

THE HUMOUR AND WISDOM OF MULLA NASRUDIN

*'If you want special illumination, look upon the human face.
See clearly within laughter, the Essence of Ultimate Truth.'*

Rumi

Humour and the Spiritual Tradition

*'Serious things cannot be understood without
humorous things, nor opposites without opposites.'*

Plato

- o Humour is important as a spiritual technique because it is an eminently practical rather than theoretical tool in helping free the human mind from conditioned thinking and behaviour.
- o Certain jokes and humorous tales contain both an experiential and inner nutritional content. "The fact that a fruit tastes delicious does not mean that it cannot have food value."
- o Humour can produce a sudden switch-over from one way of looking at things to another by breaking expectations and mental patterns. The indirect approach of humour "can slip behind the defences of our usual logic and pierce the protective armour of conventional thought."
- o Metaphysical jokes and tales are intended to challenge the consciousness and may be viable in several different ranges of meaning.

Jokes are structures, and in their Sufic usage they may fulfil many different functions. Just as we may get the humour nutrient out of a joke, we can also get several dimensions out of it on various occasions: there is no standard meaning of a joke. Different people will see different contents in it; and pointing out some of its possible usages will not, if we are used to this method, rob it of its efficacy. The same person, again, may see different sides to the same joke according to his varying states of understanding or even mood. The joke, like the non-humorous teaching-story, thus presents us with a choice instrument of illustration and action. How a person reacts to a joke will also tell us, and possibly him or her, what his blocks and assumptions have been, and can help dissolve them, to everyone's advantage. (1)

- o A sense of humour, or lack of it, is a reliable guide for distinguishing between real and false spiritual teachers. "The way to flush people out who keep their inflexibility hidden is to test whether they can endure humour or not."

Traditionally it has been noted by genuine mystics that the professionals, those who have no enlightenment but plenty of obsession, can be easily discovered

because they lack a sense of humour. Humour, here, be it noted, is not to be assumed in those who merely giggle a lot, or those who understand only the banana-skin variety: indeed, these two forms of behaviour are the types most often found in pseudo-mystics.

As a shock-applier and tension-releaser and an indicator of false situations, humour, certainly to the Sufi in traditional usage, is one of the most effective instruments and diagnostic aids. (2)

- o Humour has an enduring quality that ensures the transmission of certain ideas couched in a humourous framework. “Humour cannot be prevented from spreading; it has a way of slipping through the patterns of thought which are imposed upon mankind by habit and design.”

The Sufi Teaching Figure Mulla Nasrudin

- o Mulla Nasrudin is a traditional Middle Eastern teaching figure who personifies the ‘wise idiot’ folk-hero.

Mulla Nasrudin is the classical figure devised by the dervishes partly for the purpose of halting for a moment situations in which certain states of mind are made clear. The Nasrudin stories, known throughout the Middle East, constitute one of the strangest achievements in the history of metaphysics. Superficially, most of the Nasrudin stories may be used as jokes. They are told and retold endlessly in the teahouses and caravanserais, in the homes and on the radio waves, of Asia. But it is inherent in the Nasrudin story that it may be understood at any one of many depths. There is the joke, the moral – and the little extra which brings the consciousness of the potential mystic a little further on the way to realization.

Individual “jokes” from the collection have found their way into almost every literature in the world, and a certain amount of scholastic attention has been given them on this account – as an example of culture drift, or to support arguments in favor of the basic identity of humour everywhere. But if because of their perennial humourous appeal the stories have proved their survival power, this is entirely secondary to the intention of the corpus, which is to provide a basis for making available the Sufi attitude toward life, and for making possible the attainment of Sufic realization and mystical experience. (3)

*

Nobody really knows who Nasrudin was, where he lived, or when. This is truly in character, for the whole intention is to provide a figure who cannot really be characterized, and who is timeless. It is the message, not the man, which is important to the Sufis. This has not prevented people from providing him with a spurious history, and even a tomb. Scholars, against whose pedantry in his stories Nasrudin frequently emerges triumphant, have even tried to take his *Subtleties* to pieces in the hope of finding appropriate biographical material. (4)

- o Although Mulla Nasrudin often appears outwardly as a fool and simpleton, in reality he represents wit, simplicity and human wisdom.

Many Sufi tales concern Mulla (Master) Nasrudin, a kind of Middle Eastern Everyman who is sometimes court jester, sometimes cracker-barrel philosopher, sometimes village sage and sometimes buffoon. He combines native shrewdness and insight in a way that helps him see to the heart of a situation that his more analytical “betters” cannot. He also illustrates, in exaggerated form, the kind of fallacious thinking that hobbles the more sophisticated. (5)

*

The Mulla is variously referred to as very stupid, improbably clever, the possessor of mystical secrets. The dervishes use him as a figure to illustrate, in their teachings, the antics characteristic of the human mind.

The Mulla is probably the most versatile and resilient character in Sufi literature, because of the possibilities offered him by humour. He undergoes the most unusual changes in his stories. He has all the faults and virtues of mankind, including those that are mutually contradictory. This is where the strength of his impact lies, with which he destroys all the pigeon-holing mechanisms that our minds are used to employing. The Mulla’s actions are always unpredictable for the reader who is inevitably confused and tries to puzzle out the meaning of such unusual reactions. (6)

- o The complex ingenuity and intention of the Nasrudin story has both an inward and outward effect which produces spiritual penetration and a true regenerative force. “In order to penetrate into another dimension of cognition, we have to adjust to the way of understanding of that dimension.”
- o The Mulla Nasrudin corpus of stories and jokes are multi-dimensional in nature, featuring many different levels, aspects and purposes simultaneously.

Later, we encounter Nasrudin, a Middle Eastern joke figure. There are many purposes in these quite innocent-appearing Nasrudin stories. They can hold up a moment of action as a template, so that the reader can observe his consciousness more clearly in himself. Often one may read a story, and on later encountering a similar life situation, find oneself prepared for it. In addition, these stories can be considered “word pictures”, which can create visual symbolic situations. They embody a more sophisticated use of language to pass beyond intellectual understanding to develop intuition. (7)

- o According to traditional legend, the Nasrudin stories were developed as a means of outwitting the effects of the lower, secondary self which masks or ‘veils’ the inner essence of the human being.

It is recounted that Hussein, the founder of the system, snatched his messenger-designate Nasrudin from the very clutches of the “Old Villain” – the crude system of thought in which almost all of us live.

“Hussein” is associated in Arabic with the concept of virtue. “Hasein” means

“strong, difficult of access.”

When Hussein had searched the whole world for the teacher who was to carry his message through the generations, he was almost at the point of despair when he heard a commotion. The Old Villain was upbraiding one of his students for telling jokes. “Nasrudin!” thundered the Villain, “for your irreverent attitude I condemn you to universal ridicule. Henceforth, when one of your absurd stories is told, six more will have to be heard in succession, until you are clearly seen to be a figure of fun.”

It is believed that the mystical effect of seven Nasrudin tales, studied in succession, is enough to prepare the individual for enlightenment.

Hussein, eavesdropping, realized that from every situation comes forth its own remedy; and that this was the manner in which the evils of the Old Villain could be brought into their true perspective. He would preserve truth through Nasrudin. He called Nasrudin to him in a dream and imparted to him a portion of his *baraka*, the Sufi power which interpenetrates the nominal significance of meaning. Henceforth all the stories about Nasrudin became works of “independent” art. They could be understood as jokes, they had a metaphysical meaning; they were infinitely complex and partook of the nature of completion and perfection which had been stolen from human consciousness by the vitiating activities of the Old Villain. (8)

- o The Mulla Nasrudin teaching does not always appear in the format of stories and may sometimes be expressed as sayings or aphorisms.

Sometimes Nasrudin stories are arranged in the form of aphorisms, of which the following are examples:

It is not in fact so.

Truth is something which I never speak.

I do not answer *all* the questions; only those which the know-alls secretly ask themselves.

If your donkey allows someone to steal your coat – steal his saddle.

A sample is a sample. Yet nobody would buy my house when I showed them a brick from it.

People clamour to taste my vintage vinegar. But it would not be forty years old if I let them, would it?

To save money, I made my donkey go without food. Unfortunately the experiment was interrupted by its death. It died before it got used to having no food at all.

People sell talking parrots for huge sums. They never pause to compare the possible value of a *thinking* parrot. (9)

The Use of Mulla Nasrudin Stories in Sufi Schools

- o Mulla Nasrudin stories are widely used as a teaching instrument in Sufi circles. “Mulla Nasrudin has always been associated with the Sufi Tradition and is often used by teachers to exemplify both positive and negative ways of thinking.”

An important part of the studies of a Naqshbandi Sufi circle in Pakistan was the consideration of the Mullah-Nasreddin corpus of literature, which is generally regarded by people in Pakistan as a series of jokes. The use to which the tales of Nasreddin are put in Sufi circles, however, shows that the intention of the teachers is to develop in students a form of thinking which is different from customary patterns. (10)

*

Mulla Nasrudin, in the form in which we have him today, is the figure whose jokes, on one level, are forms of humour, but which also have a teaching function. Nasrudin is widely used by the Sufis who aim to change people's thinking-patterns so that they may attain the capacity to operate on a higher level of perception.

In the East, Mulla Nasrudin tales are recited wherever people gather. But the deliberate application of them to answer spiritual, psychological, even metaphysical questions, is part of the Sufi specialty. Nasrudin tales may act as the lead-in to deeper things. (11)

- o The Nasrudin corpus constitutes a complete 'system of thought' and exists at many depths and levels.

Since Sufism is something which is lived as well as something which is perceived, a Nasrudin tale cannot in itself produce complete enlightenment. On the other hand, it bridges the gap between mundane life and a transmutation of consciousness in a manner which no other literary form yet produced has been able to attain.

The Subtleties of the Incomparable Nasrudin has never been presented in full to a Western audience, probably because the stories cannot properly be translated by a non-Sufi, or even be studied out of context, and retain the essential impact. Even in the East the collection is used for study purposes only by initiate Sufis. (12)

- o One of the usages of Nasrudin stories in Sufi school settings is to act as a shock or stimulus to the entrenched thinking patterns of the students.

In order to understand the wider aspects of Sufi thought, and before progress can be made along lines outside the web cast over humanity by the Old Villain, the dimensions provided by Nasrudin must be visited. If Nasrudin is like a Chinese box, with compartments within compartments, at least he offers numerous simple points of entry into a new way of thinking. To be familiar with the experience of Nasrudin is to be able to unlock many doors in the more baffling texts and practices of the Sufis.

As one's perceptions increase, so does the power of extracting nutrition from the Nasrudin tales. They provide for the beginner what the Sufis call a "blow" – a calculated impact which operates in a special way, preparing the mind for the Sufi undertaking.

Looked upon as nutrition, the Nasrudin blow is called a coconut. This term is derived from a Sufi statement: "A monkey threw a coconut from a treetop at a hungry Sufi, and it hit him on the leg. He picked it up; drank the milk; ate the flesh;

made a bowl from the shell.”

In one sense, they fulfil the function of the literal blow which occurs in one of the most terse of the Mulla tales:

Nasrudin handed a boy a pitcher, told him to fetch water from a well, and gave him a clout on the ear. “And mind you don’t drop it!” he shouted.

An onlooker said, “How can you strike someone who has done nothing wrong?”

“I suppose,” said Nasrudin, “that you would prefer me to strike him *after* he has broken the pitcher, when the pitcher and water are both lost? In my way the boy remembers, and the pot and contents are also saved.”

Since Sufism is a comprehensive work, it is not only the Seeker who must learn, like the boy. The work, like the pitcher and the water, has its own rules, outside the mundane methods of arts and sciences.

Nobody can set off on the Sufi path unless he has the potentiality for it. If he tries to do so, the possibilities of error are too great for him to have a chance of bringing back the water without breaking the pot. (13)

- o Jokes and humourous tales are studied and then recalled to provide useful frameworks in the search for self-knowledge. “A joke will sometimes help a disciple to see his real situation: though not always at the very moment when it is told.”

Jokes which are familiar as just ordinary jests can be seen to have psychological levels which can be quite striking when transposed into the spiritual situation. They have been used for centuries to hold a mirror up to people, so that they can see their own behaviour in a way which is otherwise very difficult indeed. (14)

- o In a Sufi school a teacher will interpret a Nasrudin story in light of the technical terminology woven into the narrative elements of the story.

Nasrudin is taking a load of salt to market. His donkey wades through a stream, and the salt is dissolved. When it reaches the opposite bank, the ass is frisky because his load is lightened. But Nasrudin is angry. On the next market day he packs the panniers with wool. The animal is almost drowned with the increase of weight when it takes up water at the ford.

“There!” says Nasrudin triumphantly, “that’ll teach you to think that you gain something every time you go through water!”

In the original story, two technical terms are used, salt and wool. “Salt” (*milh*) is the homonym for “being good, wisdom.” The donkey is the symbol for man. By shedding his burden of general goodness, the individual feels better, loses the weight. The result is that he loses his food, because Nasrudin could not sell the salt to buy fodder. The word “wool” is of course another word for “Sufi.” On the second trip the donkey had an increase of his burden through the wool, because of the intention of his teacher, Nasrudin. The weight is increased for the duration of the journey to market. But the end result is better, because Nasrudin sells the damp wool, now heavier than before, for a higher price than dry wool.

Another joke, found also in Cervantes (*Don Quixote*, Ch. 5) remains a joke although the technical term “fear” is merely translated and not explained.

“I shall have you hanged,” said a cruel and ignorant king to Nasrudin, “if you do not prove that you have deep perceptions such as have been attributed to you.”

Nasrudin at once said that he could see a golden bird in the sky and demons within the earth. “But how can you do this?” the King asked. “Fear,” said the Mulla, “is all you need.”

“Fear,” in the Sufi vocabulary, is the activation of conscience whose exercises can produce extrasensory perception. This is an area in which the formal intellect is not used, and other faculties of the mind are called into play. (15)

The Effect on Human Consciousness

- o Humour may be used to convey important ideas that otherwise could not penetrate a person’s conditioned responses and subjective opinions. “What appears on the surface as jests are in fact structures formulated to bring into cognition patterns which the mind finds it difficult or impossible to render and receive in any other way.”
- o The Nasrudin jokes and tales present an impact to the mind that can break mental patterns and provide a taste of illumination. Nasrudin stories can help to awaken dormant capacities of the human mind.
- o The effect of Nasrudin stories is varied and depends very much on the intellectual and emotional propensity of the reader or listener.

It is more than interesting to observe the effect of Nasrudin tales upon people in general. Those who prefer the more ordinary emotions of life will cling to their obvious meaning, and insist upon treating them as jokes. These include the people who compile or read small booklets of the more obvious jests, and who show visible uneasiness when the metaphysical or “upsetting” stories are told them.

Nasrudin himself answers these people in one of his shortest jokes:

“They say your jokes are full of hidden meanings, Nasrudin. Are they?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Because I have never told the truth in my life, even once; neither will I ever be able to do so.”

The ordinary individual may say, with a sense of profundity, that all humour is really serious; that every joke carries a message on a philosophical level. But this message system is not that of Nasrudin. The cynical humorist, it may be supposed, like the Greek philosopher, may point out absurdities in our thoughts and actions. This is not the role of Nasrudin either – because the over-all effect of Nasrudin is something more profound. Since the Mulla stories all have a coherent relationship with one another and with a form of reality which the Sufi is teaching, the cycle is a part of a context of conscious development which cannot be correctly related to the snipping of the ordinary humorist or the sporadic satiricism of the formal thinker.

When a Nasrudin tale is read and digested, something is happening. It is this consciousness of happening and continuity that is central to Sufism. (16)

- o Mulla Nasrudin stories contain a deeper significance than mere jokes, allowing the student to benefit from its regenerative power. The nutrition that can be extracted from a Nasrudin tale depends on the level of development of the student.

The mere repetition of a Nasrudin jest takes with it some *baraka*; pondering over it brings more. “So that by this method the teachings of Nasrudin in the line of Hussein were impressed forever in a vehicle which could not be utterly distorted beyond repair. Just as all water is essentially water, so within the Nasrudin experiences there is an irreducible minimum which answers a call, and which grows when it is invoked.” This minimum is truth, and through truth, real consciousness.

Nasrudin is the mirror in which one sees oneself. Unlike an ordinary mirror, the more it is gazed into, the more of the original Nasrudin is projected into it. This mirror is likened to the celebrated Cup of Jamshid, the Persian hero; which mirrors the whole world, and into which the Sufis “gaze.”

Since Sufism is not built upon artificial conduct or behaviour in the sense of external detail, but upon comprehensive detail, the Nasrudin stories must be experienced as well as thought about. Further, the experiencing of each story will contribute toward the “homecoming” of the mystic. (17)

- o There is a subtle aspect to many of the Mulla Nasrudin stories and jokes that many ‘sophisticated’ adults are unable to appreciate.

Sometimes it is necessary to redeem the jaded awareness first. This technique, too, can be used, and is employed, in a contemporary context. In the Mulla Nasrudin corpus, in addition to the structures which the jokes embrace (which is something else), the ‘blow’ administered by the joke makes possible a transitory condition in which other things can be perceived. The fact, often noted by book reviewers, that many Nasrudin stories are not jokes at all, is also part of the total technique. The intention here is to prevent the stabilization of this form of humour into funny things and those which are not funny. The Nasrudin story is intended to be unexpected.

But what *is* the unexpected? This brings us to a further important consideration of the Sufi attitude towards perceptions, which does cut across quite a lot of customary Western reactions. We are all aware that children like jokes, and they mostly go through a phase when they love the most banal and absurd jokes, and even like to repeat them again and again, almost at times to the verge of hysteria. Then comes the period of cultivation of the sense of humour, when the ‘mature’ – so-called – individual responds only to new, unexpected or subtle jokes. Western observers have often remarked at the childishness of many Eastern peoples, who like to hear puns, like to have old jokes repeated, take pleasure in small incongruities. Punning is the lowest form of humour, by Western standards. Few people – if anyone at all – seemed to have bothered to wonder whether the ‘wearing out’ of the impact-capacity of a joke is ennui or maturity; whether it is an advance or a form of insensitivity. (18)

Illustrations of Human Behaviour

- o Humorous puzzles and jokes may be employed to provide timely illustrations of the ways in which the mind typically works. Many Mulla Nasrudin jokes highlight and display the structure of a situation or experience.

- o Many of the events contained in Mulla Nasrudin stories represent the dynamics operating inside the human mind. One of the purposes of jokes is to illustrate patterns of thinking and behaviour by exteriorizing them in human form. “There are social incidents, real and possible, parallel to the mind’s working.”
- o A humorous story or joke can reveal, both in its structure and the reactions of people to it, the typical ways in which people think and are guided by assumptions and preconceptions.

‘Many a true word is spoken in jest,’ they say in England. Having said it, people nod sagely. The ones who laugh at a joke generally think that it would spoil their fun if the other content of the joke were examined. Those who look for the moral too often lack a sense of humour. Because of that, they haven’t a well-rounded enough mind to learn, anyway.

This is an interesting peculiarity of the current culture, so well-established as to deprive hundreds of millions, perhaps billions, of people of a great deal of knowledge and experience.

Let us look at a joke and see whether we can both enjoy it and learn something.

I heard this one at a party given by the Afghanistan Society of the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University. People had been invited to tell tales, and one young woman stood up and told it:

There was once a philosophy don who had had little social life. One day he had to attend a conference and wondered what would happen if he was expected to talk to a woman.

He asked a friend what he should do.

‘No problem,’ said the friend. ‘Women are interested in two things: families and dieting. Mention one or the other and you can have a reasonable conversation.’

So the academic went to the conference and, when the time came when he found himself obliged to talk to a woman, he felt adequately prepared.

‘How is your brother?’ he asked, sure that the family aspect was bound to start the conversation correctly.

The woman looked at him oddly. ‘I haven’t got a brother,’ she said.

‘Well,’ thought the scholar, ‘there is still the second subject.’ He asked, ‘What do you think of turnips?’

The woman said, edging away from him, ‘I do not like them at all.’

The don was not a man of the brain for nothing, and he was now sure that, with his philosophical training, he could initiate a really good conversation on the basis of what had gone before.

‘Tell me,’ he enquired, ‘if you did have a brother, would you like turnips?’

If you try to think of two things at once, you lose both; so one should enjoy the joke before looking for a meaning.

In the case of this one – and of most other jokes – there are lots of useful meanings to be extracted from the story. Your immediate reactions can tell you something about yourself.

I tried the joke on a man who swore that it showed up the foolishness and shallow thought-patterns of philosophers. He was delighted to find this in the story, since he had disliked such people for years. In other words, his reaction told us something about him. Unfortunately, it did not help him much, since he could not believe that his opposition to philosophers was in the nature of a fixation.

Now let us look at the tale as a structure, and take out individual parts. First, it

shows assumptions: the assumptions of the university man that all he needed was a couple of points and that he would be sure to be able to use them effectively.

Split this up into the facts that the don needed basic facts, needed skill, and could gain nothing by rushing into something without these two factors. Facts plus skill produce the timing and context in which to make an approach to a problem. (19)

- o Some jokes and humorous stories are used as correctives to help people whose narrow and single-minded attitudes block higher understanding.

Humorous tales contain valuable structures for understanding. Their use also helps to weed out people who lack a sense of humour. Sufis hold that people who have not developed or who have suppressed their capacity to enjoy humour are, in this deprived state, also without learning capacity in the Sufi sphere. (20)

- o Some of the Mulla Nasrudin stories make fun of self-important people who lack a sense of humour, exposing the superficiality and triviality which masks as something higher.

Nasrudin was sitting in the main street of his own town, fishing. The hook on his line was hanging into a large pot of water.

A self-satisfied scholar passing by, called out:

‘Have you caught many today, idiot?’

‘Not many, Excellency, only three!’

‘Three! Is that all?’ smiled the self-important ‘wise’ man.

‘Well, actually it is four, including you’, said the Mulla. (21)

- o The intention behind a Mulla Nasrudin story is to apply the elements, experiences and interactions contained in the story to one’s own life situation and experience.

If you take a story of Nasrudin, whether he is travelling from Shiraz to Teheran and he’s got his donkey and such and such a thing happens to him as a result of which he says or does this or that, it is very unlikely that a great number of people will be travelling on that road at the same time with all the circumstances being similar, with the donkeys etc., so that they could exactly reproduce Nasrudin’s experience: but if you take the experience in the context of another place or another time; what he said or how he reacted is as applicable to the King’s Road or the Boulevard Saint-Michel as it is to the road between Damascus and Teheran.

The story is in fact the buildup in order to leave the kernel, the centre, of that story with you: reaction, interaction, how he used the situation, how he won in a situation or how he lost the situation. How do I apply that? In a very simple way, because none of the Nasrudin stories are so incredibly complex that you can’t apply or understand them. They are little simple human efforts, simple human endeavours, simple human successes, simple human failings, and if you take them out of that particular context, they can apply to a lot of contexts in life. (22)

- o Mulla Nasrudin tales often illustrate creative ways of thinking in response to external circumstances. One story shows how *supposed* opposition may in fact operate as the reverse.

The principle is given human shape and set in the form of a tale in the East, in order to illustrate how we see social and psychological forces having an effect contrary to that intended by their originators, an effect which can be taken advantage of by the perspicacity of an objective observer.

Mulla Nasrudin, the standard joke-figure who often appears in these stories, is about to engage in litigation, in this tale. He says to his lawyer: 'If I sent the judge 100 gold pieces, what effect would that have on his ruling in my case?'

The lawyer is horrified. 'You do that,' he says, 'and he'll find against you, for sure – you might even be arrested for attempted bribery!'

'Are you sure?'

'Quite sure, I *know* that judge'.

The case was heard, and the Mulla won.

'Well', said the lawyer, 'you *did* get justice after all, you can't deny that . . .'

'Mind you,' said Nasrudin, 'the gold pieces also helped . . .'

'You mean you actually sent the judge *money*?' howled the lawyer.

'Oh yes,' said Mulla Nasrudin, 'but, of course, I sent the gold in the *other man's* name!'

Nasarudin is, of course, the device used here to show how things work – not an example of what someone should do under such circumstances. Sufi instructional tales are interpreted by people, in the study situation, in accordance with their growing ability to learn to recognize certain situations and their equivalence in human thought-systems and processes. A superficial thinker would imagine, for example, this only to be a tale of cunning and deception. But, as the Sufis say: 'You don't call a water-wheel cunning, claiming that it fools the river into giving up its water, do you? The Sufis, in this sense, are technicians, and the instrumental function, at high levels of perception, is paramount. (23)

References

1. Idries Shah Special Illumination (London: Octagon Press, 1983), p. 10-11.
2. Idries Shah Special Illumination (London: Octagon Press, 1983), p. 7.
3. Idries Shah The Sufis (London: Octagon Press, 1984), p. 56-7.
4. Idries Shah The Sufis (London: Octagon Press, 1984), p. 57.
5. Edwin Kiester "Grand Sheikh of the Sufis" Human Behavior August 1977, p. 28.
6. Giovanna de Garayalde Jorge Luis Borges: Sources and Illumination (London: Octagon Press, 1978), p. 75-6.
7. Robert Ornstein The Nature of Human Consciousness (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1973), p. 274.
8. Idries Shah The Sufis (London: Octagon Press, 1984), p. 65-6.
9. Idries Shah The Sufis (London: Octagon Press, 1984), p. 97.
10. Raoul Simac "In a Naqshbandi Circle" in The World of the Sufi (Ed. Idries Shah) (London: Octagon Press, 1979), p. 65-6.
11. Louis Palmer Adventures in Afghanistan (London: Octagon Press, 1990), p. 58-9.
12. Idries Shah The Sufis (London: Octagon Press, 1984), p. 56.
13. Idries Shah The Sufis (London: Octagon Press, 1984), p. 96-7.
14. Idries Shah Special Illumination (London: Octagon Press, 1983), p. 18.
15. Idries Shah The Sufis (London: Octagon Press, 1984), p. 64-5.
16. Idries Shah The Sufis (London: Octagon Press, 1984), p. 86-7.
17. Idries Shah The Sufis (London: Octagon Press, 1984), p. 66.
18. Idries Shah Neglected Aspects of Sufi Study (London: Octagon Press, 1989), p. 37-8.
19. Idries Shah Knowing How to Know (London: Octagon Press, 1998), p. 257-8.
20. Idries Shah Learning How to Learn (London: Octagon Press, 1983), p. 21.
21. H.B.M. Dervish Journeys with a Sufi Master (London: Octagon Press, 1982), p. 10-1.
22. Omar Ali-Shah Sufism Today (New York: Alif Publishing, 1993), p. 128-9.
23. Idries Shah A Perfumed Scorpion (London: Octagon Press, 1983), p. 168-9.

Further Reading

- Idries Shah *The Exploits of the Incomparable Mulla Nasrudin* (Octagon Press)
Idries Shah *The Pleasantries of the Incredible Mulla Nasrudin* (Octagon Press)
Idries Shah *The Subtleties of the Inimitable Mulla Nasrudin* (Octagon Press)
Idries Shah *The World of Nasrudin* (Octagon Press)