

MTO Sufi Association Newsletter

contact@sufiasociation.com

*Flying through the cloud
Traveling through the mist
Driving through the fog
Wondering through the roads
Lost in dense forests
These are the options of life!*

Where is the light at the end of the tunnel?

-Nader Angha¹

Sufism is the reality of you.

-Nader Angha⁴

If we look closely, the underlying reason for all struggles is the attainment of tranquility - each and everyone wants true tranquility.

-Sedegh Angha⁴

Letter from the Editor

"If there were only one in the world, and that one were you, what would be your name? Who would you be? Would you hate? would you love? If there were one, and that one had all the knowledge of the universe, and could respond to all your needs and all your wants, what would you do?"²

Sufism aims to increase our awareness of who

we are, what we are and the purpose of our place in the universe. The Sufis teach of love, joy, truth and purity and of how we may find this within our lives today, and for eternity. Over 1400 years Sufis have used various forums to teach about unity, love and transcendence: art, poetry, stories and science.

The first issue of this

newsletter aims to introduce Sufism through some of these mediums. It is our hope that these monthly newsletters would bring to you the reader, as much joy, hope and love as we have experienced in preparing it for you. Please send comments and suggestions to the email address listed on this page.

Executive Editor

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Sufism: The Bottom Line

excerpted from Sufism The Science of the Soul vol. 3(1) by Behdad Afrakhan³

Since the beginning of time, each human being irrespective of culture, race or gender has at some time during their life pondered the following three questions:

Where did I come from?
What am I doing here?
Where am I going after I die? To me, these questions are the bottom line in life.

When I was born I was given a name and every aspect of living was taught to me by my parents, friends, and society as a whole. As children whenever we



Bohlul and the Bridge

Bohlul was sitting on a bridge, watching the river flow by. The king saw him, and immediately had him arrested.

“A bridge is for passing, not for staying!” said the king.

Bohlul then replied to the king, “You should take a look at yourself . Look at how you are clinging to this life.”

Sufism: The Bottom Line

needed an answer or whenever we were puzzled by something, we first and foremost asked our parents, because they seemed to have all of the answers.

However, if I inquired about the above mentioned questions, one of the following two scenarios would likely take place: They will either answer me according to what they have been taught by either their own parents or what the society has dictated to them; or, if I have scrupulously honest parents, and they truly and sincerely feel that they are not the authority to answer those questions, they will refer me to society’s authorities on the subject or the “religious leaders.”

Let us look at where my journey will lead me if I seek out the answers

from “religious leaders.” I may believe that these “religious leaders” are knowledgeable about my questions because I was referred to them by my parents whom I fully trust and love. As I sincerely seek their company to reach my answers, I may come to realize that as has too frequently been witnessed, the water is “too diluted or far from the source.” I may experience that religious leaders can “talk a brilliant game,” but as a sports saying goes: But can they talk the talk and walk the walk? The answer is all too often sadly obvious.

On the other hand, if I seek out the answers from my parents, and I listen to their answers and explanations, I will discover an “entity” that is: forgiving, loving, who created us, and who

allows us to enter heaven after death if we are good or to hell if we are bad. Our parents will also instruct us to ask this eternal entity called “God” for help during our moments of crisis and to note that if he responds to our needs He or She (since we are in the new age of religion) has cared for us, and if He/She does not respond to our needs there must be a magical or mysterious reason for this because as we all have heard “the Lord works in mysterious ways.”

As I seek my answers from these sources whom I think have the qualifications and the necessary training to respond to my answers, after a while, if I am thinking at all, I will get disillusioned and frustrated because inside I feel that my search is

“all the answers that I have sought are within me...by listening to the true I, I will find my answers.”

Sufism: The Bottom Line

going nowhere like applying for different jobs and constantly being rejected. As I feel frustrated one of two things may begin to happen inside of me:

1) I will begin to hate this thing called God for bringing me into this world and leaving me with no answers when I have important questions to ask!

2) I will say to myself "forget about all these so called important questions because many people before me too attempted to solve them and they

have failed, so I should just enjoy the worldly matters before me because life is too short to bother."

Either scenario leaves one wondering where to go next and I remain in a constant turbulent world of my own creation. Which incidentally probably closely resembles the hell that I have been promised after I die. Can the afterlife hell be much worse than what I go through within myself on a daily basis?

I do believe that everyone can relate to these

scenarios because they are universal stories and while the tenor and tone may vary, they apply to all of us.

After my introduction to Sufism, I came to the understanding that all of the answers that I have sought are within me and are not answerable by any experts. That the way to live my life, to gain and achieve what I want, are all found within myself. That by listening to this true I, I will find my answers.

References:

1. Angha, N. (1996). *Whispering Moments: Inspirations*, Riverside, CA: M.T.O. Shahmaghsoudi Publications.
2. Angha, N. (1996). *Sufism and Islam*, Riverside, CA: M.T.O. Shahmaghsoudi Publications.
3. Afrakhan, B.: *Sufism The Science of the Soul*: 2000, 3(1), 36-38.
4. Compiled by Wilcox, L., *Sayings of the Sufi Sages*, 1997, MTO Shahmaghsoudi Publications, Washington DC.
5. <http://www.vedantaatlanta.org/stories/Sufi.h ml> (Date visited: 05/09/04)

Illustration:

Pg 3: from the book *Whispering Moments: Inspirations* by Molana Salahuddin Ali Nader Shah Angha (1997) MTO Shahmaghsoudi Publications, p. 3.

