

Side Notes on Sufism

1. **Sex.** Statements have been made of the great vital power that may come with cosmic consciousness or spiritual development, and equally the relation between divine unfoldment and complete chastity.

Vital power. Abdul Kadir-i-Gilani is said to have had 14 wives and 49 sons (or children) and that his offspring were all worthy of becoming or being Murshids. There is also a tradition that Ali, if not completely incontinent, was involved in innumerable affairs. I believe there is another explanation for this, as my firm conviction is that Ali was madzub, not salik, and therefore not subject to the same standardization—whatever that be.

Continenence. Inayat Khan taught: “Celibacy is a privilege, not a practice.” Ten years after his becoming a Murshid, he married, and I have read his letters during the period of romance in which he advised marriage for everybody. Most of his disciples were either puritanical or anti-social, and so did not literally accept his teachings which appear, for the most part, in a book called *Rassa Shastra*.

After years of continence the great Abu Said ibn Abi-l-Khair married and urged the householder life on his disciples. Many also claim that both because the prophet married and proclaimed “No monkery in Islam” that celibacy should not be a standard practice. The exception is during the performance of Khilvat. The Khilvati Order and many of the wandering Dervishes presumably were celibate, and in theory the Kalandar Order.

The contemporary Meher Baba—if he can be called a Sufi—is the only one I know who openly advocates celibacy as a standard, and resembles Paul far more than he resembles Mohammed.

Presumable Ideal. My own ideal has always been expressed in your own words: “Polygamy with one woman.” Although I have lead, in a certain sense, a celibate life, in my “Siva ! Siva:” there is an explanation of Kama Yoga, union with God through the consummation of a sacred rite of coition.

Sokei-Ann Sasaki, Daisetz Suzuki and Alan Watts, all of whom are spiritual (not necessarily ‘holy’ men) married. In the first two instances their wives were very spiritual women. I do not know Mrs. Watts.

2. **Saints.** According to my understanding saints belong to the classes Jemali and Jelali, the latter of which may be called **Masters**. Inayat Khan placed those **saints** on the 5th Plane, and the pure prophets as developed Wali Kamali, as far as the 7th Plane, or Perfection. My friend, Dr. William Dunkin, who has annotated many ‘saints’ in India, gives roughly the same explanation. The determination of the superiority or inferiority of saints and prophets depends largely upon definition and function. Just what is a Wali? Just what is a Nabi?
3. **Mahdiism.** I personally have read a good deal on the Mahdi of the Sudan (by Rudolf Carl von Slatin). Am also a distant relative of Pasha Schnitzel who became a Muslim and openly practiced polygamy.