such as are unable to reach the acme of divine contemplation and abstraction, who might be led astray by that very latitude in matters of faith, which instructs and enraptures those of more powerful intellect, and more ardent piety.

The second stage is termed *tāriḳat*, or the way, in which the disciple attains what is called *jabrūt*, or potentiality and capacity; and he who reaches this stage, quits, altogether,

that state in which he is merely permitted to follow and revere a teacher or spiritual guide, and thus he becomes admitted within the pale of Sūfi-ism. All observance of the rites and forms of religion may be laid aside; for he now, it is supposed, exchanges what is called *æamal-i jismānī*, or corporeal worship, for *æamal-i-rūḥānī*, or spiritual adoration; but this stage cannot be attained, save by great piety, virtue, endurance, and resignation; for it is necessary to restrain the intellect when weak, until, from habits of mental devotion, grounded upon a proper knowledge of its own greatness and immortality, and of the Divine nature, it shall have acquired sufficient energy; since the mind cannot be trusted in the omission or disuse of the rites and usages of religion.

The third stage is *æarūf*, signifying knowledge or inspiration; and the disciple who arrives thereunto, is said to have attained superhuman knowledge—in fact, to be inspired; and when he has reached this stage, he is equal to the angels.

The fourth, and final state arrived at, is *ḥaḳīkat*, or Truth itself, which signifies that his union with the Divinity is perfect and complete.

The dignity of Khalifah, as the teacher is designated, can only be obtained after long-continued fasting and prayer, and by complete abstraction and severance from all mundane things; *for the man must be annihilated, before the saint can exist*. The preparation for the third stage of Sūfi-ism requires a protracted and fearful probation; and many lose their lives in their efforts to attain it. The person who makes the essay must be a devout and godly *murīd* or disciple, who has already advanced, by his piety and abstraction, beyond the necessity of observing religion's

forms and usages. He must begin by endeavouring to attain a higher state of beatitude, by a lengthened fast, which should not be less than forty days; and during this period of fasting he remains in solitude, and in a posture of contemplation, and takes no sustenance save enough to keep body and soul together. The character of the votary greatly depends upon the patience and fortitude he may display during this severe ordeal; and when, reduced to a mere skeleton, the disciple comes forth from his solitude, he still has years of trial to endure. He must wander about, companionless, in desert places, or remain in some frightful solitude, and only seeing, occasionally, the Khalifah, or spiritual guide, whom he follows; for the chief merit of all ranks of Şūfis, is complete devotion to their teacher. When he dies, he leaves his *khīrkah*, or patched garment, and worldly wealth, to the disciple he considers the most worthy to succeed him; and when the latter dons the holy mantle, he is invested with the power of his predecessor.

The most celebrated Şūfi teachers have been alike famed for their devotion and their learning, in Persia as well as in other countries; and, in the former, the Şūfis have claimed for their own, all who have, by their writings or sayings, shown a spirit of philosophy, or knowledge of the nature Divine, which has elevated them above the prejudices of the vulgar; and, certainly, great numbers of persons, eminent for their learning, genius, and piety, have adopted the Şūfi doctrines. Amongst the most distinguished of these are poets; for the very essence of Şūfi-ism is poetry. The raptures of genius, expatiating upon a subject that cannot be exhausted, are held to be divine inspirations, by those who believe that the soul, when emancipated by devotion, can wander in the regions of the spiritual world, and, at last, unite with its Creator, the source from whence

it emanated. It is the same with all Ṣūfi poets, whatever be their country; but Persia is more generally known as that, in which this species of poetry was supposed to have reached the highest degree of perfection; but it will be discovered, from the following pages, that Ṣūfi-ism has produced, amongst the rough and hardy Afghāns, conceptions equally as sublime. "Human speech, however," to quote the words of a writer already mentioned, "is too weak and imperfect to convey these lofty experiences of the soul, and hence these can only be represented by symbols and metaphors." For this reason the Ṣūfi poets, to quote the words of Sir William Jones, "adopt the fervour of devotion, and the ardent love of created spirits towards their beneficent Creator; and Ṣūfi poetry consists almost wholly of a mystical, religious allegory, though it seems, to the uninitiated ear, to contain merely the sentiments of wild and voluptuous bacchanals; but although we must admit the danger of such a poetical style, where the limits between enthusiasm and depravity are so minute, as to be scarcely distinguishable;"—for the mystical meaning of their poetry (save in the poems of the Afghān poet Mirzā) never, or rarely, obtrudes itself;—we may, if we choose, pass it by, confining ourselves to those passages alone, which tell of a mundane passion, and a terrestrial summer and wine. Under the veil of earthly love, and the woes of temporal separation, they disguise the dark riddle of human life, and the celestial banishment, which lies behind the threshold of existence; and, under the joys of revelry and inebriation, they figure mystical transports, and ecstatic raptures. Still, we must not censure it severely, and must allow it to be natural, though a warm imagination may carry it beyond the bounds of sober reason; "for," to quote the same author, "an ardently grateful piety is congenial to the undepraved nature of man, whose mind, sinking under the magnitude of the

subject, and struggling to express its emotions; has recourse to metaphors and allegories, which it sometimes extends beyond the bounds of cool reason, and often to the brink of absurdity." BARROW, who would have been the sublimest mathematician, if his religious turn of mind had not made him the deepest theologian of his age, describes Love as "an affection or inclination of the soul towards an object, proceeding from an apprehension and esteem of some excellence or convenience in it, as its beauty, worth, or utility; and producing, if it be absent, a proportionable desire, and, consequently, an endeavour to obtain such a property in it, such possession of it, such *an approximation to it, or union with it*, as the thing is capable of; with a regret and displeasure in failing to obtain it, or in the want and loss of it; begetting, likewise, a complacence, satisfaction, and delight, in its presence, possession, or enjoyment, which is, moreover, attended with a goodwill towards it, suitable to its nature; that is, with a desire that it should arrive at, or continue in, its best state, with a delight to perceive it thrive and flourish; with a displeasure to see it suffer or decay; with a consequent endeavour to advance it in all good, and preserve it from all evil." Agreeably to this description, which consists of two parts, and was designed to comprise the tender love of the Creator towards created spirits, the great philosopher bursts forth in another place, with his usual animation, and command of language, into the following panegyric on the pious love of human souls towards the Author of their happiness:—"Love is the sweetest and most delectable of all passions; and when, by the conduct of wisdom, it is directed in a rational way toward a worthy, congruous, and attainable object, it cannot otherwise than fill the heart with ravishing delight: such, in all respects, superlatively such, is GOD; who, infinitely beyond all other things, deserveth our affection, as most perfectly amiable and desirable; as having obliged

us by innumerable and inestimable benefits; all the good that we have ever enjoyed, or can ever expect, being derived from His pure bounty; all things in the world, in competition with Him, being mean and ugly; all things, without Him, vain, unprofitable, and hurtful to us. He is the most proper object of our love; for we chiefly were framed, and it is the prime law of our nature, to love Him; *our soul, from its original instinct, vergeth towards Him as its centre, and can have no rest till it be fixed on Him*: He alone can satisfy the vast capacity of our minds, and fill our boundless desires. He, of all lovely things, most certainly and easily may be attained; for, whereas, commonly, men are crossed in their affections, and their love is embittered from their affecting things imaginary, which they cannot reach, or coy things, which disdain and reject them, it is with GOD quite otherwise: He is most ready to impart himself; He most earnestly desireth and wooeth our love; He is not only most willing to correspond in affection, but even doth prevent us therein: *He doth cherish and encourage our love by sweetest influences, and most consoling embraces, by kindest expressions of favour, by most beneficial returns; and, whereas all other objects do, in the enjoyment, much fail our expectation, He doth even far exceed it*. Wherefore, in all affectionate motions of our hearts towards GOD; in *desiring* Him, in seeking His favour or friendship; in *embracing* Him, or setting our esteem, our goodwill, our confidence, on Him; in *enjoying* Him, by devotional meditations, and addresses to Him; in a reflective sense of our interest and propriety in Him; *in that mysterious union of spirit*, whereby we do closely adhere to, and are, as it were, inserted in Him; in a hearty complacence in His benignity, a grateful sense of His kindness, and a zealous desire of yielding some requital for it, we cannot but feel very, very pleasant transports: indeed, that celestial flame, kindled in our hearts by the spirit of love, cannot be void

of warmth; we cannot fix our eyes on *infinite beauty*, we cannot taste infinite sweetness, we cannot cleave to infinite felicity, without also perpetually rejoicing in the first daughter of LOVE to GOD—Charity towards men; which, in complexion and careful disposition, doth much resemble her mother; for she doth rid us of all these gloomy, keen, turbulent imaginations and passions, which cloud our mind, which fret our heart, which discompose the frame of our soul, from burning anger, from storming contention, from gnawing envy, from rankling spite, from racking suspicion, from distracting ambition and avarice; and, consequently, doth settle our mind in an even temper, in a sedate humour, in an harmonious order, in *that pleasant state of tranquillity, which, naturally, doth result from the voidance of irregular passions.*"

This passage, which borders upon quietism and enthusiastic devotion, differs no more from the mystic tenets of the Şūfi creed, than do European fruits and flowers from the lusciousness and fragrance of those of Asia, or than the cold skies and sun of the West differ from the gorgeous skies and blazing sun of Eastern lands.

It is to express fervid feelings like these that, by Şūfi-ism, poetry is brought into play, which, in its sweetest strains, teaches that all nature abounds with a Divine love, causing even the humblest plant to seek the sublime object of its desire.

"In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
 In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
 In halls, in gay attire is seen;
 In hamlets, dances on the green.
 Love rules the camp, the court, the grove,

And men below, and saints above;
For Love is heaven, and heaven is love."

Sir William Jones, in his "Essay on the Mystical Poetry of the Persians and Hindūs," has given an excellent description of the Şūfis and their doctrine; and I cannot do better here than extract therefrom such portions as may elucidate my present subject. "The Şūfis," he says, "concur in believing that the souls of men differ infinitely in *degree*, but not at all in *kind*, from the Divine Spirit, of which they are *particles*, and in which they will ultimately be re-absorbed; that the Spirit of God pervades the universe, always immediately present to His work, and, consequently, always in substance; that He alone is perfect benevolence, perfect truth, perfect beauty; that the love of Him alone is *real* and genuine love, while that of all other objects is *absurd* and illusory; that the beauties of nature are faint resemblances, like images in a mirror, of the Divine charms; that, from eternity without beginning, to eternity without end, the Supreme Benevolence is occupied in bestowing happiness, or the means of attaining it: that men can only attain it by performing their part of the *primal covenant*, between them and the Creator; that nothing has a pure, absolute existence but *mind* or *spirit*; that *material substances*, as the ignorant call them, are no more than *gay pictures*, presented continually to our minds by the spiritual Artist; that we must be aware of attachment to such *phantoms*, and attach ourselves, exclusively, to GOD, who truly exists in us, as we exist solely in Him; that we retain, even in this forlorn state of separation from our beloved, the *idea of heavenly beauty*, and the *remembrance* of our *primeval vows*; that sweet music, gentle breezes, fragrant flowers, perpetually renew the primary idea, refresh our fading memory, and melt us with tender affections; that we must cherish these

affections, and, by abstracting our souls from *vanity*, that is, from all but GOD, approximate to His essence, in our final union with which will consist our supreme beatitude. From these principles flow a thousand metaphors, and other poetical figures, which abound in the sacred poems of the Persians and Hindūs, who seem to mean the same thing in substance, and differ only in expression, as their languages differ in idiom." It is the same in Afghān poetry also, as the following pages will amply show.

The modern Ṣūfis, who profess a belief in the Qur'ān, suppose, with much sublimity both of thought and diction, that in a prior state of existence the soul had been united with God; and that, at the Creation, the created spirits, and the supreme soul from which they emanated, were summoned together, when a celestial voice demanded from each, separately, "ALASTO BI-RABBIKUM?" "*Art thou not with thy God?*" that is, "*Art thou not bound by solemn contract with Him?*" whereunto the spirits answered, "BALĀ," "*Yea!*" And hence it is that "ALASTO," or "*Art thou not?*" (the question of this primeval compact), and "BALĀ," or "*Yea!*" occur continually in these mystical compositions of Muḥammadan poets, whether Persians, Turks, or Afghāns. "Music, poetry, and the arts," again to quote the words of a modern writer, * "*are the unconscious aspirations of the soul, as it hurries along in its restless impulses through the world, stung by the echo of "ALASTO," yet ringing in their ears, but with no visible object to claim the passionate adoration which it burns to pour forth.*"

"The Hindūs," says Sir William Jones, "describe the same covenant under the figurative notion, so finely expressed by ISAAH, of a *nuptial contract*; for, considering GOD in the three characters of Creator, Regenerator, and Preserver, and supposing the power of *Preservation* and *Benevolence* to

have become incarnate in the power of KRISHNA, they represent him as married to Rādhā, a word signifying *atonement, pacification, or satisfaction*, but applied allegorically to the *soul of man*, or rather to the *whole assemblage of created souls*, between whom and their benevolent Creator they suppose that *reciprocal love*, which BARROW describes with a glow of expression perfectly Oriental, and which our most orthodox theologians believe to have been mystically *shadowed* in the SONG OF SOLOMON, while they admit that, in a literal sense, it is an epithalamium on the marriage of the sapient king with the princess of Egypt. The very learned author of the "Prelections on Sacred Poetry," declared his opinion, that the CANTICLES were founded on historical truth, but involved in allegory of that sort, which he named *mystical*; and the beautiful Persian poem, on the loves of LAYLĀ and MAJNŪN, by the inimitable Nizāmī—to say nothing of other poems on the same subject—is, indisputably, built on true history, yet avowedly allegorical and mysterious; for the introduction to it is a continued rapture on *Divine love*; and the name of LAYLĀ seems to be used in the *Masnawī* * and the odes of Ḥāfiz, for the omnipresent Spirit of God." If reference is here made to the first of the poems of the Afghān monarch, Aḥmad Shāh, at page, the force of the words of Sir William Jones will be more fully seen.

According to the interpretation given to these mystical poems, by the Ṣūfis themselves—for they have even composed a vocabulary of the words used by these mystics—by *wine* is meant devotion, *sleep* is meditation on the Divine perfections, and *perfume* the hope of the Divine favour; the *zephyrs* are outbursts of grace; *kisses* and *embraces*, the transports of devotion and piety; *idolators*, *infidels*, and *libertines*, are men of the purest faith, and the *idol they worship* is the Creator himself; the *tavern* is a

secluded oratory, where they become intoxicated with the wine of love, and its *keeper* is an enlightened instructor or spiritual guide; *beauty* denotes the perfection of the Deity; *curls* and *tresses* are the infiniteness of His glory; the *lips* are the inscrutable mysteries of His essence; *down* on the cheek, the world of spirits who surround His throne; and the *black mole* upon the cheek of the beloved, the point of indivisible unity; and *wantonness*, *mirth*, and *inebriation*, signify religious enthusiasm, and abstraction from all earthly thoughts and contempt of all worldly affairs.

The poets themselves give a colour to such interpretations as the foregoing, in many passages in their poems; and it is impossible to imagine that such effusions as those of Ḥāfiz, Saædi, and their imitators, would, otherwise, be tolerated in a Musalmān country, particularly at places like Cairo and Constantinople, where they are venerated as divine compositions. It must be, however, allowed, that " the mystical allegory, which, like metaphors and comparisons, should be general only, not minutely exact, is greatly diminished, if not wholly destroyed, by any attempt at particular and distinct resemblances; and that this style of composition is open to dangerous misinterpretation."

The following ode, by a Ṣūfi of Bokhārā, is such an extraordinary specimen of the mysterious doctrine of the sect, although some of the poems of the Afghān poet Mīrzā are sufficiently so, that I cannot refrain from inserting it in this place:—

"Yesterday, half inebriated, I passed by the quarter where
the wine-sellers dwell,
To seek out the daughter of an infidel, who is a vendor of
wine.

At the end of the street, a damsel, with a fairy's cheek,
 advanced before me,
 Who, pagan-like, wore her tresses dishevelled over her
 shoulders, like the sacerdotal thread.

I said, 'O thou, to the arch of whose eyebrows the new
 moon is a shame!
 What quarter is this, and where is thy place of abode?'

'Cast,' she replied, 'thy rosary on the ground, and lay the
 thread of paganism thy shoulder upon;
 Cast stones at the glass of piety; and from an o'erflowing
 goblet quaff the wine.

After that draw near me, that I may whisper one word in
 thine ear;
 For thou wilt accomplish thy journey, if thou hearken to
 my words.'

Abandoning my heart altogether, and in ecstasy wrapt, I
 followed her,
 'Till I came to a place, where, alike, reason and religion
 forsook me.

At a distance, I beheld a company, all inebriated and
 beside themselves,
 Who came all frenzied, and boiling with ardour from the
 wine of love;

Without lutes, or cymbals, or viols; yet all full of mirth and
 melody –
 Without wine, or goblet, or flask; yet all drinking
 unceasingly.

When the thread of restraint slipped away from my hand,
I desired to ask her one question, but she said unto me,
'SILENCE!'

'This is no square temple whose gate thou canst
precipitately attain;

This is no mosque which thou canst reach with tumult, but
without knowledge:

This is the banquet-house of infidels, and all within it are
intoxicated—

All, from eternity's dawn to the day of doom, in
astonishment lost!

Depart, then, from the cloister, and towards the tavern
bend thy steps;

Cast away the cloak of the darwesh, and don thou the
libertine's robe!

I obeyed; and if thou desire, with ISMAT, the same hue and
colour to acquire,

Imitate him; and both this and the next world sell for one
drop of pure wine!"

The tenets of the Şūfi belief, as may be judged from what
has been already stated, are involved in mystery. They
begin by instilling doctrines of virtue and piety, and by
teaching forbearance, abstemiousness, and universal
benevolence. This much they profess; but they have secrets
and mysteries for every step and degree, which are never
disclosed to the uninitiated and profane; but I shall now

proceed to quote a few passages from the writings of celebrated Şūfis, which may tend to throw some additional light upon this dark and mystic creed.

The Persian poet, Shaikh Saædî, in his "Bostan," or "Flower Garden," the subject of which is devoted to divine love, thus describes it:—"The love of a being constituted, like thyself, of water and clay, destroys thy patience and thy peace of mind; it excites thee, in thy waking hours, with minute beauties, and occupies thee, in thy sleep, with vain imaginations. With such real affection dost thou lay thine head at her feet, that the universe, in comparison with her, vanishes into nothing before thee; and, since her eye is not allured by thy gold, gold and dust alike appear equal in thine. Not a breath dost thou utter unto any one else, for with her thou hast no room for any other; thou declarest that her abode is in thine eye, or, when thou closest it, in thy heart; thou hast no power to be at rest for a moment: if she demands thy soul, it runs, instantly, to thy lip; and if she waves a sword over thee, thy head falls, immediately, under it. Since an absurd passion, with its basis on air, affects thee so violently, and commands with a sway so despotic, canst thou wonder that they who walk in the true path are overwhelmed in the sea of mysterious adoration? They abandon the world through remembrance of its Creator; they are inebriated with the melody of amorous complainings; they remember their beloved, and resign unto Him both this life and that to come. Through remembrance of God, they shun the whole of mankind; they are so enamoured of the cup-bearer, that they spill the wine from the cup. No panacea can cure them; for no mortal can be apprised of their malady; so loudly have the divine words, ALASTO and BALĀ, the tumultuous exclamation of all spirits, rung in their ears, from time without beginning. They are a sect fully employed, though

sitting in retirement; their feet are of earth, but their breath is like flame. With a single shout they could rend a mountain from its base; with a single cry they could throw a city into commotion. Like the wind, they are gone, and more swiftly; like stone, they are silent, yet utter God's praises. At the dawn of day, their tears flow so copiously, as to wash from their eyes the black antimony of sleep; though the fleet steed of their conception ran so swiftly all night; yet the morning finds them left, in disorder, behind. Night and day they are plunged in an ocean of ardent desire, until they are, through astonishment, unable to distinguish the night from the day. With the peerless beauty of Him, who adorned the human form, so enraptured are they, that, with the beauty of the figure itself, they have no concern; and whenever they behold a beauteous form, they see in it the mystery of the Almighty's work. The wise take not the husk in exchange for the kernel; and he who makes that choice has no understanding. He alone has drunk the pure wine of unity, who has forgotten, by remembering GOD, all things besides in both worlds."

Jāmī, the author of the celebrated poem of Laylā and Majnūn, defines the principles of this mystic philosophy in the following words:—"Some wise and holy men are of opinion, that when the Supreme Being sheds the refulgence of his Holy Spirit upon any of his creatures, that creature's essence, attributes, and actions, become so completely absorbed in the essence, the attributes, and the actions of the Creator, that he finds himself in the position of regulator or director, with reference to the rest of the creation, the several existences of which become, as it were, his limbs—nothing happens to any of them, that he does not feel it has happened to himself. In consequence of his individual and utter annihilation, the result of his

essential union with the Deity, he sees his own essence to be the essence of the One and Only; his own attributes to be His attributes; and his own actions to be His actions;— and beyond this, there is no stage in progression to complete union with God attainable by man. When the spiritual vision of any man is engrossed by contemplating the beauty of the Divine Essence, by the overpowering influence of the Eternal Spirit, the light of his understanding, which is that quality by which we are enabled to distinguish between things, becomes wholly extinguished; and as 'error passeth away on the appearance of Truth,' so is the power of discriminating, between the perishable and the imperishable, at once removed."

Few orthodox Muḥammadans give a literal construction to the words of the Prophet on the subject of predestination, although the Ḳur'ān inculcates such; for they deem it impious so to do, as thereby God would be made the author and cause of man's sin. All Ṣūfis are fatalists, and believe that the principle which emanates from the Almighty can do nothing without His will, and cannot refrain from what He wills that it should do. Some Ṣūfis deny that evil exists at all, because every thing proceeds from God, and must therefore necessarily be good; and they exclaim, with the poet—

"The writer of our destiny is a fair and truthful writer,
And never did he write that which was evil." Others, again, admit, that in this world the principle of evil doth exist; but that man is not a free agent; and quote the following couplet, from the Persian poet Ḥāfiz,—

"My destiny hath been allotted to the tavern by the Almighty:

Then tell me, O teacher! Where lieth my crime."

Such is the remarkable doctrine of the Şūfis, and still more so their language and allegories, which we have been too much accustomed, in Europe, to consider as the wanton and reckless effusions of Eastern revellers, all devoted to the pleasure of the hour—"effusions bright, indeed, with all the gorgeous hues of Eastern colouring, like unto the skies over their heads, or the gardens around them, but yet transient as the summer's roses, or the nightingale's notes which welcomed them."

This may be correct as to the outward form of Eastern poetry in general; but most Asiatic poets are Şūfis, and if we would attempt to read their poems, we should also desire to understand them; since beneath all this gorgeous and mysterious imagery their lies a latent signification of far different, and more lasting interest, where the ardent longings and fervid transports of the soul find utterance, which we may look for in vain in the venerated literature of pagan Greece and Rome. Their great Molawī assures us that they profess eager desire, but with no carnal affection, and circulate the cup, but no material goblet; since, in their sect, all things are spiritual—all is mystery within mystery:

"All, all on earth is shadow, all beyond
Is substance; the reverse is folly's creed."

Sāhil-ibn-Æabd-ullah, of Shustar, a celebrated Sūfi teacher, states, "That the soul's secret was first revealed when Faræawn declared himself a god:" and another, Shaikh Muhi-ud-dīn, writes, "That the mighty host of the Egyptian monarch was not overwhelmed in the sea of error, but of knowledge:" and in another place, "That the Christians are

not infidels because they consider Jesus Christ a God, but because they deem him *alone* a God." Another author, Aghā Muḥammad Ālī, of Karmānshāh, who, however, is an open enemy of the Ṣūfis, says, that "they ignore the doctrine of reward and punishment," which is as incompatible with their ideas of the soul's re-absorption into the divine essence, as with their literal belief of predestination. Some of their most celebrated teachers, however, deny the truth of this statement, and maintain that sinners will be punished in a future state, and that the good will enjoy a much higher and purer bliss than the sensual paradise of Muḥammad holds out, thus revolting at a literal translation of the on that subject.

Another Persian Author, of high reputation for his piety and judgment, has given a good account of the Ṣūfis and their doctrines. He conceives, with several other Muḥammadan writers, that some of the principal Muḥammadan saints were of the Ṣūfi belief; but he applies this name to them, apparently, only as religious enthusiasts, and no more. He makes a great distinction between those who, whilst they mortified the flesh, and indulged in an enraptured love of the Almighty, still kept within the pale of revealed religion; and those wild devotees who, abandoning themselves to the frenzied wanderings of a heated imagination, fancied they should draw nearer unto God by departing from every thing deemed rational among men.

In another passage, this author states, "The Almighty, after his prophets and holy teachers, esteems none more than the pure Ṣūfis, because their desire is to raise themselves, through His grace, from their earthly mansion to the heavenly regions, and to exchange their lowly condition for that of angels. I have stated what I know of them in my

Preface. The accomplished and eloquent among them form two classes, the Ḥukamā, or *men of science*, and the Æulamā, or *men of piety and learning*. The former seek truth by demonstration; the latter, through revelation. There is another class called Æarūfā, or *men of knowledge*, and Awliyā, or *holy men*, who, in endeavouring to reach a state of beatitude, have abandoned the world. These are also *men of science*; but as, through Divine grace, they have attained to a state of perfection, their fears are believed to be less than those of others who remain in worldly occupations. Thus they are more exalted, and nearer to the rich inheritance of the Prophet than other men. No doubt there are imminent dangers along the path: there are many false teachers, and many deluded students pursuing the vapour of the desert, like the thirsty traveller; and these, if they do not rush unto their death, return wearied, grieved, and disappointed, from having been the dupes of their fancy. A true and perfect teacher is most rare; and when he exists, to discover him is impossible; for who shall discover perfection, except He who is himself perfect? who but the jeweller shall tell the price of the jewel? This is the reason why so many miss the true path, and fall into all the mazes of error. They are deceived by appearances, and waste their lives in the pursuit of that which is most defective; conceiving all along that it is most perfect; and thus lose their time, their virtue, and their religion. It is to save men from this danger, that God, through the Prophet, has warned us to attend to established usages, and to be guided by care and prudence. What has been said applies equally to those who live in the world, and to those who have abandoned it; for neither abstinence, nor devotion, can exclude the Devil, who will seek retired mendicants, clothed in the garb of divinity; and these, like other men, will discover that real knowledge is the only talisman by which the dictates of the good can be distinguished from

those of the evil spirit. The traveller, on the path of Şūfism, must not, therefore, be destitute of worldly knowledge, otherwise he will be alike exposed to danger from excess or deficiency of zeal, and he will certainly act contrary to the most sacred of his duties. A senseless man is likely to exceed the just bounds, in the practice of abstinence and abstraction, and then both his bodily and mental frame become affected, and he loses his labour and his object."

"The Şūfi teacher," continues Kāzī Nūr-ullah, "professes to instruct his disciple how to restore the inward man by purifying the spirit, cleansing the heart, enlightening the head, and anointing the soul: and when all this is done, they affirm that his desires shall be accomplished, and his depraved qualities changed into higher attributes, and he shall prove and understand the conditions, the revelations, the stages, and gradations of exaltation, till he arrives at the ineffable enjoyment of beholding and contemplating God. If teachers have not arrived at this consummation of perfection themselves, it is obvious, that to seek knowledge or happiness from them is a waste of time; and the devoted disciple will either terminate his labour in assuming the same character of imposture that he has found in his instructor, or he will consider all Şūfis alike, and condemn this whole sect of philosophers.

"It often happens, that sensible and well-informed men follow a master, who, though able, has not arrived at the virtue and sanctity which constitute perfection: his disciples conceiving that none are better or more holy than their teacher and themselves, and yet, disappointed at not reaching that stage of enjoyment which they expected to arrive at, seek relief from the reproaches of their own mind in scepticism. They doubt, on the ground of their personal

experience, all that they have heard or read, and believe that the accounts of the holy men who have, in this world, attained a state of beatitude, are only a string of fables. This is a dangerous error; and I must therefore repeat, that those who seek truth should be most careful to commence with prudence and moderation, lest they be lost in the mazes I have described; and, from meeting with evils of their own creation, should give way to disappointment and grief; and, by expelling from their minds that ardent fervour which belongs to true zeal, should disqualify themselves for the most glorious of all human pursuits."

The Şūfis are divided into innumerable sects, as must be expected regarding a doctrine, which may be called an ideal belief. It will not be necessary to the present subject to enumerate them all; for though they differ in designation and some minor usages, they all agree as to the principal tenets of their creed; particularly in inculcating the absolute necessity of entire submission to their inspired teachers, and the feasibility, through fervent piety, and enthusiastic devotion, of the soul's attaining a state of heavenly beatification, whilst the body is yet an inhabitant of this terrestrial sphere.

I have refrained from attempting to give any description of the extraordinary phases the Şūfi belief has, from time to time, assumed in Hindūstān, where it has ever flourished, and where it has been beneficial in tending to unite the opposite elements of Muḥammadanism and Hindūism, as shown more particularly in the events of the life of Nānak Shāh, the *gurū* or spiritual guide of the Sikhs, and founder of their religion. On the Bombay side of India, also, it has even taken root among the Gabrs or Pārsīs. Many of the usages and opinions of the Şūfis bear a similarity to those of the Gnostics, and other Christian sects, as well as to

some of the philosophers among the ancient Greeks. The Şūfi writers are familiar with Plato and Aristotle: their more celebrated works abound with quotations from the former. It has often been asserted that the Greeks borrowed their knowledge and philosophy from the East; and, if correct, the debt has been well repaid. Should an account of Pythagoras be translated into the Persian or other Eastern language, it would be read as that of a Sufi saint. "His initiation into the mysteries of the Divine nature, his deep contemplation and abstraction, his miracles, his passionate love of music, his mode of teaching his disciples, the persecution he suffered, and the manner of his death, present us with a close parallel to what is related of many eminent Şūfi teachers, and may lead to a supposition that there must be something similar, in the state of knowledge and of society, where the same causes produce the same effects."

In the same manner as with Ḥāfiz's poems in Persian, many of the following odes, particularly those of Raḥmān and Ḥamīd, are commonly sung all over Afghānistān, as popular songs are sung in Europe; but the singers, generally, unless educated men, have little idea of the deep meaning that lies beneath.

By H.G. Raverty
www.sacred-texts.com

A SUFI MESSAGE OF SPIRITUAL LIBERTY

By Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

GOD

Beloved ones of God, you may belong to any race, cast, creed, or nation, still you are all impartially beloved by God. You may be a believer or an unbeliever in the supreme Being, but He cares not. His mercy and grace flow through all His powers, without distinction of friend or foe.

'Every leaf of tree, Allah's
praise displays, Only the
pious mind can hear their
sacred lays.'

The sun, moon, and stars give light; the timely change of seasons promotes health and cheerfulness; the rain grows corn, fruits, and flowers; and the alternation of day and night provides the opportunity for work and rest.

'Earth, water, fire and air,
All work harmoniously.
For thee they always food
prepare,
Thou shouldst not eat
unthankfully.
For how each day the sun
shines and serves,

All praise from thee Allah deserves.'

If you study your own body, you will find its mechanism to be the original model of the artificial mechanism of the world. Art and science fail if compared with that of His nature. The ear, eyes, and all other organs, how perfectly they are adapted in shape and mechanism to the purpose which they must serve! How liberally the needs of life, water, air, and food, are supplied; even milk is prepared in the mother's breast for the unborn infant. Should we not appreciate the liberality of the Creator, and thank him each moment with all humility and gratitude? 'Praise be to Allah, the worship of whom is the means of drawing closer to Him, and the giving of thanks to whom involves an increase of benefits. Every breath which is inhaled prolongs life, and when exhaled it quickens the frame. In every breath, therefore, two blessings are contained, and for every blessing a separate thanksgiving is due' (*Sa'di*).

He has fashioned and molded you after His own image, and made you *Ashrá f al-Makhlúá t*, the highest of all beings and the pride of the universe, having given you command over all other beings of both worlds. As is said in the Qur'an, 'Do you not see that Allah has subjected all things on earth to you?' And at the same time He has given you, by His grace, the attributes of humanity: kindness, gratitude, faithfulness, justice, modesty, piety, sympathy, reverence, bravery, patience, love, knowledge, and wisdom. This is an open proof of your being the real object of creation and the most beloved of God.

NATURE

The argument has been raised that all manifestation is due to the interaction of natural elements, working by their own force; every cause has its effect, and the effect again becomes a cause for the reaction; thus nature works unaided. The answer is, that every cause must have some preceding cause, or first cause, to produce it; and logically one cause may produce many effects, which effects again become second causes, producing new reactions, 'While intellectual minds are seeking second causes, the wise man only perceives the first cause. Air, earth, water, being second causes, the precedent cause, which makes them act and pause, is hidden.'

THE PERSONAL BEING

Granting that we see nature, and also admitting its original cause, upon what grounds do we consider the cause to be a personal God, meriting worship? The answer is that nature itself consists of different personalities, and each of them has its peculiar attributes. The sum total of all these personalities is One, the only real personality. In relation to that One all other personalities are merely an illusion. Just as, in a limited form, a nation or a community is the sum of many personalities. Just as nature manifested in numerous names and forms is still called nature, singular not plural, just as the individual combines within himself the different parts of his body, arms, limbs, eyes, ears, and is possessed of different qualities yet is one person, so the sum total of all personalities is called God.

He is the possessor of all the visible and invisible attributes of the Absolute, and has different names in different languages for the understanding of man. It may be said

that the personality of a man is quite comprehensible, since his actions exhibit him as a single individual, whereas God's personality has no clear identification of its own. The answer is, that variety covers unity. 'Hidden things are manifested by their opposites, but as God has no opposite He remains hidden. God's light has no opposite in the range of creation whereby it may be manifested to view' (*Jelal-ud-Din Rumi*).

The wise man by studying nature enters into the unity through its variety, and realizes the personality of God by sacrificing his own. 'He who knows himself knows Allah' (*Sayings of Mohammed*). 'The Kingdom of God is within you' (*Bible*). 'Self-knowledge is the real wisdom' (*Vedanta*).

God's relation to nature may be understood by analysing the idea expressed in the words, 'I myself'. This affirmation means the one individual; at the same time it identifies the dual aspect of the One. In this phrase 'I' is the possessor, and 'myself' is the possessed. So also God, the unmanifested, is the possessor; and nature, the manifestation, is the possessed, which has its source hidden within itself.

The possessed could not have been created from anything other than the possessor's own self, as there existed none but the possessor. Although the possessor and the possessed are considered to be two separate identities, in reality they are one. The possessor realizes the possessed through the medium of his own consciousness, which forms three aspects, the Trinity, of the one Being. The German philosopher Hegel says, 'If you say God is one, it is true; if you say He is two, that is also true; and if you say He is three, that is true too, because it is the nature of the world.'

God is regarded from three points of view: personality, morality, and reality. According to the first view, God is the most high; man is dependent upon Him and is His most obedient servant. According to the second view, God is the all-merciful and all-good Master of the Day of Judgement, while all evil is from Satan. The third is the philosophic view that God is the beginning and end of all, having Himself no beginning nor end. As a Sufi mystic has said, 'The universe is the manifestation of Allah, where from His own unity He created, by involution, variety – the state of various names and forms – , thereby distinguished as Allah, worthy of all praise and worship.'

DUAL ASPECT

According to Sufi tenets the two aspects of the supreme Being are termed *Zát* and *Sifat*, the Knower and the Known. The former is Allah and the latter Mohammed. *Zát* being only one in its existence, cannot be called by more than one name, which is Allah; and *Sifat*, being manifold in four different involutions, has numerous names, the sum of them all being termed Mohammed. The ascending and descending forms of *Zát* and *Sifat* form the circle of the Absolute. These two forces are called *Nuzul* and *Uruj*, which means involution and evolution. *Nuzul* begins from *Zát* and ends in *Sifat*; *Uruj* starts from *Sifat* and ends in *Zát*, *Zát* being the negative and *Sifat* the positive force.

Zát projects *Sifat* from its own self and absorbs it within itself. It is a rule of philosophy that the negative cannot lose its negativeness by projecting the positive from itself, though the positive covers the negative within itself, as the flame covers the fire. The positive has no independent existence, yet it is real because projected from the real, and

it may not be regarded as an illusion. Human ignorance persists in considering Zât to be separate from Sifat, and Sifat independent of Zât.

WORSHIP

We may ask: why we should worship God, and whether the theoretical knowledge of His law in nature is not sufficient For the highest realization. The answer is: no. Theoretical knowledge of a subject can never take the place of experience, which is necessary for realization. Written music cannot entertain us unless it is played, nor the description of perfume delight our senses unless we smell it, no recipes of the most delicious dishes satisfy our hunger. Nor can the theory of God give complete joy and peace; we must actually realize God or attain that state of realization which gives eternal happiness through the admiration and worship of nature's beauty and its source. 'The Beloved is all in all, the lover only veils him; the Beloved is all that lives, the lover a dead thing' (*Jelal-ud-Din Rumi*).

TRUTH

Different methods called religions and philosophies have been adopted by different nations at various periods. Though the form and teachings of the several religions appear so unlike, their source is one and the same. But from the very beginning the differences have created prejudice, envy, and antagonism between man. Such dissensions occupy a large portion of the histories of the world and have become the most important subject in life.

'So many castes and so many
creeds,

So many faiths, and so many
beliefs,

All have arisen from
ignorance of man,

Wise is he who only truth
conceives.'

A wise man realizes that the fundamental basis of all religions and beliefs is one: *Haq*, or truth. The truth has always been covered by two garments: a turban on the head, and a robe upon the body. The turban is made of mystery known as mysticism, and the robe is made of morality, which is called religion. Truth has been covered thus by most of the prophets and saints, in order to hide it from ignorant eyes, as yet too undeveloped to bear it in its naked form. Those who see the truth uncovered, abandon reason and logic, good and bad, high and low, new and old; differences and distinctions of names and forms fade away, and the whole universe is realized as nothing other than *Haq*. Truth in its realization is one; in its representation it is many, since its revelations are made under varying conditions of time and space.

As water in a fountain flows in one stream but falls in many drops, divided by time and space, so are the revelations of the one stream of truth. Not everyone can comprehend the idea of different truths being derived from the one truth. Common sense has been so narrowly trained in this world of variety, that it naturally fails to

realize the breadth and subtlety of a spiritual fact so far beyond the reach of its limited reasoning.

THE SUFIS

The word Sufi is derived from *Safa* meaning pure, purified of ignorance, superstition, dogmatism, egotism, and fanaticism, as well as free from limitations of caste, creed, race, and nation. The Sufis believe in God as the Absolute, the only Being; and that all creation is the manifestation of His nature.

There have been Sufis at all periods of human history. Though they have lived in different parts of the world, speaking different languages and born into different faiths and beliefs, they have recognized and sympathized with each other, through the oneness of their understanding. Yet with their deep knowledge of the world and of spiritual mysteries, they have concealed their beliefs from the multitude, and have pursued in secret their way of attainment to the highest bliss.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Nature has been involved through spirit into matter, and evolves through different stages. Man is the result of the involution of spirit and the evolution of matter; the final effect of this cause is 'self-realization', which means that the Knower arrives at that stage of perfection where He can know Himself...

'Thou art a mortal being,

And thou art the Eternal
One;

Know thyself, through light
of wisdom,

Except Thee there exists
none.'

The human being is inherently capable of self-knowledge; but to know oneself means not only to know that one is John, Jacob, or Henry, or short, tall, or of normal height, or to know that one is good, bad, and so forth, but also to know the mystery of one's existence, theoretically as well as practically: to know what one is within oneself, from whence and for what purpose one was born on earth; whether one will live here for ever, or if one's stay is short; of what one is composed, and which attributes one possesses; whether one belongs to angels, contemplating the beauties of God's nature, or if one belongs to the animals, who know nothing other than to eat, drink, and be merry; or whether one belongs to the devils. It requires perfection in humanity to attain self-knowledge. To know that I am God, or we are gods, or to know that everything is a part of God, is not sufficient. Perfect realization can only be gained by passing through all the stages between man, the manifestation, and God, the only Being; knowing and realizing ourselves from the lowest to the highest point of existence, and so accomplishing the heavenly journey.

LOVE

The greatest principle of Sufism is, 'Ishq Allah, Ma'bud Allah' (God is love, lover, and beloved).

When Ahad, the only Being, became conscious of his Wahdat, only existence, through His own consciousness, then His predisposition of love made Him project Himself to establish His dual aspect, that He might be able to love someone. This made God the lover, and manifestation the beloved; the next inversion makes manifestation the lover, and God the beloved. This force of love has been working through several evolutions and involutions, which end in man who is the ultimate aim of God. The dual aspect of God is significant in Zát and Sifat, in spirit and matter, and in the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms, wherein the two sexes, male and female, are clearly represented. The dual aspect of God is symbolized by each form of this wonderful world. This whole universe, internally and externally, is governed by the source of love, which is sometimes the cause and sometimes the effect. The producer and the product are one, and that One is nothing but love.

'A church, a temple or a
Ka'ba stone,

Qur'an or Bible or a martyr's
bone,

All these and more my heart
can tolerate,

Since my religion now is
Love alone' (Abul Ala).

Sufis take the course of love and devotion to accomplish their highest aim, because it is love which has brought

man from the world of unity to the world of variety, and the same force can take him back again to the world of unity from that of variety.

'Love is the reduction of the universe to the single being, and the expansion of a single being, even to God' (*Balzac*).

Love is that state of mind in which the consciousness of the lover is merged in that of the object of his love; it produces in the lover all the attributes of humanity, such as resignation, renunciation, humility, kindness, contentment, patience, virtue, calmness, gentleness, charity, faithfulness, bravery, by which the devotee becomes harmonized with the Absolute. As one of God's beloved, a path is opened for his heavenly journey: at the end he arrives at oneness with God, and his whole individuality is dissolved in the ocean of eternal bliss where even the conception of God and man disappears.

'Although love is a sweet
madness,

Yet all infirmities it heals.

Saints and sages have passed
through it,

Love both to God and man
appeals.'

PERFECTION

The ideal perfection, called *Baqa* by Sufis, is termed 'Najat' in Islam, 'Nirvana' in Buddhism, 'Salvation' in Christianity, and 'Mukhti' in Hinduism. This is the highest condition attainable, and all ancient prophets and sages experienced it, and taught it to the world.

Baqa is the original state of God. At this state every being must arrive some day, consciously or unconsciously, before or after death. The beginning and end of all beings is the same, difference only existing during the journey.

There are three ways in man's journey towards God. The first is the way of ignorance, through which each must travel. It is like a person walking for miles in the sun while carrying a heavy load on his shoulder, who, when fatigued, throws away the load and falls asleep under the shade of a tree. Such is the condition of the average person, who spends his life blindly under the influence of his senses and gathers the load of his evil actions; the agonies of his earthly longings creating a hell through which he must pass to reach the destination of his journey. With regard to him the Qur'an says, 'He who is blind in life, shall also be blind in the hereafter.'

The next way is that of devotion, which is for true lovers. Rumi says, 'Man may be the lover of man or the lover of God; after his perfection in either he is taken before the King of love.' Devotion is the heavenly wine, which intoxicates the devotee until his heart becomes purified from all infirmities and there remains the happy vision of the Beloved, which lasts to the end of the journey. 'Death is a bridge, which unites friend to friend' (*Sayings of Mohammed*).

The third is the way of wisdom, accomplished only by the few. The disciple disregards life's momentary comforts, unties himself from all earthly bondages and turns his eyes toward God, inspired with divine wisdom. He gains command over his body, his thoughts and feelings, and is thereby enabled to create his own heaven within himself, that he may rejoice until merged into the eternal goal. 'We have stripped the veil from thine eyes, and thy sight today is keen', says the Qur'an. All must journey along one of these three paths, but in the end they arrive at one and the same goal. As it is said in the Qur'an, 'It is He who multiplied you on the earth, and to Him you shall be gathered.'

PROPHETS

It is hard for intellect alone to believe in the possibility of prophetic inspiration. Intellect is the consciousness reflected in the knowledge of names and forms; wisdom is consciousness in its pure essence, which is not necessarily dependent upon the knowledge of names and forms.

The gift of wisdom gives vision in. to the real nature of things as the X-ray penetrates material bodies. Wisdom has been specially bestowed upon certain persons, and in these rare cases the receivers of it are more than merely wise, and may be regarded as the very manifestation of wisdom. They are the prophets, who have foresight, inspiration, intuition, clairvoyance, and clairaudience as their inborn attributes.

A Sufi considers all prophets and sages, not as many individuals, but as the one embodiment of God's pure consciousness, or the manifestation of divine wisdom, appearing on earth for the awakening of man from his

sleep of ignorance, in different names and forms. Just as one's own sub-consciousness would awaken one at a certain time, if previously warned, in the same way the consciousness of God is the agency for awakening His manifestation, projecting itself through different names and forms to accomplish His desire of being known. All these causes of wisdom are the manifestation of the one cause, Haq.

The prophetic mission was intended to train the world gradually in divine wisdom according to its mental evolution, and to impart it to man, according to his understanding, in forms suitable to various lands at different periods. This is why numerous different religions are still in existence, although the moral principles of all are the same.

Each prophet had a mission to prepare the world for the teaching of the next; each one prophesied the coming of the next, and the work was thus continued by all the prophets until Mohammed, the *Khatim al Mursalin*, the last messenger of divine wisdom and the seal of the prophets, came on his mission, and in his turn gave the final statement of divine wisdom: 'None exists but Allah.' This message fulfilled the aim of prophetic mission. This final definition is a clear interpretation of all religions and philosophies in the most apparent form. There was no necessity left for any more prophets after this divine message, which created the spirit of democracy in religion by recognizing God in every being. By this message man received the knowledge that he may attain the highest perfection under the guidance of a perfect murshid or spiritual teacher.

Sufis have no prejudice regarding any prophets and masters. They look upon all as divine wisdom itself, the highest attribute of God, appearing under different names and forms; and they love them with all adoration, as the lover loves his beloved in all her different garments, and throughout all the stages of her life. Sufis also respectfully recognize and offer devotion to their Beloved, the divine wisdom in all her garments, at all times, and under such different names and forms as Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. Mohammed teachings are studied and followed by the orthodox as religion, and by the deep thinkers as a philosophy.

SUFISM

Sufis, who had received spiritual training from all previous prophets and leaders, likewise received training from Mohammed. The openness of Mohammed's essential teachings paved the way for them to come forward into the world without the interference they had previously experienced, and a mystic order called the Saheba-e-Safa, Knights of Purity, was inaugurated by the Prophet, and afterwards was carried on by Ali and Siddiq. The lives of these knights were extraordinary in their wisdom, piety, bravery, spirituality, and great charity of heart. This order was carried on by their successors, who were called *Pir-o-Murshid*, *Shaikh*, etc., one after another, duly connected as links in a chain.

The spiritual bond between them is a miraculous force of divine illumination, and is experienced by worthy initiates of the Sufi Order; just as the electric current runs through all connected lamps and lights them. By this means the higher development is attained without great efforts. Sufism was unostentatiously practiced in Arabia during

the period of Sahabis, Taba'in, and Taba'-i-taba'in. Charity, piety, spirituality, and bravery are the real proofs of Sufi advancement.

The sensational Sufi movements which took place in Persia in the later periods, have won all the credit of Sufism for the Persians, and Sufism came to be regarded as a Persian philosophy. Imam al-Ghazali, Juneyd-e Baghdadi, Farid-ud-Din 'Attar had taken the lead in advancing Sufism in the world at large. Shams-e-Tabré z, Sa'di, Khagani, Firdausi, Omar Khayyám, Abdul Ala and other great Sufi poets, have very substantially established the reputation of Sufism by their inspired poetical works on divine wisdom. Sa'adi's works (*Gulistan* and *Bostan*) illuminate the intellect; the Divan of Hafiz expands the heart with divine love; Jelal-ud-Din Rumi's poems, the *Masnavi e Ma'navi* inspire the soul.

These works were originally composed in Persian, but are now translated into many other languages. They have been a most important source of education for humanity, and are studied as the most popular treatises on the divine wisdom of the East.

The spiritual part of Sufism was most miraculously realized by Abdul Qadir Jilani, Moin-ud-Din Chishti, Bahaud-Din Naqshband, Shihab-ud-Din Sohrawardi, and others.

India, being greatly addicted to philosophy, was well suited for Sufism, where, in ancient and modern records, a great many Sufis with miraculous careers are to be found. The tombs of Moin-ud-Din Chishti, Nizam-ud-Din, Sharif-ud-Din, Bandeh Navaz, Mohammed Gauth, are visited with much reverence and devotion by people of various

nations and many beliefs, in thankful remembrance of their great careers.

Sufism, as a religious philosophy of love, harmony, and beauty, aims at expanding the soul of man until the realization of the beauty of all creation enables him to become as perfect an expression of divine harmony as possible. It is therefore natural that the Sufi Order should stand foremost as a spiritual power in the East, and that it is rapidly becoming recognized in the West.

Many Sufi saints have attained what is known as Godconsciousness, which is the most all-inclusive realization of the meaning of the word 'good' attainable by man. Strictly speaking, Sufism is neither a religion nor a philosophy; it is neither theism nor atheism, but stands between the two and fills the gap. Among the religious, Sufis are considered to be free-thinkers; while among intellectual philosophers they are considered religious, because they make use of subtler principles in life to elevate the soul than can readily be followed by material logic.

Sufis have in many cases realized and shown the greatest perfection in humanity. And among the lives of the Sufi saints may be found some of the most divine models of human perfection in all capacities, from a king to a laborer. The idea that Sufism sprang from Islam or from any other religion, is not necessarily true; yet it may rightly be called the spirit of Islam, as well as the pure essence of all religions and philosophies.

A true Sufi remains in the thought of truth continually, sees the truth in all things and never becomes prejudiced, but cultivates affection for all beings. A Sufi accomplishes

the divine journey and reaches the highest grade of Baqa during this life, but people of all beliefs arrive, eventually, at the same level of understanding and realization which Sufism represents.

Sufism contains all branches of mysticism, such as psychology, occultism, spiritualism, clairvoyance, clairaudience, intuition, inspiration, etc., but that which a Sufi particularly wishes to acquire is not necessarily any of the above-named powers; because the object of all these powers is towards greater individuality, and individuality itself is only a hindrance on the Sufi's path towards the accomplishment of his highest perfection. Therefore the main object of initiation in the Sufi Order is to cultivate the heart through renunciation and resignation, that it may be pure enough to sow the seed of divine love and realize the highest truth and wisdom, both theoretically and practically, thereby attaining the highest attributes of humanity.

Divine perfection is perfection in all powers and mysteries. All mysteries, powers, and realizations gradually manifest themselves to the Sufi through his natural development, without his specially striving for them.

Self-realization is the highest and most difficult attainment of all; it is impossible to acquire it in the manner of sciences and arts, nor is it possible to attain it as health, wealth, honor, and power can be obtained by certain means. For the sake of selfrealization, thousands have renounced family and all worldly possessions, and kings their kingdoms, and they have retired to desert, jungle, or mountain fastness, striving to find in asceticism the secret of this bliss.

SUFI TRAINING

The murshid prefers a mureed whose mind is unembarrassed by other methods of training; who is free from worldly considerations, and is possessed of whole-hearted perseverance; who is capable of committing himself with perfect faith and devotion to the guidance of his murshid.

The practice of harmony and temperance is essential, but the murshid never prescribes for his mureeds the ascetic life; rather it is a peculiarity of the Sufi training that the mureed is quickened to appreciate and enjoy the world more than others. The murshid at first creates divine love in the mureed, which, in the course of time, develops and purifies his heart so much that it permits the virtues of humanity to develop freely of themselves. He then receives more and more divine wisdom from the appointed channel, and at last arrives at complete self-realization.

There is no common course of study for mureeds; each receives the special training best adapted to his requirements. In other words, the murshid, as a spiritual physician, prescribes a suitable remedy for curing every mureed. There is no limit of time for the advancement to a certain degree. To one, realization may come the moment after initiation; to another it may not be vouchsafed during his whole life. Among the Sayings of Mohammed one finds: 'It depends upon nothing but the mercy of Allah whomever He may kindly choose for it.'

Still, there is hope of success: 'Whoever walks one step towards the grace of Allah, the Divine mercy walks forward ten steps to receive him' (id.).

MANIFESTATION

The only Being has manifested Himself through seven different planes of existence, to accomplish His desire of being recognized:

Tanzih

1. Zát – the unmanifested
2. Ahadiat – plane of Eternal Consciousness
1. Wahdat – plane of consciousness
1. Wahdaniat – plane of abstract ideas

Tashbih

5. Arwah – the spiritual plane
6. Ajsam – the astral plane
7. Insan – the physical plane

There are, again, seven aspects of manifestation:

1. Sitara – planetary
2. Mahtab – lunar
3. Aftab – solar

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4. Madeniat – mineral kingdom

5. Nabitat – vegetable kingdom

6. Haywanat – animal kingdom

7. Insan – human kingdom

Insan, being the ideal manifestation, recognizes God by the knowledge of his own self. Man reaches this perfection by development through five grades of evolution:

1. Nasut – material plane

2. Malakut – mental plane

3. Jabarut – astral plane

4. Lahut – spiritual plane

5. Hahut – plane of consciousness

Each grade of development prepares a person for a higher one, and perfects him in five different grades of humanity:

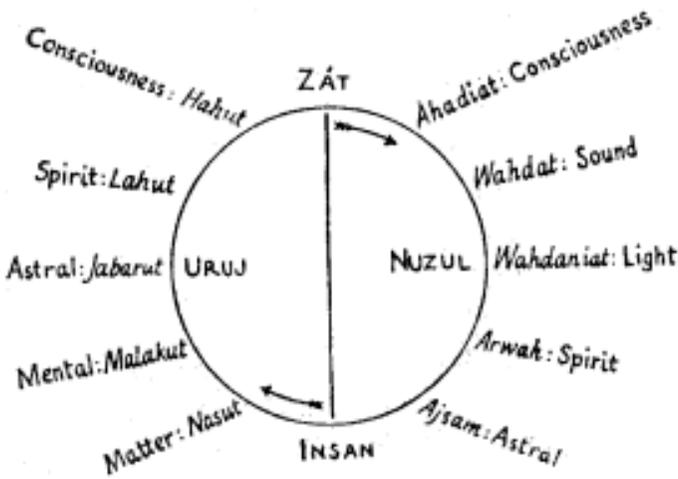
1. Adam – the ordinary man

2. Insan – the wise man
3. Wali – the holy man
4. Qutb – the saint
5. Nabi – the prophet

The five natures corresponding to these five grades are:

1. Ammara – who acts under the influence of his senses;
2. Lauwama – one who repents of his follies;
3. Mutmaina – one who considers before taking action;
4. Alima – one who thinks, speaks and acts aright;
5. Salima – one who sacrifices himself for the benefit of others.

The following is a diagram illustrating the planes of Nuzul and Uruj (evolution and involution):



All planes of existence consist of vibrations, from the finest to the grossest kind; the vibrations of each plane have come from a higher one, and have become grosser. Whoever knows the mystery of vibrations, he indeed knows all things. Vibrations are of five different aspects, appearing as the five elements:

1. Nur – ether
2. Baad – air
3. Atesh – fire
4. Aab – water

5. Khaak – earth

In relation to these elements, mankind has five senses:

Senses Organs

Basarat – sense of sight the eyes

Samat – sense of hearing the ears

Naghat – sense of smell the nose

Lazzat – sense of taste the tongue

Muss – sense of touch the skin

Through these senses and different organs of the mental and physical existence the *Ruh*, the soul, experiences life; and when the *Ruh* receives the highest experience of all phases of existence by the favor of the murshid, then it will have that peace and bliss, the attainment of which is the only object of manifestation.

INTEREST AND INDIFFERENCE

Interest results from ignorance and indifference results from wisdom; still it is not wise to avoid interest as long as we are in the world of illusion. It is the interest of God which has been the cause of all creation and which keeps the whole universe in harmony; nevertheless one should not be completely immersed in phenomena, but should realize oneself as being independent of interests.

The dual aspect of the only Being, in the form of love and beauty, has glorified the universe and produced harmony.

He who arrives at the state of indifference without experiencing interest in life is incomplete, and apt to be tempted by interest at any moment; but he who arrives at the state of indifference by going through interest, really attains the blessed state. Perfection is reached not through interest alone, nor through indifference alone, but through the right experience and understanding of both.

SPIRIT AND MATTER

From the scientific standpoint, spirit and matter are quite different from each other, but according to the philosophical point of view they are one.

Spirit and matter are different, bust as water is different from snow; yet again they are not different, for snow is nothing other than water. When spiritual vibrations become more dense they turn into matter, and when material vibrations become finer they develop into spirit.

For a Sufi at the beginning of his training the spiritual life is desirable, but after mastering it, material and spiritual lives become the same to him, and he is master of both.

THE HEART AND SOUL

Man's heart is the throne of God. The heart is not only a physical organ but is also the function of feeling, placed in the midst of the body and soul. The heart of flesh is the instrument which first receives the feeling of the soul, and transmits its effect through the whole body. There are four aspects of the heart:

1. 'Arsh – the exaltation of the will
2. Kursi – the seat of justice and distinction
3. Lawh – the fount of inspiration
4. Kalam – the source of intuition

Breath keeps body, heart, and soul connected. It consists of astral vibrations, and has much influence upon the physical and spiritual existence. The first thing a Sufi undertakes in order to harmonize the entire existence, is the purification of the heart; since there is no possibility of the heart's development without devotion, so the faithful mureed becomes a Sahib-e Dil, as the easiest and most ideal way of development.

INTELLECT AND WISDOM

Intellect is the knowledge obtained by experience of names and forms; wisdom is the knowledge which manifests only from the inner being; to acquire intellect one must delve into studies, but to obtain wisdom, nothing but the flow of divine mercy is needed; it is as natural as the instinct of swimming to the fish, or of flying to the bird. Intellect is the sight which enables one to see through the external world, but the light of wisdom enables one to see through the external into the internal world.

Wisdom is greater and more difficult to attain than intellect, piety, or spirituality.

DREAMS AND INSPIRATIONS

Dreams and inspirations are open proofs of the higher world. The past, present, and future are frequently seen in a dream, and may also be revealed through inspiration. The righteous person sees more clearly than the unrighteous. There are five kinds of dreams:

1. Khayali – in which the actions and thoughts of the day are reproduced in sleep.
2. Qalbi – in which the dream is opposite to the real happening.
3. Naqshi – in which the real meaning is disguised by as symbolic representation which only the wise can understand.
4. Ruhi – in which the real happening is literally shown.
5. Elhami – in which divine messages are given in letters or by an angelic voice.

Dreams give, sometimes clearly, sometimes in a veiled form, warnings of coming dangers and assurance of success. The ability to be conscious of dreams and their meaning varies with the degree of development attained.

Dreams have their effect sooner or later, according to the stars under which they take place. The dream seen at midnight is realized within one year, and the dream of the latter part of night within six months; the dream of the early morning is realized soon after. At the same time the manifestation of dreams is subject to qualification according to the good or bad actions of the dreamer.

Inspirations are more easily reflected upon spiritual persons than upon material ones. Inspiration is the inner light which reflects itself upon the heart of man; the purer the heart is from rust, like a clean mirror, the more clearly inspiration can be reflected in it. To receive inspirations clearly the heart should be prepared by proper training. A heart soiled with rust is never capable of receiving them. There are five kinds of inspiration:

1. Elham-e-'Ilm – inspiration of an artist and scientist
2. Elham-e-Husn – inspiration of a musician and poet
3. Elham-e-'Ishq – inspiration of a devotee
4. Elbam-e-Ruh – inspiration of a mystic
5. Elham-e-Ghayb – inspiration of a prophet

Inspirations are reflected upon mankind in five ways:

1. Kushad der Khyal – in the wave of thought

2. Kushad der Hal – in emotions and feelings
3. Kushad der Jemal – in the sufferings of the heart
4. Kushad der Jelal – in the flow of wisdom
5. Kushad der Kemal – in the divine voice and vision

Some are born with an inspirational gift, and to some it appears after their development. The higher the development in spirituality, the greater the capacity for inspiration, yet the gift of inspiration is not constant; as the saying of Mohammed declares, 'Inspirations are enclosed as well as disclosed at times; they appear according to the will of Allah, the only Knower of the unknown.'

LAW OF ACTION

The law of cause and effect is as definite in its results in the realm of speech and thought as in the physical world.

Evil done, when it is considered evil, is a sin; and good done, when it is considered good, is a virtue, but one who does good or bad without understanding, has no responsibility for his sins nor credit for his virtues; but he is liable to punishment or reward just the same.

Man forms his future by his actions. His every good or bad action spreads its vibrations and becomes known throughout the universe. The more spiritual a man is, the

stronger and clearer are the vibrations of his actions, which spread over the world and weave his future.

The universe is like a dome: it vibrates to that which you say in it, and echoes the same back to you. So also is the law of action: we reap what we sow.

It is impossible to differentiate between good and bad, because the thing seen is colored by the personality of the seer; to the bad view, all good is bad, and to the good view, even the bad seems good in a certain sense; so the wise keep silence in distinguishing good from bad. The most essential rule is not to do to others that which you would not have done to you. That action is desirable which results from kindness, and that action is undesirable which is unkind. Doubtless also, might is often right, but in the end, right is the only might.

There are different principles for life in different religions, but a Sufi's will is the principle for himself. He is the servant, who surrenders himself to principles; and he is the master, who prescribes principles for himself. One who has never been commanded in life, never knows how to command; in the same way, to be the master, one must first be the servant.

The murshid as a physician of the soul prescribes necessary principles to the mureed, who after accomplishing the training, arrives at that blessed state where he overcomes virtues and sins, and stands beyond good and bad. To him happiness no longer differs from sorrow, for his thought, speech, and action become the thought, speech, and action of God.

MUSIC AMONG SUFIS

Music is called *Ghiza-i-ruh*, the food of the soul, by Sufis. Music being the most divine art elevates the soul to the higher spirit; music itself being unseen soon reaches the unseen; just as only the diamond can break the diamond, so musical vibrations are used to make the physical and mental vibrations inactive, in order that the Sufi may be elevated to the spiritual spheres.

Music consists of vibrations which have involved from the top to the bottom, and if they would only be systematically used, they could be evolved from the bottom to the top. Real music is known only to the most gifted ones. Music has five aspects:

1. Tarab – music which induces motion of the body (artistic)
2. Raga – music which appeals to the intellect (scientific)
3. Qul – music which creates feelings (emotional)
4. Nida – music heard in vision (inspirational)
5. Saut – music in the abstract (celestial)

Music has always been the favorite Sufi means of spiritual development. Rumi, the author of the *Masnavi*, introduced music into his Maulvi Order, and enjoyed the memory of his blessed murshid's association while listening to it. Since that time music has become the second subject of Sufi practices. They declare that it creates harmony in both worlds and brings eternal peace.

The great mystic of India, Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti, introduced music into his Chishtia Order. Even today musical entertainments for the elevation of the soul, called *Suma*, are held among Sufis.

ECSTASY

Ecstasy is called *Wajad* by Sufis: it is especially cultivated among the Chishtis. This bliss is the sign of spiritual development and also the opening for all inspirations and powers. This is the state of eternal peace, which purifies from all sins. Only the most advanced Sufis can experience *Wajad*. Although it is the most blissful and fascinating state, those who give themselves entirely to it become unbalanced, for too much of anything is undesirable; as the day's labor is a necessary precursor of the night's rest, so it is better to enjoy this spiritual bliss only after the due performance of worldly duties.

Sufis generally enjoy *Wajad* while listening to music called *Qawwali*, special music producing emotions of love, fear, desire, repentance, etc.

There are five aspects of *Wajad*: *Wajad* of dervishes, which produces a rhythmic motion of the body; *Wajad* of idealists, expressed by a thrilling sensation of the body, tears and sighs; *Wajad* of devotees, which creates an

exalted state in the physical and mental body; Wajad of saints, which creates perfect calm and peace; and Wajad of prophets, the realization of the highest consciousness called *Sadrat al Mantaha*. One who by the favor of the murshid arrives at the state of Wajad is undoubtedly the most blessed soul and deserves all adoration.

CONCENTRATION

The entire universe in all its activity has been created through the concentration of God. Every being in the world is occupied consciously or unconsciously in some act of concentration. Good and evil are alike the result of concentration. The stronger the concentration, the greater the result; lack of concentration is the cause of failure in all things. For this world and the other, for material as well as spiritual progress, concentration is most essential.

The power of will is much greater than the power of action, but action is the final necessity for the fulfillment of the will. Perfection is reached by the regular practice of concentration, passing through three grades of development: Faná -fi-Shaikh, annihilation in the astral plane, Faná-fi-Rasul, annihilation in the spiritual plane, and Faná-fi-Allah, annihilation in the abstract.

After passing through these three grades, the highest state is attained of Bá qi-bi-Allah, annihilation in the eternal consciousness, which is the destination of all who travel by this path.

Breath is the first thing to be well studied. This is the very life, and also the chain which connects material existence with the spiritual. Its right control is a ladder leading from the lowest to the highest stage of development. Its science

is to be mastered by the favor of the murshid, the guiding light of God.

MALE AND FEMALE ASPECTS OF GOD

The only Being is manifested throughout all planes of existence in two aspects, male and female, representing nature's positive and negative forces. In the plane of consciousness there are two aspects: *Wahdat*, consciousness, and *Ahadiat*, eternal consciousness, and thus also spirit and matter, night and day, signify the dual aspect on lower planes. In the mineral and vegetable kingdoms sex is in a state of evolution, but the highest manifestation of male and female is man and woman.

Man being the first aspect of manifestation, is the more spiritual and nearer to God; woman being the next manifestation, is finer and more capable of divine knowledge. Man's natural tendency is towards God, while woman's tendency is towards the world. These contrary tendencies result in balance. Therefore man needs woman to direct his life, and woman needs man for her guidance and protection, both being incomplete in themselves.

The problem of the emancipation of woman may be studied by a comparison of her position in the East and in the West.

The Oriental woman, whose freedom is restricted, is the better wife from the individual point of view, but the enforced inactivity of half the population is not beneficial to the nation. The Occidental woman who is given entire freedom is less anxious for and less capable of home life, but being out in the world her influence promotes the advancement of the nation.

At first sight it would appear that woman is more respected by man in the West, but in reality the East gives her the greater reverence.

Man has more freedom than woman throughout the entire world because he has more strength and power; and the fineness of woman needs protection, just as the eye, being the finest organ of the body, has been protected by nature with eyelids. Both excel in their own characteristics.

A virgin is idolized by man because she is the model of high manifestation; woman's virtue is a greater ideal than her physical and intellectual beauty. Nature has placed her under the protection of man, but what is most desirable is that man gives her freedom and that she appreciates it by making the best use of it.

There are three kinds of virgins. One, commonly considered a virgin, who has never had association with a man; another is the virgin in heart, whose love is centered in one beloved only; and the third is the virgin in soul, who considers man as God. She alone can give birth to a divine child.

A woman may become a doctor, solicitor, or minister, but it is incomparably greater if she can become a good wife and a kind mother.

Monogamy and polygamy are inborn human attributes. They also exist among birds and beasts. Each individual is born with one of these tendencies, but sometimes one rather than the other is developed by the effect of the atmosphere and surroundings. These tendencies also depend upon the climatic and physical conditions of different countries and races. Polygamy may be natural to

man, and monogamy to woman, as the former helps manifestation while the latter destroys it. Illegal polygamy is worse than legal, because it creates deceit and falsehood. Monogamy is the ideal life which is a comfort in this world and the next, and perfects one in love.

Absolute renunciation is as undesirable as is the blind attachment to the world. The ideal life is detached interest in the world, which is best accomplished by man and woman together.

Woman is a mystery within herself, owing to her subtle nature. Sages who made the mistake of considering woman to be of lesser spiritual importance forgot that they themselves were the product of woman.

The majority of prophets and masters have been men because man is the higher manifestation, as is signified by the myth of Adam and Eve, in which Eve was born from the rib of Adam, meaning that woman is the later manifestation; the fruit means that woman directed man's thoughts towards procreation. The interpretation of Adam and Eve's exile from heaven is the fall of mankind from the state of innocence to the state of youth. The separation and unhappiness of Adam and Eve show the object of God to manifest in the dual aspect, that He may accomplish his real desire of love. According to the Vedanta half of the divine body, Ardhangi, is womanhood, proving that unity of both is the complete life.

Sufis consider a life of complete unity the most balanced, if it is true and harmonious. Love and wisdom create harmony between man and woman; but these being absent, harmony ceases to exist.

A child inherits more attributes from its mother than from its father, therefore the mother is more responsible for its merits and defects and if she has knowledge she can train the soul of her child even before its birth by the power of her concentration, molding the child's future according to her own will.

Harmony between truer persons is more lasting than the affections of average mankind. People of angelic qualities have everlasting harmony between them, in which God Himself accomplishes His object of manifestation.

Mankind is born with a worshipful attitude, and as all attitudes demand satisfaction by expression, so the attitude of worship finds its object of adoration. The ancient Greeks and Shiva Bhaktas of India worshipped both aspects of manifestation in the names of gods and goddesses. Sufism, being the essence of all religions and philosophies, looks upon both the opposite aspects of nature as one in reality, and calls it *Safat Allah*. Sufis reach realization of God by adoring His nature, calling on Him saying, 'Kull-i shayin Há l-i kull', which means, 'Everything will perish except His own Face.' They look upon all names and forms as the means of realizing the One, the only Being.

By Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

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The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:

'The 800th Anniversary of Jalalludin Rumi, and the True Spiritual
Heritage of Afghanistan and the Middle East'

Issue Twelve

Compiled by Marilynn Hughes

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Author, Marilynn Hughes, Photo by Harvey Kushner

The twelfth issue of the 'The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal' Marilynn writes an article on the true spiritual heritage of Afghanistan and the Middle East - Jalalludin Rumi and the Sufi Mystic Poets.

In our 'Question and Answer' Section, we have a series of inquiries from 'Dianne' who is experiencing profound mystical phenomena but wasn't aware that this was what she was experiencing.

And In our 'Different Voices' section, **H.G. Raverty** writes 'Mystic Doctrine and Poetry of the Sufi's,' and **Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan** makes a profound statement in 'A Sufi Message of Spiritual Liberty.' This issue is an attempt to look deeper at the spiritual heritage of the Middle East - some of the profoundly peaceful teachings - and recognize that some of the forces (i.e. the Taliban) in these countries in no way represent the full depth of the hidden mystical knowledge and traditions of the people.

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