

## *The Sufis Idries Shah*

This work offers coverage of the spiritual and psychological tradition of Sufism. It shows that Sufism is not the preserve of ecstatic religionists, but has a contribution to make to human culture and philosophy. First published in 1957, *Destination Mecca* was both an ambitious travel book and a work of ethnographic and cultural research. Shah documents a wide range of fascinating journeys, from his quest for the Gold Mines of King Solomon on Sudan's Red Sea Coast, to encounters in desert caravanserais and sojourns with Mediterranean contraband smugglers, to his time as a personal guest of the elderly King Ibn Saud. As readable now as it was more than fifty years ago, *Destination Mecca* acts as a beacon for young adventurers and for more sedate armchair travellers.

In his writing about Sufism, Idries Shah did some revolutionary things. Critically, and almost alone, he said that it was possible to divorce the essence of Sufi philosophy from what he insisted were secondary accretions of Islamic culture and religion. Moreover, he said, in making this material available to the West, you could not only do this, you must do it. This is because, he believed, you can only absorb materials that are designed for your own time and place. Sufism as an essence may be 'truth without form' but, in order to penetrate into the human mind, it must be delivered in a package shaped to fit the receiving culture. 'When something new enters a culture, there is a period where, like a new object being thrown into the chimpanzee pen at a zoo, all the chimps rush over to touch it, throw it on the floor, fight over it and so on,' he once told me. 'We must wait until the dust settles; only then will people be in a position to assess this material.' My father died in 1996 and the dust is settling fast. He leaves a body of work behind and, on this work alone, he believed, he should and would be judged. This anthology is intended to provide a basic sample of his work, an essential reader, to allow people to do exactly what he would have wished them to do: to think for themselves and to make up their own minds. - From the Editor's Note, by Saira Shah

'Perhaps the best introduction to the body of Shah's work, the most comprehensively informative. And one is immediately forced to use one's mind in a new way.' - *The New York Times* When it first appeared in 1964, *The Sufis* was welcomed as the decisive work on the subject: rich in scope, clearly explaining the traditions and philosophy of the Sufis to a Western audience for the first time. In the five decades since its release, the book has been translated into dozens of languages, and has found a wide readership in both East and West. It is used as a text in scores of leading universities around the world, and the material contained within it has been applied by psychologists and physicists, by school teachers, lawyers, social workers, and by ordinary members of the public. Ted Hughes wrote of it: 'An astonishing book. The Sufis must be the biggest society of sensible men on earth'; and Nobel laureate Doris Lessing said of it: 'I had waited my entire life to read this book.'

Introd. by Robert Graves

Tales of the Dervishes

Oriental Magic

Veiled Gazelle

Sufism, the mystical aspect of Islam, has had a lasting effect on the literature of that religion. Its teachings aim at perfecting the human mind. This is an anthology of Sufi writings which form an introduction to this body of thought.

As our world continues to shrink, we are being brought headlong into often explosive contact with other cultures and religions. Islam continues to be for many a mysterious and misunderstood force, alien to our own cultural values. Yet, in more ways than expected, Christianity and Islam share common ground. For centuries, Sufi thinkers have been linked to both religions in certain important ideas. But, like the elephant in the dark in Jalaludin Rumi's classic fable, these ideas are not grasped in full by seizing parts of the whole and arguing for or against their supposed Christian or Islamic derivation. From a series of lectures given by Idries Shah at Geneva University, *The*

Elephant in the Dark shifts focus to more fruitful ground, tracing documented episodes of cooperation and understanding between Christians and Moslems over the past 1,400 years.

Does there lie in mankind's remote past a single origin for the beliefs and practices of magic found in nearly every culture in the world? Behind the distortions and grotesqueries of magical practices, could there be clues to processes worthy of our objective consideration? First published nearly 40 years ago, *Oriental Magic* is still the definitive work on the subject. Its publication was the culmination of five years of research into rare artifacts, obscure manuscripts, and travels into remote areas where strange magical practices endure. The "singing sands" of Egypt, the invisible rulership of Sufism, subcutaneous electricity, and the prehistoric sources of Babylonian occult practices are just a few of the intriguing subjects described. The author includes personal accounts of "training" under a ju-ju witch doctor, a demonstration of Hindu levitation, and translations of secret alchemical and magical formulae. Revealed is an astonishing similarity in magical beliefs, practices, and terminology of places as diverse as China, the Near East, Scandinavia, and Africa. *Oriental Magic* includes a myriad of illustrations, including unique photos of places and people associated with the mysterious world of magic. Only an author of Shah's experience, dedication, and knowledge of human nature could assemble such an array of arcane information into a dazzling picture of human beliefs and practices. This new release is sure to attract the attention of a new generation of interested readers.

A mixture of primitive and conditioned responses, common to everyone, which inhibits and distorts human progress and understanding.

The Sufis, [by] Idries Shah

A Global History

The Magic Monastery

Darkest England

Studies in Experientialism

A 'Veiled Gazelle', as the great mystic Ibn Arabi explains in his *Interpreter of Desires*, is a subtlety, an organ of higher perception. Sufi experientialists refer to the activation of these centres of awareness as the awakening of real knowledge of Truth beyond form. A *Veiled Gazelle* considers the symbolic and instrumental employment of its literature in Sufi studies. Seldom didactic, and never meant only as entertainment, such works are regarded as some of the world's greatest and most important writing.

Part meditation book, part oracle, and part collection of Sufi lore, poetry, and stories, *The Sufi Book of Life* offers a fresh interpretation of the fundamental spiritual practice found in all ancient and modern Sufi schools—the meditations on the 99 Qualities of Unity. Unlike most books on Sufism, which are primarily collections of translated Sufi texts, this accessible guide is a handbook that explains how to apply Sufi principles to modern life. With inspirational commentary that connects each quality with contemporary concerns such as love, work, and success, as well as timeless wisdom from Sufi masters, both ancient and modern, such as Rumi, Hafiz, Shabistari, Rabia, Inayat Khan, Idries Shah, Irina Tweedie, Bawa Muhaiyadden, and more, *The Sufi Book of Life* is a dervish guide to life and love for the twenty-first century. On the web:

<http://sufibookoflife.com>

First published in 1957, *The Secret Lore of Magic* contains within it a series of major source-books of magical arts. Many of them translated into English for the first time, these works are annotated and fully illustrated. The book's title in itself signalled the fact that the bulk of material in this bibliographical study had never been published openly before. Together with *Oriental Magic* which appeared in the preceding year, it provided a complete survey of fundamental magical literature, and thus a comprehensive reference system for psychologists, ethnologists and others interested in the rise and development of human beliefs. Both books also introduced the general reader to dependable information about what was a shadowy and confusing subject.

No ordinary collection of tales, this anthology was the result of extensive research that led Shah to conclude that there is a certain basic fund of human fictions which recur again and again throughout the world and never seem to lose their compelling attraction. This special paperback version of *World Tales* concentrates on the essentials, the text of the stories, and omits the illustrations which were part of a previous edition.

Seeker After Truth

The Pleasantries of the Incredible Mulla Nasrudin

The Secret Lore of Magic

Analogical and Action Philosophy of the Middle East and Central Asia

The Sufi Book of Life

"A concise but authentic account." — *Islamic Review*. The first concise history of Sufism to appear in any language, this work remains among the best. A noted scholar offers insights into every aspect of Sufism, from interpretation of the word of God and the life of the Prophet to the theorists of Sufism, the structure of Sufi theory and practice, and more.

Using the powerful approach of classical teachers, Shah has crafted a contemporary teaching tool that blends a fastpaced look at today's world with the timeless teachings of the Sufis. The book brings into sharp focus the conditioned behavior and self-deception that are common in Western minds. Far more than a literary tool for breaking loose old mental habits, it is a blueprint for a process of self-development that precludes self-deceit. Truly a book among books, *A Perfumed Scorpion* is treasured the world over for its clarity of wisdom and forcefulness of insight.

Assembled by Idries Shah, *The World of the Sufi* is a comprehensive collection of learned essays and papers on the subject of Sufi thought. One of the book's attractions is the way that it considers central questions and areas of study from different angles. Sufi literature, the use of humour, and Sufi communities in various cultural settings, are some of the many subjects discussed. In addition, experts in their fields comment on areas such as Sufism and Psychiatry, Indian Thought and the Sufis, and Therapy and the Sufi. Among the book's contributors are Idries Shah, Doris Lessing, Peter Brent and Dr. Arthur J. Deikman.

These lines by the great teacher and mystic Jalaludin Rumi indicate the many-faceted role of humor in Sufi teaching. Shah writes: "As a shock-applier and tension-releaser and an indicator of false situations, humour, certainly to the Sufi in traditional usage, is one of the most effective instruments and diagnostic aids." Not only are the 60 jokes contained in this volume representative of the type of material used in Sufi development, but their selection, arrangement, and presentation comprise an actual learning experience for the modern reader. Shah weaves contemporary jokes, humorous anecdotes, and stories with skillful commentary. The result is an entertaining journey which mixes laughter, introspection, and surprise.

Western Sufism

An Account of the Mystics of Islam

Caravan of Dreams

Special Illumination

A Perfumed Scorpion

SufiseBook Partnership

The Sufis is the best introduction ever written to the philosophical and mystical school traditionally associated with the Islamic world. Powerful, concise, and intensely thought-provoking, it sums up over a thousand years of Eastern thought - the product of some of the greatest minds humanity has ever produced - into a single work, presenting timeless ideas in a fresh and contemporary style. When the book was originally published in 1964, it launched its author, Idries Shah, on to the international stage, attracting the attention of thinkers and writers such as J. D. Salinger, Doris Lessing, Ted Hughes and Robert Graves. It introduced to the Western world concepts which have subsequently become commonly accepted, varying from the psychological importance of attention and humour, to the use of traditional tales as teaching instruments (what Shah termed 'teaching-stories'), and the historical debt owed by the West to the Middle East in matters scientific, literary and philosophical. As a primer for the many dozens of Sufi books that Shah later produced, it is unsurpassed, offering a clear window onto a community whose system of thought and action has long concerned itself with the advancement of the whole of humankind, and whose ideas about individuals and society, their purpose and direction, need to be understood now more than ever before.

Learning How to Learn contains the authentic material from the Sufi stand-point, written in response to more than 70,000 questions received from government leaders, housewives, philosophy professors, and factory workers around the world. The lively question-answer format provides readers a direct experience of a Sufi learning situation. Shah draws from diverse sources, ranging from 8th-century Sufi narratives to today's newspapers, giving us insight into how Sufis learn, what they learn, and how spiritual understanding can be developed.

Sufi thought has been made easily available to the West thanks to the books Idries Shah. But is merely wanting to learn about it enough? What kind of preparation does a potential student of Sufism need to have to benefit from what Shah's writings offer? Learning How To Learn is a crucial book for readers wishing to approach the Sufi Way. In it, Shah uses much of the language of Western psychology - still in its infancy in comparison with its much longer evolution in the East - to explain basic concepts for anyone trying to understand this philosophical system. Built around Shah's answers to some of the many thousands of questions

he received - from all manner of people and from all over the world - it shines a light on how traditional Sufi psychology can benefit both individuals and society in general. Automatic thinking, and the many desires, hopes and fears which can pose as an aspiration towards personal development, are among the most important barriers to progress.

Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis

Neglected Aspects of Sufi Study

Index Edition

Psychology and Spirituality in the Sufi Way

World Tales

*Traditionally known as The Hundred Tales of Wisdom, this collection comprises excerpts from the life, teachings and miracles of the Sufi teacher Jalaluddin Rumi, together with certain important stories from his works. As well as being part of the bedrock of classical Persian literature, these tales, anecdotes and narratives are believed, by Sufis, to aid in the development of insights beyond ordinary perceptions. Here, they are translated and presented by Idries Shah.*

*An historical survey of the backgrounds, beliefs, literature, and practices of Sufism and of the extensively influential diffusion of Sufic thought, in East and West, particularly in the seventh century.*

*Since their beginnings in the ninth century, the shrines, brotherhoods and doctrines of the Sufis held vast influence in almost every corner of the Muslim world. Offering the first truly global account of the history of Sufism, this illuminating book traces the gradual spread and influence of Sufi Islam through the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and ultimately into Europe and the United States. An ideal introduction to Sufism, requiring no background knowledge of Islamic history or thought Offers the first history of Sufism as a global phenomenon, exploring its movement and adaptation from the Middle East, through Asia and Africa, to Europe and the United States of America Covers the entire historical period of Sufism, from its ninth century origins to the end of the twentieth century Devotes equal coverage to the political, cultural, and social dimensions of Sufism as it does to its theology and ritual Dismantles the stereotypes of Sufis as otherworldly 'mystics', by anchoring Sufi Muslims in the real lives of their communities Features the most up-to-date research on Sufism available This work offers coverage of England in an anthropological sense and from the Sufi perspective.*

**Idries Shah Anthology**

**Sufis**

**The Book of the Book**

**99 Pathways of the Heart for the Modern Dervish**

**Knowing How to Know**

Collected stories about a popular figure in the folklore of many Asian and European countries.

Shah deals here with aspects of Sufi material, and the psychology of his readership, which underline the unique way in which Sufi studies should be approached.

Drawn from teachings of more than a hundred sages from three continents, Thinkers of the East is a book of enormous breadth and depth, the impact and vitality of which is characteristic of the Sufi emphasis on experience rather than theory.

Contemporary esoteric systems almost always play on the desire of mankind to seek or acquire knowledge. All but universally neglected in such systems are the aa often unrecognized aa barriers which prevent knowledge and understanding. Before learning can take place, certain conditions and basic factors must be in place; in the individual or the group. Building on the foundations laid in Learning How to Learn and The Commanding Self, Idries Shah in Knowing How to Know illuminates those factors. Like an ultra-violet light shone onto the petals of flowers, it reveals concealed patterns, normally invisible to our customary modes of thought.

The Extraordinary Coincidence of Stories Told in All Times, in All Places

South Asia

Learning how to Learn

The Sufi Use of Humour

Sufism

*Here, Nasrudin's anecdotes are seen to be parallel to the mind's working, designed to amuse the tea-house, but also intended for use on other levels.*

*Western Sufism is sometimes dismissed as a relatively recent "new age" phenomenon, but in this book Mark Sedgwick argues that it has deep roots, both in the Muslim world and in the West. In fact, although the first significant Western Sufi organization was not established until 1915, the first Western discussion of Sufism was printed in 1480, and Western interest in Sufi thought goes back to the thirteenth century. Sedgwick starts with the earliest origins of Western Sufism in late antique Neoplatonism and early Arab philosophy, and traces later origins in repeated intercultural transfers from the Muslim world to the West, in the thought of the European Renaissance and Enlightenment, and in the intellectual and religious ferment of the nineteenth century. He then follows the development of organized Sufism in the West from 1915 until 1968, the year in which the first Western Sufi order based on purely Islamic models was founded. Western Sufism shows the influence of these origins, of thought both familiar and less familiar: Neoplatonic emanationism, perennialism, pantheism, universalism, and esotericism. Western Sufism is the product not of the new age but of Islam, the ancient world, and centuries of Western religious and intellectual history. Using sources from antiquity to the internet, Sedgwick demonstrates that the phenomenon of Western Sufism draws on centuries of intercultural transfers and is part of a long-established relationship between Western thought and Islam.*

*A mysterious chest is buried unopened. A wondrous caravan brings fortune to a simple cobbler. An outcast princess creates a new life in the wilderness. Some of the 78 tales in this remarkable book first appeared in print over a thousand years ago; others are medieval classics. Yet each has a special relevance for us at the dawn of the 21st century. All are told with Idries Shah's distinctive wit and grace and the author's own commentary notes. These are teaching stories in the Sufi tradition. Those who probe beyond the surface will find multiple meanings to challenge assumptions and foster new*

*ways of thinking and perceiving. Tales of the Dervishes is essential reading for anyone interested in Sufi thought, the significance and history of tales, or simply superb entertainment.*

*In Idries Shah's 'Wisdom of the Idiots', the 'idiots' are Sufis, called this because their wisdom penetrates to a depth which renders it inaccessible to the merely intelligent or academically-knowledgeable. The exercise-stories of the Sufis are tools prepared for a specific purpose. On this level the movements of the characters in a story portray psychological processes, and the story becomes a working blueprint of those processes.*

*The Elephant in the Dark*

*The Way of the Sufi*

*The Exploits of the Incomparable Mulla Nasrudin*

*Teaching Stories of the Sufi Masters Over the Past Thousand Years : Selected from the Sufi Classics, from Oral Tradition, from Unpublished Manuscripts and Schools of Sufi Teaching in Many Countries*

*From the Abbasids to the New Age*

**This book is an anthology of the extraordinary diversity of Sufi ideas and activities in many countries and cultures today. Nothing approaching this kind of survey has ever been assembled. In addition to first-hand accounts of Sufi learning methods, subjects covered include the Sufi meeting place, avoiding imitators, Sufi work enterprises, the idea of organic enterprises, entry into a Sufi group, the Sufi Adept and the projection of mind, extra-sensory perception, what the Sufis do not want us to know, and more.**

**World of the Sufi**

**Learning How to Learn**

**The Sufis**

**Wisdom of the Idiots**

**Thinkers of the East**