

## Universal Worship Theme for Pearls from the Ocean Unseen



### The Ocean, the Pearl, the Discovered Wisdom

Muinuddin Chishti (1141 - 1230 ce) born in Khorasan. A widely beloved Persian spiritual mystic who carried the Chishti lineage to India.

The noise of the lover is only up to  
the time when he has not seen his Beloved.  
Once he sees the Beloved, he becomes calm and quiet,  
just as the rivers are boisterous before they join the ocean,  
but when they do so, there are becalmed forever.

Sheikh Sultan Bahu (1628 - 1691 ce) belonged to the Qadiri Order of Sufis and is known by the title of Sultan-ul-Arifin (king of the Gnostics). Born in the Soon Valley, he wrote in both Persian and Punjabi, and is regarded as one of the most prominent Sufi poets of the Indo-Pak subcontinent.

The Lord is an ocean of oneness  
in which lovers swim as they please, free of care.  
In their own turn, they appear in the world  
to dive deep into that ocean, to gather pearls.  
Among the pearls is a gem --  
unique in value, unmatched in lustre --  
that shines like the moon.  
We are all in the employ of the Lord, O Bahu;  
let us pay homage to him through our prayers.

Poetry by Sultan Bahu, translated by J.R. Puri and K.S. Khak

#### Who (or What) is a Sufi?

Inayat Khan once commented that learning how to be a friend is really the essence of the Sufi path: "There are many things in the life of a Sufi, but the greatest is to have a tendency toward friendship; this is expressed in the form of tolerance and forgiveness, the form of service and trust. In whatever form (one) may express this it, this is the central theme: the constant desire to prove one's love for humanity, to be friend of all."

According to the sacred history which the Sufis have inherited from one another, it is clear that Sufism has never been owned by any race or religion, for differences and distinctions are the very delusions from which Sufis purify themselves. It might appear that Sufism must have been formed of different elements of various religions which are prominent today, but it is not so, for Sufism itself is the essence of all religions ..... *Hazrat Inayat Khan, "Gathekas for Candidates"*

WHAT is a Sufi? Strictly speaking, every seeker after the ultimate truth is really a Sufi, whether he calls himself that or not. But as he seeks truth according to his own particular point of view, he often finds it difficult to believe that others, from their different points of view, are yet seeking the same truth, and always with success, though to a varying degree. That is in fact the point of view of the Sufi and it differs from others only in its constant endeavor to comprehend all others as within itself. It seeks to realize that every person, following his own particular line in life, nevertheless fits into the scheme of the whole and finally attains not only his own goal, but the one final goal of all....

...The Sufi is the student of two worlds, the world within and the world without. The world within is equivalent to what is popularly named 'the next world', because of the widespread belief that time is the all-important factor; that we have a life now, and another life at another time. The Sufi knows otherwise. The world without has two aspects, the social world in which we are placed, and the greater world which is the topic of history, past, present, or prophetic. The world within can be entered only by the student oneself, though they may learn about it as 'esotericism', a subject which also has two aspects, that of the forces in the mind and that of the divine light. The latter is the real goal of the Sufi's inquiry, it is his Shekinah, and it is one's Holy of Holies.

*Volume 1 Section 1 – The Way of Illumination, part 111 The Sufi*

The God of the Sufi is the God of all, and we are the very being. The Christ is the ideal. Therefore, no one's savior is foreign to a Sufi, for they see the beauty and greatness and perfection of a human being in everyone's ideal. They do not mind if that ideal is called Buddha by one person, Krishna by another, and Muhammad by yet another; names make little difference to the Sufi; the ideal does not belong to history or tradition, but to the sacred feelings of the heart. So how can we compare the ideals of the different creeds, which dispute in vain about historical and traditional points of view, without making any impression upon each other? The ideal of the Lord, the Lord in the form of person, is the outcome of one's heart's deepest devotion. One cannot dispute and argue about an ideal like this, nor can it be compared; so the Sufi believes that the less spoken about this subject the better, for they respect that one ideal which people call by different names.

Is this not the pearl of wisdom, discovered not by teaching but by the efforts one puts into the inner exploration?

Life, human nature, the nature around us, are all a revelation to a Sufi. This does not mean that a Sufi has no respect for the sacred scriptures revered by humanity. On the contrary, they hold them as sacred as do the followers of those scriptures; but the Sufi says that all scriptures are only different interpretations of that one scripture which is constantly before us like an open book – if we could only read and understand it. Our path is to discover that pearl.

Pearls of wisdom from the sacred texts...

Hindu text – Divine Wisdom

Thou God from the beginning, God in man since man was. Thou Treasure supreme of this vast universe. Thou the one to be known and the Knower, the final resting place. Thou the infinite Presence in whom all things are.

Buddhist text - Divine Compassion

So take advantage of this human boat.  
Free yourself from sorrow's mighty stream!  
This vessel will be later hard to find.  
The time that you have now, you fool, is not for sleep!"

*All streams eventually lead to the ocean. To the Buddhist, life is suffering and freeing oneself from the suffering. We ask ourselves, where is the pearl of wisdom to be found? Our friendships, in harmony, will guide the boat along life's tumultuous stream.*

Native tradition – Divine Nature

All things are inter-related. Everything in the universe is part of a single whole. Everything is connected in some way to everything else. It is therefore possible to understand something only if we can understand how it is connected to everything else.

Let us now take a journey together around the medicine wheel. What you will see, if you look deeply within your own being using the medicine wheel as a mirror, is an image of your strengths and weaknesses, and a vision of what you could become if you were to commit your life to the symbolic journey of the medicine wheel, which is really the journey of authentic human development.

Jewish text – Divine Law

Two are better than one, because they have good return for their work:  
If one falls down, his friend can help him up.  
But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!  
Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?  
Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves....  
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Christian Scripture – Divine Self-Sacrifice

This is my commandment: that you love one another as I have loved you.  
Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his love for his friends;

Scripture of Islam – Divine Unity

To each of you, We prescribed a law and a method.  
Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation,  
united in religion, but He intended to test you  
in what He has given you; so, race to all that is good.  
To Allah is your return, all together,

and He will then inform you concerning that over which you used to differ.

The Gayan – Divine Truth

I looked and looked to find someone to whom I might give my trust;  
But I found no one.....until I saw Thee at last in my heart,  
holding in Thy hand the record of my life's secret.  
As I put myself forward into the world, so I show my limitation, my King;

But as I withdraw myself from the world, so I enter into Thy Kingdom.

Is this not the mystical experience of the singing zikar? For a few short moments we withdraw from the world and we experience harmony. It is such a relief to the soul. A pearl unseen.

So, to the secret of the pearl, traveling through the material world to the world beyond on the vehicle of friendships, Inayat Khan has this to say – “To be today friendly and tomorrow unfriendly cannot for one moment be called friendship; the value of friendship is in its constancy. Forbearance, patience, and tolerance are the only conditions which keep two individual hearts united. There is a saying in Hindustani, by Seman, on friendship, 'Stand by your friend in their time of need, like the reed on the bank of the river.' When a person is sinking in the water and catches hold of a reed, it will save them if it is strong; and if not, it will sink along with them.