



TITUS BURCKHARDT'S

**AN
INTRODUCTION
TO SUFI
DOCTRINE**

Translated by
D. M. MATHESON

Sh. MUHAMMAD ASHRAF
KASHMIRI BAZAR - LAHORE (Pakistan)

ALL too many Muslims today are ignorant of the true nature of Sufism or have come to think of it as something extraneous to Islam resulting from borrowings from outside sources long after the days of the holy Prophet. This book will go a long way to enlighten the reader on the subject.

The author is already well known to readers of French or German for his translations of and commentaries on texts of Ibn Arabi and Abd al-Karim al-Jili, and he writes, not from a scientific or orientalist point of view, but from that of Tasawwuf itself and with deep understanding.

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of the soul. Thus patience (*aṣ-Ṣabr*) and zeal (*al-ghayrah*), the second of which shows itself in holy wrath, both imply an unshakeable inner axis and this immutability shows itself passively in patience and actively in holy wrath.

In a sense all the virtues are contained in spiritual poverty (*al-faqr*) and the term, *al-faqr*, is commonly used to designate spirituality as a whole. This poverty is nothing other than a *vacare Deo*, emptiness for God; it begins with the rejection of passions and its crown is the effacement of the "I" before the Divinity. The nature of this virtue clearly shows the inverse analogy which links the human symbol with its divine archetype: what is emptiness on the side of the creature is plenitude on the side of the Creator.

Another virtue which can be taken as a synthesis of all that is implied in the attitude of being "poor" (*faqīr*) is sincerity (*al-ikhhlāṣ*) or veracity (*aṣ-ṣidq*). This is the absence of egocentric preoccupations in both intentions and thoughts; ultimately it is the effacing of the mind before the Divine Truth. Thus, like "poverty," it is an emptiness of the individual and correlatively a plenitude of a higher order, though with this difference that, whereas "poverty," like humility, belongs only to the servant, veracity belongs first of all to the Lord, though it could none the less be said that the "poverty" or "humility" of God is the simplicity of His Essence. In any case spiritual sincerity implies cessation of that split consciousness which is the ordinary state of the soul, in which man instinctively and inevitably introduces

relation to the intellectual pole of the mind imagination may be considered as its plastic material; for this reason it corresponds by analogy to the *materia prima* on which the plastic continuity of the "cosmic dream" depends just as, subjectively, it depends on imagination.

If the imagination can be a cause of illusion by binding the intelligence to the level of sensory forms it none the less also has a spiritually positive aspect in so far as it fixes intellectual intuitions or inspirations in the form of symbols. For imagination to be able to assume this function it must have acquired in full measure its plastic capacity; the misdeeds of imagination come not so much from its development as from its being enslaved by passion and feeling. Imagination is one of the mirrors of Intellect; its perfection lies in its remaining virginal and of wide compass.

Some Sufi writers, including 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, have said that the dark pole of the mind is *al-wahm*, a term which means conjecture and also opinion, suggestion and suspicion and so mental illusion. This is the reverse of the speculative freedom of the mind. The power of illusion of the mind is, as it were, fascinated by an abyss; it is attracted by every unexhausted negative possibility. When this power dominates the imagination, imagination becomes the greatest obstacle to spirituality. In this context may be quoted the saying of the Prophet that "the worst thing your soul suggests to you is suspicion."

As for memory, this has a double aspect; as the faculty of retaining impressions it is passive and "earthly"

at page 106.
at volume 116.