whether the model of the Prophet (peace be on him) is to be emulated (imitatio Muhammadi) but only on which basis, i.e. how to do it (p. 138)? This explains the absurdity that even the radical opponents of tradition still tend to base their Sunnah critique on that very Sunnah.

May Allah preserve of it all that is authentic and helpful as guidance.

Murad Wilfried Hofmann


One of the characteristics of the modern age in the realm of religious thinking and spiritual contemplation is — in my opinion — confusion. The scientific mind of the twentieth century which does not heed to, or so it claims and tries to prove, any irrational or undefined or undefinable objective, phenomenon or idea seems to be forgetting itself and rushing towards all sorts of messages and ideas introducing itself in the name of spirituality, mysticism or metareligious consciousness for reasons repeatedly dealt with by writers from the East and the West in the field of mysticism and clearly illustrated in the introduction of all books having been published and being published under the title 'mysticism' or 'spiritualism'. This state of affairs does not trouble the western mind at all, the mind which seems to have concluded for itself that religion is a matter of faith and individual consciousness, not a matter of science and human reason. What matters here is the individual happiness and personal satisfaction, not the objective reality, well-defined sound theory or clear-cut spiritual conception or theologically backed rationally consistent mystical practices.

These type of pseudo-mystical and spiritually superficial and religiously shallow writings and movements are becoming very popular in the west and in many parts of the world among groups that could not adopt themselves to the teachings of any particular religion, any behavioural philosophy or creedal system. Since Humanism without any
theological attachment or religious support tries to replace the world religions or to introduce itself as an umbrella suitable for providing a working relation between diverse religions of the world or sometimes as a solution to the problem of conflicting truth claims of different religions or as a unifying principle that can encompass all religions thus succeeding in creating an atmosphere where men do not value theological postulations or religious convictions or dogmatic approaches. These pseudo-spiritual philosophies can hardly find any resistance. This seems to be the very situation in the west regarding the so-called modern mystical tendencies and spiritual philosophies.

I do not obviously intend to go into a critical analysis of this phenomenon which is western in origin and very much prevalent there and attracting modern western minded individuals and groups in other parts of the world. Rather, this is the background against which I find it appropriate to review Dr Elisabeth Keesing's, *A Sufi Master Answers: On the Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan*.

The book makes an interesting reading for those who want to know something about the diverse spiritual and meditational approaches which try to find meaning for human life and the question of unity within diversity out of the domain of established world religions.

Nine chapters out of ten, that constitute the book, illustrate clearly the nature of the mystical ideas, the importance of meditation and prayer in shaping the human soul and the significance of spiritual exercises and contemplation that can take different forms in different areas of the globe with different cultural backgrounds out of the artificial barriers in the name of religion.

It is the kind of message that today's western world, secular societies and modernists (in the popular sense) enthusiastically welcome. The recognition that different religious cults and many Indian-oriented meditational philosophies receive in the western societies — Maharishis, Rajanis and Bob John to name a few — is a clear proof of the readiness to accept such ideas which prevail in the western societies. This readiness 'in fact' paved the way for many Eastern mystical traditions as well as pseudo-Sufi movements and encouraged them to take up their activities in the western land and among the western educated Muslim intellectuals in the Muslim world itself.

The problem that emerges out of Hazrat Inayat Khan's message is that his teachings and ideas — mystical, contemplative and free from the religious restriction of any kind, and stressing on universal human spiritual brotherhood out of the realm of religious tradition as a result of universal religion that makes the core of all the different religious teaching — are being presented in the name of *Taṣawwuf* as a Sufi message as the title clearly states.
It would be unfair to seek in this book a scientific methodology, a thematic organization or conceptual consistency. It is like a lover dazzled by his beloved or like a disciple excited by the wisdom of her guru presenting his ideas.

The author's style creates considerable confusion as each chapter contains a number of issues all mingled together without clear-cut definite boundaries. That is all the more noticeable keeping in view the nature of the topic.

Chapter I titled "Answer and Audience" outlines the ways with which Inayat used to handle the question he faced from people. It briefly underlines the basic principles of his philosophy as well.

Chapter II "What is Sufism" sketches out his concept of Sufism, its roots and contents as well as it unfolds his intention of creating a spiritual contact between the East and the West in a bid to bring them closer while ignoring the differences between religions. His movement as stated by the author in Chapter X, p. 232: "has members belonging to many different faiths and who have not given up their own faith through understanding the faith of others".

In Chapter III titled "Concepts of God and Belief" the author takes into account various beliefs concerning God namely that of Christians, Hindus (Vedantic) and the so-called Sufis. Hazrat Inayat thinks that any belief in God which satisfies the believer is good enough. Mankind is not necessarily bound to base its concept of the divine on any revealed scripture.

Chapter IV "Concepts of Mysticism and Initiation" presents the answers that Inayat offered to the western mind about queries on mysticism. Then, the author proceeds to explain the initiation process and the journey towards self-realization prescribed by Inayat.

Chapter V "Mysticism, Methods and Means" deals with the contents of mysticism and serves as a guideline for the new initiate. It raises the confusions rallying in the mind of an initiate and those who find themselves willing to tread this path.

Chapter VI focuses — as the title "Mysticism-First Result" implies—on the first tenable results in this path such as telepathy, clairvoyance and other supranormal activities. But it is clear that the ultimate result is self-realization.

In Chapter VII "Mysticism, The Great Ones and the Great Attainments", we are taken to deeper aspects of mysticism. It also deals at length with abstract states and ideas like love, beauty, silence, *Fanā* and *Baqā*.

Chapter VIII titled "Life After Death and Life Before Life" discusses issues pertaining to life after death such as hell and heaven, the souls'
journey, reincarnation and *karma*. It reiterates the primary purpose of life, i.e. reunion with God.

With chapter IX "Sufism in Daily Life, An Art of Living" we come to the most important part of the book because it attempts to demonstrate the balance and harmony which a mystic attains in a life full of contradictions and problems. It answers questions which any mystic faces while dealing with this world but with a mystical outlook.

The last chapter "Sufism in Daily Life, Service of Humanity" understandably endeavours to show the compatibility of spirituality with mankind, progress in education, politics and other spheres of life. It reiterates Hazrat Inayat's ambitious objective of mysticism of bringing the East and West into one universal brotherhood highlighting his core concept of human brotherhood.

After Chapter X there are two Appendices, the first of which surveys his works chronologically while the second throws light on his Sufi Movement and its principles and objectives.

There is no questioning of the freedom of speech as long as one is convinced of it and finds an audience willing to hear him out. Problems arise when truth is twisted, facts distorted, clearly established traditional concepts questioned and the ignorance of readers exploited, thus causing confusion and chaos.

The problem that Dr Elisabeth's book is presenting is that all those ideas of Hazrat Inayat Khan — which are so deeply rooted in Hindu Philosophy and whom the book succeeded in introducing as an advocate of universal Human Brotherhood which naively overlooks different cultural and religious attachment of human individuals and societies — are being presented in the name of *Taṣawwuf* as a Sufi message.

*Taṣawwuf*, technically, historically and scientifically speaking, is nothing other than the psychological transformation of human self to submit its will to Allah the Almighty. It is the sublimation of the self in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. It is the art of purifying human ego in the way of spiritual perfection as explained in Islam. It is the inner dimension of Islamic faith and practice and the manifestation of Islamic values and morals. It is the answer to the question of how to be a Muslim. It is not mysticism, though there might be, and in fact are, several corresponding aspects of Islam, for Islam does not consist of 'isms' despite the fact that the term "Sufism" has become universally accepted as referring to the inner dimension of Islamic faith and practice. This is the essence of *Taṣawwuf* as taught and practiced by the great Sufi sages throughout the ages of Islam and as expressed in their authentic writings both classical and modern.

There are 10 principles enshrined in the constitution of Hazrat Inayat's International Sufi Movement given in Appendix 2 of the book.
1. There is one God, the Eternal, the only Being; none else exists save He.
2. There is one Master, the Guiding Spirit of all souls, who constantly leads his followers towards the light.
3. There is One Holy Book, the sacred manuscript of nature, the only scripture which can enlighten the reader.
4. There is one Religion, the unswerving progress in the right direction towards the ideal, which fulfils the life's purpose of every soul.
5. There is one Law, the Law of reciprocity, which can be observed by a selfless conscience together with a sense of awakened justice.
6. There is one Brotherhood, the human brotherhood, which unites the children of earth indiscriminately in the fatherhood of God.
7. There is one Moral Principle, the love which springs forth from self denial, and blooms in deeds of beneficence.
8. There is one Object of Praise, the beauty which uplifts the heart of its worshipper through all aspects from the seen to the unseen.
9. There is one Truth, the true knowledge of our being within and without which is the essence of all wisdom.
10. There is one Path, the annihilation of the false ego in the real, which raises the mortal to immortality and in which resides all perfection.

These 10 principles which can be considered a summary of the book help the reader to clearly envisage the gap existing between *Taṣawwuf* and Hazrat Inayat's message.

The book hardly convinces anyone of Hazrat Inayat's having in-depth knowledge of *Taṣawwuf* and the literature of great Sufi Masters although it clearly demonstrates Hazrat's enthusiastic desire to present his brand of so-called Sufi message through Hindu philosophy especially Shankara's version of Vedantic philosophy (pp. 33–34, 52). His ideas about concepts like religion (p. 5), revelation (pp. 146–7), God (p. 24), etc. are not only far from being Islamic but in conflict with the Sufi writings and do not fit — in my opinion — into any established religious system. The influence of Yoga Margha or the way of Yoga, Hindu meditational practices, is more apparent than the Sufi way of Murāqabah and Dhikr (p. 163). A tendency towards a syncretism of Sufi ideals and Hindu philosophies especially that of Bhakti and Yogic ones — one that ends up knowingly or unknowingly in favour of Hinduism — is quite clear. Almost all the sufi ideas and terminologies used by the master seemed to be coloured by Hindu ideas (pp. 11, 159). Although the message defines its goal as human happiness, spiritual fulfillment, universal brotherhood and promotion of moral values specially the virtue of love — which the master has depicted very rightly as the essential value and the great force that
can, when properly channelled, bring a tremendous change in human personality. Nevertheless his analysis misses an important element, that of moral compulsion. So crucial that its absence led even the so exaggeratedly placed Kantian ethics in the realm of philosophy to failure.

Dr Elisabeth's book must make an interesting reading for Hazrat Inayat's devotees just as it can attract those who are interested in, or concerned about, current developments in the field of spiritual discipline and mystical philosophies. The book doubtlessly will be of great attraction to the new humanist and will be received by them with equal appreciation.

M.M. Dheen Mohamed*  


"This book is my attempt to show how Christianity fits into the worldview of modern science, and to show what intellectual belief in God as the cause of the universe has to do with things like going to Church and praying". So writes Professor Ward on the first page of his latest book, *God, Faith and the New Millennium: Christian Belief in an Age of Science*.

This clearly sets out Ward's intention. Like his previous three books, he is once again concerned with some of the most important issues at the interface of Christianity and science. Ward has combined theistic explanation of the universe with some of the basic Christian doctrines to produce a work which is clear, at times witty, and always readable. However, for the uncommitted reader, the second half of the book becomes rather too heavy with Christian theology and science recedes into background. But perhaps that was how the work was conceived.

Toward the end of the Preface, Ward further writes: "So I have tried to present Christianity as a religion of truly cosmic scope, which can give insight into the meaning and purpose of this universe, the physical structure of which modern science has marvellously discovered. Such a view of Christian belief may seem new both to some Christians and to those generally interested in the nature and relationship of religion and science. It may show one the way in which belief in the rather abstract 'God of the physicists' can be enriched by the insights of a particular

*M.M. Dheen Mohamed, Assistant Professor of Comparative Religion, International Islamic University, Islamabad.