

MTO Sufi Association Newsletter

*Once upon a time I had a dream of me,
Met myself, did not recognize,
Talked to, but did not hear,
Walked with, but could not follow,
Spoke to, but did not understand,
Once upon a time, I had a dream of me,
But when I woke up there was no dream,
It was just I.*

-Nader Angha'

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Sufism: A Bridge Between Religions?

By Nader Angha

The reality of religion is not based on the differing practices and rituals that have been developed over the centuries. God is the foundation of religion, and God cannot be found through the mind and the physical senses, nor from reading or hearing the words of others. The discovery of religion is the discovery of the innermost dimension of our own being, from which the divine attributes follow. This is what the prophets cognized. To make this discovery requires devo-

tion, discipline, and precise training, which Sufism provides.

In order to attain this goal, to know the "I", the "Being" of our self, knowledge is required. Such knowledge is not to be found in the usual social sources, but one must move beyond these limited boundaries. This "I" is the basis of Sufism, which follows the Way of the Prophets toward the seed of Truth lying within every human heart. In this sense, Sufism is a bridge between all "religions", for it

accepts all the Prophets.

To the Sufi, the boundaries separating traditional views of religious institutions are irrelevant. This emphasis and insistence on the personal experience and knowledge of God and the discipline and method of training which assists students in the path toward this goal is the structure which makes Sufism the bridge among the "religions", both in our inner being and in our world.

*I looked for Him on the Christian cross,
But he was not there.
I went to Hindu temples and shrines - but
nothing.
I visited the Ka'aba in Mecca,
I did not find Him.
I questioned learned scholars,
But He outstripped their understanding.
Finally, when I peered into my own heart -
There, and nowhere else, was His home.
-Rumi³*

Controlling Anger

When was the last time you felt anger? Chances are, it was probably sometime today. Every day we initiate the 'fight or flee' response in our bodies, when most of the time neither fighting nor fleeing would be necessary. Our hearts are made to beat faster due to missed trains, petty arguments and misplaced items. Is all this really worth the assault

on our bodies?

Research has shown that angrier people are more likely to suffer from heart conditions such as atherosclerosis.⁴ Interestingly, a separate study has shown that women evaluated as being optimists were less likely to develop atherosclerosis than pessimists.⁵

A common practice in Sufism is to sit quietly, focus on the heart and

breathe slowly with complete concentration. By performing this act, the love and energy from the heart can finally be heard, and the body is no longer assaulted by daily demands and inconveniences.

Choosing love instead of anger is the way to gain a more positive outlook on life, leading to a healthier body and soul.

*Why are your lips dry when the cup is full?
Conceive an impossible plan - as Noah did!
Live the life that you love.
-Rumi³*

References

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