

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PREVALENCE OF THE HINDU YOGAS IN SUFISM

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Introduction

With the recent proliferation of translations into English of the love poetry of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi and Hafez, Sufism, which is the esoteric or mystical dimension of Islam, has been widely considered, in the popular literature, a “*bhakti*” tradition, in which, “the aim of *bhakti* yoga is to direct toward God the love that lies at the base of every heart” (Smith, 1991, p. 32).

On further investigation, a deeper appreciation of Sufism can be gained by comparing and contrasting the combinations (or lack thereof) of the Hindu *yogas* in the paths of several renowned Sufi Masters, such as Mansur Al-Hallaj (d. 992), Jalaluddin Rumi (d. 1273), Hafez (d. 1389), and Ibn al-Arabi (d.1240), who was known as the *Shaykh* al-Akbar, the greatest Sufi Master and the Seal of the Saints.

This paper seeks to explore the paths of these Sufi Masters within the framework of the four Hindu *yogas* and their relationship to the “stations of the heart” presented by a Sufi sheikh of the Jerrahi Order, Dr. Robert Frager, (1999) in “Heart, Self and Soul: The Sufi Psychology of Growth, Balance and Harmony.” Frager explains the contribution of Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d.ca. 932) to the theory of Sufism’s “four stations of the heart”: the breast, the heart, the inner heart and the innermost heart.

Each of these stations houses a light. “The breast is the home of the Light of Practice of the outer forms of any religion. The heart houses the Light of Faith. The inner heart holds the Light of Gnosis, or knowledge of spiritual truth. The innermost heart holds two lights, The Light of Unification and the Light of Uniqueness, which are two aspects of the divine” (Frager, 1999, p. 26).

Thus one might postulate that there are some parallels and comparisons to be drawn between the four *yogas* of Hinduism: *karma*, *bhakti*, *jnana* and *raja*, and the stations of the heart in Sufism:

An exploration of parallels in Sufism and the Hindu Yoga tradition



1. The Light of Practice is equivalent to Karma Yoga described by Huston Smith as “the Way to God through Work.” From the Sufi perspective, the most effective work is service to another, because it is intimated that as a result of this dedication to service, the aspirant’s breast opens to the next level - the heart, and spiritual progress is made developmentally, along the Way, through the Light of Practice. This station, then, is the station of the seeker, whose practice is guided by right action or deeds, which includes the fundamental principles of outward religion.

2. The Light of Faith is equivalent, to both *Bhakti* Yoga in the Hindu yogic tradition described by Huston Smith as the “Way to God through Love,” and Raja Yoga, which we will consider later. As with *bhakti* yoga’s adoration of God, this station is the station of the believer, whose practice is guided by inner knowledge. Since there is no original sin in Islam, Sufi psychology’s presupposition is that we are born with innate wisdom and goodness. The heart houses “the traits of love, piety, calmness, fear of wrongdoing, humility, softness, tranquility, submission, patience, refinement and purity” (Frager, 1999, p.31). There is also, in this station, a sense of love for a Transcendent God: “Others are given the ability to speak eloquently about God and God’s attributes of mercy, beauty, grandeur and forgiveness. Some are granted the ability to write inspiring poetry or prose about God and about the spiritual path” (Frager 1999, p. 32). The distinction to be made is that the Light of Faith does not in Sufism, stand alone without the Light of Practice, as in Hinduism *bhakti* yoga can apparently stand alone without karma yoga, depending on the traits and temperament of the seeker.

3. The Light of Gnosis is closely equivalent to *Jnana* Yoga, which Smith describes as “The Way to God through Knowledge.” Smith suggests that this yoga is ideal for a



spiritual aspirant with a strong reflective or contemplative bent, comparing it with the Greek ‘gnosis’ or ‘sophia’ – “an intuitive discernment that transforms, turning the knower eventually into that which she knows” (Smith, 1991, p. 29). Frager identifies this station of the inner heart as the station of the gnostic who is guided in his/her practice by inner vision. From the Sufi

perspective, this station is one which the aspirant attains inner knowledge, along with inner vision, along the Way.

It is important to note here that whereas Hinduism breaks down the four *yogas* as approaches to the Divine that may be suited to different personality types or different temperaments, in Sufism, the stations of the heart are not based on personality types or

temperaments but on the graduated level of each individual's spiritual development or spiritual consciousness.

4. The station of the Lights of Unification and Uniqueness is perhaps the result of combination of the *Bhakti* and *Jnana* Yoga traditions. Frager states that the lines between the heart and the inner heart are not always easily distinguished. However, this station of the innermost heart is where the deepest truths are revealed, or understood, by Divine Grace, and where a profound inner transformation occurs. Frager describes this state of Unity with the Divine as one of the crowning achievements of Sufi Psychology and the highest state of human experience.

The Hindu equivalent for this experience is Samadhi, defined in the Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion (1994) as "a non-dualistic state of consciousness in which the consciousness of the experiencing "subject" becomes one with the experienced "object"- thus is only experiential content."

Spiritual Mastery in Sufism

It is appropriate at this juncture to begin our examination of four of the most renowned Spiritual Masters of the Sufi tradition by first asking the question, more precisely: "What is Sufism?"

Martin Lings, a practicing Sufi, in his thought provoking book of the same title, begins his exploration by quoting Ibn al-Arabi, considered the greatest of all Sufi Masters:

"The great Andalusian Sufi, Muhyi'd-Din Ibn 'Arabi, used to pray a prayer which begins:

'Enter me, O Lord, into the deep of the Ocean of Thine Infinite Oneness,' and in the treatises of the Sufis this 'Ocean' is mentioned again and again, likewise by symbolic reference to the End towards

which their path is directed. Let us therefore begin by saying, on the basis of this symbol, in answer to the question ‘What is Sufism?’:

From time to time a Revelation ‘flows’ like a green tidal wave from the Ocean of Infinitude to the shores of our finite world; and Sufism is the vocation and the discipline and the science of plunging into the ebb of one of these waves and being drawn back with it to its Eternal and Infinite Source” (Lings, 1973, p.11).

In tracing a historical outline of classical Sufism, Schimmel connects the Revelation that Martin Lings speaks of here with the unlettered Messenger of the Qur’anic revelation:

“Muhammad is the first link in the spiritual chain of Sufism, and his ascension through the heavens into the divine presence, to which the first lines of *Sura* 17 allude, became the prototype of the mystic’s spiritual ascension into the intimate presence of God. According to the tradition, esoteric wisdom was transmitted from Muhammad to his cousin and son-in-law ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, the fourth of the righteous caliphs (d.661). Other members of his family and his friends, according to legend, were endowed with mystical insight or pursued mystical practices. The traditions (*hadith*) that go back to the Prophet, or at least are attributed to him, served the Sufis when they elaborated their own definitions of various stages and states” (Schimmel, 1975, p. 27).

Michael Sells’ recent translation and commentary on one of the earliest revelations of the Quran, *Sura* 53: 1-18, identifies the Prophet’s vision with his heart:

“The passage ends with an affirmation of the validity of the vision: the heart of the prophet “did not lie in what he saw.” This affirmation becomes a proof text for the claim among many mystics and philosophers that the locus of spiritual vision and mystical knowledge is the heart” (Sells, 1999, p. 45).

In the introduction offered by Robert Graves to “The Sufis” authored by Idries Shah, a Grand Sheikh of a Sufi order in India, who himself claims descent from the prophet of Islam, a disclaimer is made for Sufism’s Islamic origins:

“Though commonly mistaken for a Moslem sect, the Sufis are at home in all religions: just as the “Free and Accepted Masons” lay before them in their Lodge whatever sacred book – whether Bible, Koran, or Torah – is accepted by the temporal State. If they call Islam the “shell” of Sufism, this is because they believe Sufism to be the secret teaching within all religions” (Shah, 1964, p. vii).

If such is the case, then, even if these eternal truths are approached differently by different spiritual traditions, there are clearly some phenomenological parallels as has been demonstrated between some of the *yogas* of Hinduism and the stations of the heart of Sufism.

Raja Yoga

One of these four *yogas* that we have yet to examine is raja yoga. Huston Smith describes this as the “Way to God through Psychophysical exercises” and states that “the purpose of raja yoga is to demonstrate the validity of this fourfold estimate of the human self by leading the inquirer to direct personal experience of “the beyond within” (Smith 1991, p. 43).

The *Dhikr* or Remembrance of God is a practice that is common to all Sufi Orders. It is a constant striving to be mindful of God through prayer, repetition or invocation of mystical formulas or divine names, leading to temporary inner states in which awareness of God overwhelms the aspirant. This is known as the remembrance of the heart, which in turn leads to a stable inner station, where one has attained the remembrance of the soul, which is a state of constant inner prayer (Frager, 1999).



One of the psychophysical exercises in Sufism, in addition to the chanting of litanies, invocations, and “breath exercises,” is the “sacred dance” celebrated by the “Whirling Dervishes” of the Mevlevi Order of Jalaluddin Rumi:

“This summary account fails to do justice to the complexity of the dance, but it serves to bring about one essential feature which it has in common with the dances of other orders, namely that the body stands for the Axis of the Universe which is none other than the Tree of Life. The dance is thus a rite of centralisation, a foretaste of the lost Centre and therefore of a lost dimension of depth and of height. It is thereby the equivalent of the Name which also, as we have seen, replaces the centre, and in fact the invocation of the Name, aloud or in silence, usually accompanies the dance which in any case is intended above all to plunge the dancer into a state of concentration upon Allah” (Lings, 1975, p.84).

Smith describes the hypothesis that underlies the Hindu doctrine of the human self which postulates that the human organism is a four layered entity which includes the body, the conscious layer of the mind, the realm of the individual subconscious, and finally:

“underlying the other three, less perceived by the conscious mind than even its private subconscious (though related to it fully as much), stands Being Itself, infinite, unthwarted, eternal. “I am smaller than the minutest atom, likewise greater than the greatest. I am the whole, the diversified-multicolored-lovely-strange universe. I am the Ancient One. I am Man, the Lord. I am the Being-of-Gold. I am the very state of divine beatitude” (Smith, 1991, p. 43).

The examination of the parallels between this underlying Hindu doctrine of the self, and the four stations of the heart, with their corresponding forms of *Dhikr*, remembrance of God, may be an area for further research. Suffice it to say, however, for the scope of this paper, that this final layer of the Hindu doctrine of the human self seems very close to the station of the innermost heart, which is the station of Unity. (Frager, 1999).

Mansur al-Hallaj



It was the self-discovery of this station of the innermost heart which led Mansur al-Hallaj, who is known as the martyr of mystical love, to declare: *Ana'l-Haqq!*, “I am the Absolute Truth.” It was for this outrageously “unorthodox” statement, it is reported, that he was crucified and beheaded for heresy in 992 C.E.

But how did al-Hallaj come upon this station? According to one of his biographers:

“His emphasis was focused on the cultivation of the spiritual state of love (*mahabba*) leading through desire to union with God’s essence (*‘ishq dhati*) extending the teaching of such earlier mystics as Rabiya and Muhasibi as well as the elder Nuri, to mention a few” (Mason, 1995, p.15).

This attests to his engagement in *bhakti* yoga and yet, he is also described as a radical who demonstrated against the Caliphal authorities on behalf of salt field laborers, and starving Bedouins who stormed Basra and Baghdad desperate for food. He constantly allied himself with sufferers from injustice. It was in this untiring service to the cause of justice that Mason says led to al-Hallaj’s continuous confrontations with the authorities and his final execution. (Mason, 1995). Can we discount then, in his social activism, the practice of karma yoga in his own unique and particular form?

His biographers have reported that he had many disciples, and in Islam, teaching is considered one of the highest forms of service to humankind. Al-Hallaj traveled from the Near East to India and China, in service to his fellow man. (Mason, 1995, *Shaykh Muhammad Said al-Jamal ar-Rifai*, 1998). His dedication to this humanitarian service to the Spirit can only be characterized as karma yoga, using its Sufi connotation.

Was his willing martyrdom, to suffer crucifixion, the gallows and cremation, in itself not the highest form of karma yoga as it has surely left an indelible imprint on the

consciousness of so many Muslim mystics that learned of the nature of this Spiritual Truth, not to mention the political dangers of the passionate declaration of al-Hallaj?

In researching the literature for any trace of *jnana* yoga in the spiritual life of al-Hallaj, *Shaykh* Sidi Muhammad Said al-Jamal ar-Rifai (1998, p. 183) quotes a letter written by al-Hallaj to one of his “close beloveds:”

“In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate, Who manifests Himself through everything (*tajalla ma'rifa jaliya*), the revelation of a clear knowing to whomsoever He wishes, peace be upon you, my son. This praise belongs to Allah Who manifests Himself on the head of a pin to whom He wishes, so that one testifies that He is not, and another testifies that there is none other than He. But the witnessing in the denying of Him is not rejected, and the witnessing in the affirming of Him is not praised.”

What exactly is this ‘*marifa*’, this “clear knowing?” In Nicholson’s classic work, “The Mystics of Islam,” his chapter on gnosis makes the distinction between ordinary knowledge, ‘*ilm*, and *ma'rifat*, gnosis:

“As I have indicated in the foregoing paragraphs, *ma'rifat* is fundamentally different from ‘*ilm*, and a different word must be used to translate it. We need not look far for a suitable equivalent. The *ma'rifat* of the Sufis is the ‘gnosis’ of Hellenistic theosophy, i.e. direct knowledge of God based on revelation or apocalyptic vision. It is not the result of any mental processes, but depends entirely on the will and favour of God, who bestows it as a gift from Himself upon those whom He has created with the capacity of receiving it. It is the light of divine grace that flashes into the heart and overwhelms every human faculty in its dazzling beams” (Nicholson, 1914, p.71).

If the Light of Gnosis is one that is “gifted”, one might ask whether *jnana* yoga can actually be “practiced” as such, or whether in fact it emerges, as a gift of Divine Grace, as

one penetrates the inner heart through *bhakti* yoga to the innermost heart? In this sense, one might suggest that there is one subtle distinction in the parallel made earlier between *jnana* yoga and the station of Divine Grace, both of which seem to lead to the experience of the mystic knowledge of the Unity. *Jnana* yoga, however, relies on discrimination, thinking contemplation, and reflection and does not emphasize the role of Divine Grace, but relies more on an intuitive discernment.

From what has been written of the life of al-Hallaj, he was, in fact, a thinker and a writer. He was crucified as a heretic for his declaration of “I am the Truth.” Was this declaration based on a “*bhakti*” experience of an ecstatic state or was it, in fact, an existential experience based on “*jnana*?”

Mason refers to a Persian biographer Hujwiri (d. 1072) who suggests that al-Hallaj may have attained the gnosis of *jnana* yoga: “Hujwiri records the tradition that Dhul’Nun set forth the notion of gnosis (*ma’rifa*), mystical knowledge of God beyond deductive learning. Scholars see in him the fusion of neo-Platonist and Qur’anic formulations alluded to before and apparent in Hallaj” (Mason, 1995, p. 66).

In the case of Mansur al-Hallaj, it would appear then that all four of the Hindu *yogas* were part of his profound and passionate spiritual trajectory.

Ibn al-Arabi



We turn now to the *Shaykh* al-Akbar, Ibn al-Arabi, the famous Andalusian Sufi Master who changed the landscape of Sufi philosophy with his theory of the Unity of Existence. Fortunately for this study, Ibn al-Arabi, who has been compared with Sankara for the systemization of his philosophy (Zaehner 1960), left many of his own works, from which one of his recent biographers, was able to identify the prevalence of both the *jnana* yoga and the raja yoga of *Dhikr*:

“Among the spiritual exercises recommended by Ibn ‘Arabi, the practice of muhasaba or examination of one’s conscience occupies a special place. It will be remembered that he received this practice from two of his Andalusian teachers who used to note down every evening all their actions during the day. But Ibn ‘Arabi was even more demanding: he invited disciples to follow his own example by examining their thoughts as well as their actions. ‘You must demand that your soul account for itself, and you must verify the thoughts which crossed your mind at various moments of the day – all this while feeling shame with regard to God” (Addas, 1993, p. 164).

It is important to note that, although he prescribes reflection and contemplation, for Ibn al-Arabi, human reason and the intellect alone are much too limited a means in the search for gnosis. His form of *jnana* yoga requires what is called “Creative Imagination” or “theophanic Imagination”, which is expounded by Ibn al-Arabi in a “Science of the Imagination.” (Corbin, 1969) – similar to the intuitive discernment of the earliest gnostics.

The need for raja yoga is also central in the spiritual quest, and there is formidable evidence of Ibn al-Arabi’s use of the Sufi form of meditation:

“Regarding the kind of *dhikr* used and recommended by Ibn Arabi, it would seem that he adopted different ones during the course of his life” (Addas, 1993, p. 164).

Evidence of *bhakti* yoga in Ibn al-Arabi’s work and his practice is profound, and is rooted in his use of the terms *hawa* or divine passion, and *mahabbah* or divine Love:

The sense of *hawa*, says Ibn al-Arabi is “that of spontaneously falling passionately in love, hurling oneself, like a rushing gust of wind, into the deep emptiness of the abyss. This experience is, says Ibn al-Arabi, universal and necessary to the whole notion of worship, since without this desperate urge by the whole to integrate its part and by the part to

merge with the whole there would be no love, worship or affirmation, the consummation of which is in the Oneness of Being” (Austin, 1980, p. 242).

Here, it is clear that al-Tirmidhi’s model of the stations of the heart is affirmed, as the penetration to the innermost heart can only occur through the work of the inner heart.

In fact, his most recent biographer makes the case that for Ibn al-Arabi, love is the central feature of all existence:

“Without love, the universe would not have come into being. Without love, everything would remain in a state of non-motion, pure possibility buried in non-existence. Without love, the Divine treasury would not be known. And love permeates every movement, every action, every level, whether we are aware of it or not” (Hirtenstein, 1999, p. 192).

Thus, from Ibn al-Arabi’s perspective all three *yogas*: *raja*, *bhakti*, and *jnana*, are required to attain the experience of the Unity of Existence, or the Unity of Being. As regards the prevalence of karma yoga, although Ibn al-Arabi does not specify such a call for service, it is a practice that is implicit both in his own life and required in all Sufi orders. Most importantly, this service is rendered to the Sufi Master in the form of obedience. It can only be surmised, then, that from the expanse of his literary opus of over 350 treatises, and his service as the Greatest of all Sufi Masters, not to mention his own claim to be the “Seal of the Saints,” that Ibn al-Arabi certainly practiced all four Hindu *yogas*, inter-dependently.

Jalaluddin Rumi



We have already seen how Rumi evolved his own *raja* yoga, through the “sacred dance” of the Whirling Dervishes, which was always a prelude to the Sufi *dhikr* in remembrance of Allah.

In addition to his own 'karma yoga' in service to his disciples, Rumi stresses the need for a community, "dedicated to perceiving reality, of which apparent reality is only a substitute. This cognition comes through contact with others, by being engaged in group activity, as well as in personal activity and thought" (Shah, 1964 p. 148).

Thus, as the concept of karma yoga is not confined strictly to the mode of the devoted service of *bhakti* yoga, but can be practiced in the *jnana* mode (Smith, 1991), one might characterize Rumi's karma yoga as *jnanic* in his role as a teacher, par excellence.

A question that Rumi was at pains to address was how does a seeker who has the aptitude for the state of gnosis or *ma'rifa* begin to understand his own reality? In the introduction of a new interpretation of Rumi's "Divan of Shems of Tabriz," it is suggested that "Rumi's answer was that a seeker must first find a guide who knows his own self. Once he has found him, then with all his heart and soul he must transform his character into that of his guide. The person who desires mystical knowledge should hold on to this way and, through his spiritual guide, 'search for the means that will take you to Him.' Another *hadith* explains it well in the words: 'He who knows himself knows his Lord'" (Cowan, 1992, p. 40).

In other words, even though Rumi's version of *jnana* yoga embodies the penetration from the heart with the love of *bhakti* yoga to the inner heart and gnosis of *jnana* yoga, assistance to the spiritual aspirant in the form of a guide is essential for the journey towards gnosis and through the innermost heart to the station of Unity.

This need for a guide is central to the Sufi approach to spiritual development, and perhaps explains why the four *yogas* of Hinduism, that are clearly all present to some degree or another on the Sufi path, are not subject, in Sufism, to differences of personality and temperament. It is the Sufi Master's role to address any such differences in his relationship with his/her disciples, with the knowledge that each individual has a pre-disposition for penetrating to the innermost heart, even though that penetration may occur in its own unique time. "Ideally, the sheikh has the capacity to give each disciple what is

needed at each stage of development (Frager, 1999, p. 190).” Such a relationship between disciple and Sheikh is founded on a love more profound than between a man and a woman, and yet the Sheikh must instruct his disciples as if they were his children (Frager, 1999).

Nicholson (1989) makes the point that not all Sufis are gnostics, and that those that are not ripe for gnosis receive the appropriate ethical instruction, suitable to their needs, from their teachers. This argues the Sufi position that all spiritual instruction is based on the developmental state of consciousness of the aspirant, rather than on any personality trait or temperament.

Rumi, who was a scholar, theologian and well-versed in the mysticism of his day, discovered an all consuming love in his own relationship with Shams of Tabriz, a wandering dervish, who kindled in Rumi the fire of mystical love, “so that one did not know who was the lover and who was beloved” (Schimmel, 1975, p. 313). It is as a result of his initial grief over the loss of this relationship that Rumi found his own answers in the “sacred dance” and in his poetry of love. It is perhaps this *bhakti* aspect of Rumi’s poetry that often veils the lesser known *jnana* yoga of his mystical journey.

Some Sufis have opposed the purely intellectual, scholastic and philosophical approach to gnosis because they believe that such training of the mind can be obsessive. Other Sufis combat the notion that all that matters is intuition and asceticism. “Rumi insists upon the balance of all the faculties” (Shah, 1964, p. 146). That Rumi experienced the Unity through penetration to the innermost heart is evidenced in his own words:

“My place is in the Placeless, my trace in the Traceless;
I am neither body nor soul, as I belong to the soul of the Beloved.
I have dispensed with duality, and seen the two worlds as One;
One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call.”
(Cowan, 1992, p. 113).

Hafez



The great Sufi poet of love, Shamsuddin Muhammad's pen name was Hafez. It is the title given to a memorizer of the entire Quran. Hafez in fact mastered Qur'anic law, theology, grammar, mathematics, astronomy and calligraphy. As a court poet, he gained notoriety and was offered a position as a professor in a religious college, in Shiraz, Iran.

As a result of an epiphanic dream, Hafez was guided to a spiritual teacher, under whom he studied for most of his adult life, and for whom he wrote a poem a day, until he became a Sufi Master when he was well over sixty (Ladinsky & Mindlin 1996).

It was in his unstinting service for over forty years to his demanding teacher that one apprehends the significance of karma yoga in Hafez's practice. One of his recent biographers pays tribute to this aspect of Hafez's spiritual journey: "Through Hafez, I have learned that life is a pathway of service and that service means transcendence of self through fully embracing the world (Pourafzal & Montgomery, 1998, p. 18)." For Hafez, the Unity of Creator and created is the essence of service, through which each soul embodies the eternal flow of generosity, and we are beckoned to give to Life as the Sun gives light to us:

"I aspired to mastery but became your slave,
I desired *sultanhood* but chose service instead."
(Pourafzal & Montgomery, 1998, p. 92).

The role of *Dhikr* as a form of raja yoga is also very evident in Hafez's life:

"The main method of Sufism, in fact, is to extend the prayers so that they become continuous, for as Hafiz says: 'How happy are those who are always praying.'

This extension is not quantitative but qualitative and vertical; that is, Sufism uses the quintessential form of prayer, the *dhikr* or invocation, in which all otherness and separation from the Divine is removed and man achieves *tawhid* (Nasr, 1972, p. 49)."

The *Tawhid* being referred to is the essential Unity of all Existence, as expounded by Ibn al-Arabi, and attested to by Hafez, demonstrating the station of unity and the Light of Divine Grace, which he attained:

"Hafez, needs need not worry about unity of heart; at creation, God freed us of need for duplicity" (Pourafzal & Montgomery, 1998, p. 88).

From this we might deduce that he penetrated the innermost heart via the Light of gnosis, based on our understanding of the stations of the heart. But was this achieved through any form of *jnana* yoga? His biographers explain that in fact Hafez used verse after verse for social commentary on the religious orthodoxy and that "his public stance took on the purpose of telling the truth as it appears to someone who examines all sides of a question and who has no hidden agenda in interpreting and revealing that truth" (Pourafzal & Montgomery, 1998, p. 133). It is equally clear that Hafez, the freethinker, was self-reflective both in his poetry and on his own journey: "As the rend surrenders to the pathway, the focus of truth becomes undivided, pure, complete, and irreversible. Consider this verse:

"Whatever effort I've made has been all in search, all to keep destiny upright on my pathway" (Pourafzal & Montgomery, 1998, p. 92).

Although there are significant traces of karma, raja and *jnana* yoga, Hafez's path is unquestionably grounded in *bhakti* yoga:

"Since eternity, love's been my destiny; this inscribed fate cannot be erased from me" (Pourafzal & Montgomery, 1998, p. 139).

At the same time this *bhakti* yoga inspires Hafez's karma yoga and is balanced by *jnana* yoga:

"In order to successfully balance the often contradictory demands of the sacred and profane realms, Hafez says, you must perfect the skill of living and thinking on the razor's edge, without selling yourself to either world:

I speak openly and I tell thee:

I am the servant of love – and from both worlds free.

Love is the limitless energy that flows unconditionally between worlds. It is the erotic essence that compels us to fully engage in life to express our connection and respect for the source of creation through spontaneous acts of service (Pourafzal & Montgomery, 1998, p. 222)."

Conclusion



Our investigation thus demonstrates that despite the wide brush of *bhakti* yoga, that is extant in the popular literature, about Sufism, a more integrated practice of all four types of Hindu *yogas*, in varying degrees of passion and intensity, has been the approach of some of the most renowned of the world's Sufi Masters. However, it appears that, in the Sufi tradition, each of these *yogas*, rather than serving as specific practices suited to the needs of an individual based on one's personality type or temperament, is applied as a

process of inter-penetration from the breast to the heart, by karma yoga, to the inner heart, by *bhakti* yoga and raja yoga, all combined with *jnana* yoga to the innermost heart - into the station of the Lights of Unity and Uniqueness, where the Transcendent and the Immanent become the Ocean without a Shore.



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