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M.T.O. Sufi Association Newsletter

Real Self-Knowledge

What are you in yourself, and where did you come from?

Where are you going, and for what purpose are you here?

By Professor Nader Angha¹

Since the 1990's there has been a fresh interest in mysticism. Sufism is generally considered the mystical dimension of Islam. The word mysticism is often used as a term of mere reproach, to throw at any opinion which we regard as vague, vast and sentimental without any basis in either fact or logic.

For thousands of years Sufism has offered a path in which one can progress towards the "great end" of self-realisation, or the cognition of God. Sufism is the way of love, a way of devotion and a way of knowledge. It is also called The Way of the

Prophets, for it recognises and respects all the prophets, including Moses, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammad. The universal message of Sufism is that not only love but also self-knowledge leads to knowledge of God. My father, the great Sufi Mater of our time, has said:

Real self-knowledge consists in knowing the following:

- **What are you in yourself, and where did you come from?**
- **Where are you going, and for what purpose are you here?**

According to the tradition of Sufism, the reality of humanity and the answers to the above cannot be revealed nor transferred

through words or found in books.

Sufis find God by knowing Him, but their mode of knowing is intuitive rather than informational. Sufism represents cognition and awareness. Cognition and awareness in this sense means discovering God through heart discovery and inner vision, rather than through reasoning and deduction. To the Sufis this discovery is not vague or imaginative, but rather it is a personal religious experience that has its roots and centre in states of consciousness.

Inside this issue:

Real Self-Knowledge	1
Stress	2
Sufi Tales	2

Of all the forms of slavery to which man is liable, the greatest importance attaches to the slavery of man to society.

-Nikolai Berdyaev¹



FOUR TOWNS¹

There were 4 towns. In each town, people were starving to death. Each town had a bag of seeds.

In the first town, no one knew what seeds could do. No one knew how to plant them.

In the second town, one person knew what seeds were and how to plant them, but did nothing about it for one reason or another. Everyone starved.

In the third town, one person knew what seeds were and how to plant them. He proposed to plant them in exchange for being declared the king or ruler. All ate, but were ruled.

In the fourth town, one person knew what seeds were and how to plant them. He not only planted the seeds, but taught everyone the art of gardening. All ate, and all were free and empowered.

THE MAN AND THE TIGER⁴

A man being followed by a hungry tiger, turned in desperation to face it, and cried: "Why don't you leave me alone?"

The tiger answered: "Why don't you stop being so appetizing?"

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3. Mc Graw, P.C., Self Matters: Creating Your Life from the Inside Out, 2001, New York, NY: Simon and Schuster Source.
4. <http://www.katinkahesslink.net/sufi/stories2.html> (Date visited 18/06/06).
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*Open your hidden eyes and come,
return to the root of the root of
your own self.*
-Rumi²

the number of years that might be lost because of stress and living in the fictional self, it would be thirty two years."

Think about it, that's almost 1/3 of your life lost for no reason.

As a student of the School of Sufism, I have learnt a great saying that I always repeat to myself when life become overwhelming, "THIS TOO SHALL PASS". So I hope that while you are all studying for the exams and juggling everything else that is occurring in your life, you take some time out to remember the real meaning of life...all of this is for you to find your AUTHENTIC SELF. The real you that can not be moved or shaken by anyone or any circumstance.

Stress

Ok, during these exam periods we all experience it one way or another. Undoubtedly, stress is a major influential factor in the lives of each one of us.

Where does it come from and why is it so painful?

We often think about stress stemming from external stimuli, but what about stress that is caused by denying yourself the REAL YOU.

In the book *Self Matters*³, Dr Phil explains the research of Dr Michael Roizen which points out that, "for every year that you live life with high stress, you shorten your life expectancy by 3 years. According to his research, if you do not have an outlet for your true passion, it costs you another 6 years...If you add up

*The wise knows that he does not know and the foolish does not.
Those aware of their poverty shall receive wealth.
And those aware of their loss shall seek and find.*
-Professor Sadegh Angha⁵