

THE SPIRIT OF SUFISM

by

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All the divine Messengers of God are regarded by the Sufi as One embodiment of the Spirit of Guidance. Through this attitude, he enters the path of his illumination, where he is far from feeling the necessity of comparing these great personalities, and disputing over the question of their superiority or inferiority, as most religious persons do, to find themselves differing on this subject. To the Sufi, the Teacher is never absent. For some, the Teacher has already come and gone, for others the Teacher is still to come, but to the Sufi, the Teacher has always been and will remain with him. For the Sufi, God is the same and the Light is the same as it was ever before.

The Messengers who came on earth from time to time in order to enlighten mankind, brought their divine Messages in various forms and in various languages, according to the place of their birth, to the different periods and races. They all borrowed the Light from one and the same Source, the *Nur*. Out of this Light, this *Nur*, the whole universe manifested; and this variety, we witness on earth, has sprung from one Source, and that is God, Whose desire it was to be manifested in order to know the two aspects of perfection and imperfection. When we observe and study the nature of the human soul, we find its inclination is towards seeking and knowing the knowledge not only of the inner life but also of our outer being. We find in human life two demands, because we have in us two aspects; of spirit and matter. These two aspects require sustenance, and this sustenance we ought to attain in life,

and if we really respond to both these demands, then our life grows in harmony and balance. Our drawback is that owing to this objective world, we overlook the demand and longing of our soul and spirit. In this way, we allow our soul to starve and we think only important in life, that which is objective and our daily need; this has deluded us and drawn our soul from the inner life. When we study our life and the life around us and its earthly achievement, its wealth, power, position and possessions, we may still feel its poverty. It is as if our soul is pulled from two sides, by spirit and matter. Therefore the effort of the wise is to harmonise these two sides in life through prayer. For prayer is the means by which to rise to a higher consciousness, which is the purpose of the soul.

The spirit of Sufism is constantly lifting the different religions of the world upwards through the understanding of their ideal and their goal. It points out to their followers the depth of their own religions showing them the Essence, which is the Divine wisdom. This spirit may bring a closer co-operation in which differences may cease. Each follower of a religion may thus unite in the true religion, in Sufism, through the realisation that the Messengers were never sent to separate mankind but to unite humanity in the Fatherhood of God.

Inayat Khan says: The God of the Sufi is the God of every creed and the God of all. Names make no difference to Him - Allah, God, Gott, Dieu, Khuda, Brahma or Bhagwan. All these names and more are the names of God •••• God, to the Sufi, is not only a religious belief forced on him, but the highest ideal, the human mind can conceive. The Sufi forgetting the self, and aiming at the attainment of the divine ideal walks constantly all through life in the path of love and light. In God the Sufi sees the perfection of all that is in the reach of man's perception and yet knows Him to be above human reach. He looks to Him as the lover to the Beloved.