The Sufi Conspiracy

Written By David Livingstone

Having lost touch with its glorious heritage of classical scholarship, the Muslim world today is divided in squabbles between two opposing camps, who despite their respective deviations, are both attempting to usurp the right to represent orthodox Islam. The Wahhabis and Salafis are the product of a British strategy to undermine Islamic tradition and create fundamentalism. While the Sufis are their most vocal and articulate critics, rightly pointing out their corruptions, they themselves are part of a similar conspiracy, again with close ties to Western intelligence and the occult.

Helena P. Blavatsky (1831 – 1891)

The New Age movement, following the teachings of a leading disciple of H. P. Blavatsky, believes that the coming of the Age of Aquarius will herald the beginning of world peace and one-world government, headed by the Maitreya, who is said to be awaited also by Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims, though he is known by these believers respectively as Christ, Messiah, the fifth Buddha, Krishna or Imam Mahdi. The New Age’s expectation of the Mahdi awaited by the Muslims has been nurtured through its relationship with Sufism.

Essentially, the pretext of the occult is that in the future the world will be united in peace by eliminating all sectarianism, when the world will be brought together under a single belief system. The basis of that belief will be the occult tradition, which it is claimed has been the underlying source of all exoteric religions. As such, since at least the middle of the eighteenth century, occultists have marketed Sufism as being the origin of Freemasonry.

According to Idries Shah, the twelfth century Qadiriyya Sufi order was the origin of the Rosicrucians, the most important occult movement after the Renaissance, who later evolved into the Freemasons. As detailed in Black Terror White Soldiers, the Rosicrucians were responsible for orchestrating the advent of Sabbatai Zevi, who took the Jewish world by storm in 1666 when he declared himself their expected messiah. However, Zevi disappointed the vast majority of his followers when he subsequently converted to Islam. Nevertheless, an important segment followed him into Islam as well, and to this day consist of a powerful community of secret Jews known as Dönmeh.

The Dönmeh of Turkey maintained associations with a number of Sufi orders, like Whirling Dervishes founded by Jalal ad-Din Rumi, and the Bektashis. Strongly heretical, the Bektashi venerated Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed, repudiated many of the legal rulings of Islam, and combined Kabbalistic ideas with elements of ancient Central Asian shamanism.

Through the influence of Bektashi Sufism, the Dönmeh developed the belief of Pan-Turkism, later adopted by the Young Turks, a Dönmeh and Masonic organization responsible for overthrowing the Ottoman Caliphate in 1908. Pan-Turkism begins with Alexander Csoma de Körös (1784 – 1842), the first in the West to mention mysterious Buddhist realm known as Shambhala, which he regarded as the origin of the Turkish people, and which he situated in the Altai mountains and Xinjiang.

Csoma de Körös’s mention of Shambhala became the basis of the mystical speculations offered by H. P. Blavatsky, which she regarded as the homeland of the Aryan race. Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society, and came to be regarded as an oracle of Freemasonry and the godmother of the occult. Blavatsky became largely responsible for initiating the popularity of Buddhism as a font of the Ancient Wisdom. However, contrary to popular perceptions, Tibetan Buddhism is a strange amalgam of Buddhist ideas, along with Hindu Tantra and Central Asian shamanism, it was for this reason that Blavatsky regarded it as the true preservation of the traditions of magic.

The myth of Sufism as the origin of Freemasonry developed through the influence of Abdul Qadir al Jazairi (1808 – 1883), an Algerian national hero who led a struggle against the French invasion of their country in the mid-nineteenth century. Abdul Qadir was ultimately forced to surrender, and eventually settled in Damacus, Syria, under a generous pension from the French.

In 1860, he attained international fame when he and his personal guard saved large numbers of Christians who had come under attack by the local Druze population. As reward, the French government bestowed on him the Grand Cross of the Légion d’honneur and he was also honored by Abraham Lincoln. As well, the town of Elkaker of Iowa was named after him.

Abdul Qadir had been initiated into the Naqshbandi, into the Qadiriyya by his own father, and into the Darqawi branch of the Shadhili Sufi order, by the student of its founder, al Arabi ad-Darqawi. The Shadhili was branched to the Akbariyya chain, going back to the “Shaykh Al-Akbar” (Greatest Sheikh), referring to Arab mystic, Ibn Arabi (1165 – 1240). However, Ibn Arabi was condemned by the vast majority of orthodox Muslim scholars as a heretic. The reason Ibn Arabi served the purposes of these Sufi Masons was for his belief in the doctrine of a “Universal Brotherhood,” which was the core of the mission of Freemasonry and Theosophy, and the basis of their pretext of establishing a one-world religion.

Although Ibn Arabi is widely regarded among Sufis as al-Sheikh al-Akbar (“The Greatest Sheikh”), he was consistently denounced as an apostate by orthodox scholars. Imam Burhan al-Din al-Biqa‘i (d. 885) wrote a book titled Tanbih al-Ghabi ila Takfir Ibn ‘Arabi wa Tahdhir al-‘Ibad min Ahl al-‘Inad (“Warning to the Ignoramus Concerning the Declaration of Ibn Arabi’s Disbelief, and Cautioning the Servants of Allah Against Stubborn People”) in which he quotes many Fatwas (Islamic rulings) by scholars from different Madhhabs criticizing Ibn Arabi. The famous Meccan historian Taqi al-din al-Fasi (1373 – 1429 AD) in massive biographical dictionary, al-‘lqd al-thamin (“The Precious Necklace”) also collected the legal opinions issued against lbn Arabi by the respected scholars of over almost two centuries. Among them Ibn Taymiyyah (1263 – 1328 AD) and his students, but also Ibn Taymiyya’s fiercest opponent al Taqi al Din Al Subki (1284 – 1355 AD), chief judge of Damascus.[1]

Abdul Qadir was also friends with Jane Digby and Sir Richard Burton, the famous British explorer, spy and fellow Freemason, who had been made consul in Damascus in 1869. Digby, or Lady Ellenborough (1807-1881), was an English aristocrat who lived a scandalous life of romantic adventures, having had four husbands and many lovers. Burton and Digby were also close friends of Wilfred Scawen Blunt and his wife Lady Anne, a grand-daughter of poet Lord Byron. Blunt was the handler of British agent Jamal ud Din al Afghani and his disciple, Mohammed Abduh, the founders of the fundamentalist tradition of Islam known as Salafism, from which emerged the Muslim Brotherhood.[2]

Burton was also an avid occultist, and like Abdul Qadir, a member of the Qadiriyya Sufi order, because “Sufism,” he claimed, is “the Eastern parent of Freemasonry.”[3] Burton was also a member of the Theosophical Society of Blavatsky, who visited him in Damascus. According to historian K. Paul Johnson, Afghani was one of Blavatsky’s “Ascended Masters,” from whom she learned her central doctrines. Afghani was the reputed head of a mysterious order known as the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor (or Light), which exercised a profound influence over the occult societies of the period, culminating in the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) of the scandalous Aleister Crowley.

Most important to the transmission of Sufism to the West was Réne Guénon, a one-time member of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light. Guénon founded the occult school of Traditionalism, which suggests that all exoteric religions share a single underlying occult tradition Therefore, according to Guénon, one could choose any religion as one’s outward belief, and so he chose Islam.

Guénon’s initiation was effected by Swedish convert to Islam Ivan Aguéli, who was also interested in Kabbalah, and performed under the authority of the friend of Abdul Qadir al Jazairi, Sheikh Abder Rahman Illaysh al Kabir, a Freemason and head of the Maliki Madhhab at Al Azhar University. As a Freemason, al Kabir also aimed to demonstrate the relationship between the symbols of Freemasonry and Islam.[4]

Also promoting the origin of shamanism as the source of ancient wisdom was the chief propagandist for the popularization of Sufism within the New Age, George Gurdjieff (1866 – 1949), a charismatic hypnotist, carpet trader and spy of Armenian origin. Gurdjieff’s teaching claimed that human beings were helplessly caught in a “waking sleep” unable to fully perceive reality, but that it is possible for them to transcend to a higher state of consciousness and achieve their full human potential. He developed a method for doing so called “The Work” or “the Method.” Because his method for awakening one’s consciousness was different from that of the fakir, monk or yogi, his discipline is also called the “Fourth Way.” As Gurdjieff explained, “The way of the development of hidden possibilities is a way against nature and against God.”[5]

Gurdjieff’s deceptive and tyrannical ways led to his reputation as a “rascal guru.” He was widely referred to as a black magician, and Rasputin was so fearful of him that he was quoted to have said, “I had been especially careful not to look at Gurdjieff and not to allow him to look into my eyes...”[6] He was criticized by many of his former students as being slovenly, gluttonous and was notorious for seducing his female students and fathering several illegitimate children. P. D. Ouspensky, his leading student, finally broke with him, claiming that he was “a very extraordinary man,” but that it was “dangerous to be near him.”[7] Another of his famous student, J. G. Bennett, warned that Gurdjieff “is far more of an enigma than you can imagine. I am certain that he is deeply good, and that he is working for the good of mankind. But his methods are often incomprehensible.”[8]

Louis Pauwels, a former student of Gurdjieff, in his book Monsieur Gurdjieff, asserts that one of the “Searchers After Truth” that Gurdjieff speaks of in his book Meetings with Remarkable Men was Karl Haushofer, "the magician, the secret master," who through his student Rudolf Hess, influenced the development of Adolf Hitler's geopolitical strategies. Haushofer was also a leading member of the Thule Society, from which evolved the Nazi Party, and founded by Baron Rudolf von Sebottendorf, who had studied Kabbalah in Turkey under Bektashi Sufis who were also Freemasons. Haushofer was apparently influenced by Gurdjieff's teaching that men are asleep and waiting for a strong leader to force them to wake up and become supermen. Haushofer was supposed to have been with Gurdjieff in Tibet, and it was then that Gurdjieff supposedly advised Haushofer to adopt the symbol of the swastika.[9]

There has also often been the suggestion that Gurdjieff and Joseph Dzhugashvili, later known as Stalin, met as young students while attending the same seminary in Tiflis in the Caucasus. Gurdjieff’s family records contain information that Stalin lived in his family’s house for a while.[10] There are also suggestions that Stalin belonged to an occult "eastern brotherhood," which consisted of Gurdjieff and his followers.[11]

Gurdjieff’s thought is an amalgam of Theosophy, Neopythagoreanism, Rosicrucianism and alchemy. According to James Webb, author of The Harmonious Circle: The Anatomy of a Myth, the first comprehensive book on Gurdjieff and his movement, Blavatsky’s Theosophy was his single most important source. Additionally, as K. Paul Johnson notes, “a comparison of the teachings of Blavatsky and Gurdjieff leads to the conclusion that both are equally indebted to another source, Ismaili Shi’ism.”[12] According to Johnson, Blavatsky’s likely source for this Ismaili influence would have been Jamal ud Din al Afghani, who was simultaneously the Grand Master of Freemasonry in Egypt, as well as founder of fundamentalist reform group, known as Salafism.

Having studied with the Bektashi Sufis, Gurdjieff also adopted the belief in shamanism as the source of the Sufi tradition. Gurdjieff’s Fourth Way teachings mentioned a “Universal Brotherhood” and also a mysterious group of monks called the Sarmoung (also: Sarman, Sarmouni). Both groups were described as in possession of advanced knowledge and powers, and as being open to suitable candidates from all creeds. In the account of Gurdjieff’s wanderings, Meetings with Remarkable Men, he describes encounters in many parts of the world, including Central Asia, Egypt and Rome. Gurdjieff then ventures to Central Asia to search out and locate the mysterious Sarmoung Brotherhood. The chief monastery of the society was said to be located somewhere in the heart of Asia, about twelve days’ journey by horse and donkey from Bukhara in Uzbekistan.

From the Sarmoung, Gurdjieff learns the sacred dances, much like those of the Whirling Dervishes, which constitute an integral part of his “the work.” According to Gurdjieff’s leading student J. G. Bennett, who was head of British Military Intelligence in Istanbul and his friend Idries Shah, the popular author of Sufism, Gurdjieff’s “Fourth Way” originated with the Khwajagan, a chain of Naqshbandi Sufi Masters from the tenth to the sixteenth century influenced by Central Asian shamanism. According to Bennett, the Sufis are the descendants and spiritual heirs of the old master magicians of Altai, where Central Asia has been their heartland for forty thousand years or more.

As Bennett relates, the Sarmoun became active in the rise of Zoroastrianism, and he connects the influence of the Magi to the Essenes.[13] Gurdjieff believed that the true teachings of Jesus Christ were corrupted by the Christian Church, but that a small group of initiates called the “Brotherhood of the Essenes” were able to secretly preserve them. Likewise, Gurdjieff believed that Islam as well had deviated from the original teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. Gurdjieff believed that the esoteric teachings of Islam were in Bokhara, in Central Asia, which Bennett believes was associated with the Naqshbandi Sufis who had preserved the true teachings of Islam, and which represented a synthesis of the inner meaning of all religions.

In 1953, Bennett had undertaken a long journey to the Middle East, which included a mysterious visit to Abdullah Faizi ad Daghestani (1891-1973), Shaykh of the Naqshbandi Haqqani Sufi order, in Damascus.[14] Ad Daghestani initiated Gurdjieff and allowed him through a dream to “ascend to the knowledge of the power of the nine points,” which became the basis of his Enneagram.[15] The enneagram is a nine-pointed figure usually inscribed within a circle. Gurdjieff is quoted by Ouspensky as claiming that it was an ancient secret and was now being partly revealed for the first time, though hints of the symbol could be found in esoteric literature. It has been proposed that it may derive from the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, as used in Renaissance Hermeticism, which used an enneagram of three interlocking triangles, also called a nonagram or a nine-pointed figure used by the Christian medieval philosopher Raymond Lull.[16]

Through the influence of the Romanian Traditionalist historian, Mircea Eliade, brought forward the idea that its mystical feats of the shamans of Central Asian were achieved through the use of drugs, often referred to as “entheogens.” In 1954, Aldous Huxley, who studied Eliade, wrote the The Doors of Perception, which also reflected the ideas of Gurdjieff, and claimed that hallucinogenic drugs “expand consciousness.” Like many of the leading LSD evangelists of the CIA’s MK-Ultra program, including Huxley, Gerald Heard and Alan Watts, Timothy Leary was strongly influenced by Gurdjieff.

Gurdjieff believed that the ascetic practices of monks, fakirs and yogis resulted in the production of psychological substances that produced their religious or mystical experiences. Instead of the torturous practices of these mystics, Gurdjieff proposed that the man who knows the Fourth Way “simply prepares and swallows a little pill which contains all the substances he wants. And in this way, without loss of time, he obtains the required result.”[17] Leary later remarked about receiving a copy of the Fourth Secret Teaching of Gurdjieff:

For the past twenty years, we Gurdjieff fans had been titillated by rumors of this Fourth Book, which supposedly listed secret techniques and practical methods for attaining the whimsical, post-terrestrial levels obviously inhabited by the jolly Sufi Master [Gurdjieff]. We had always assumed, naturally, that the secret methods involved drugs. So it was a matter of amused satisfaction to read in this newly issued text that not only were brain-activating drugs the keys to Gurdjieff's wonderful, whirling wisdom, but also that the reason for keeping the alkaloids secret was to avoid exactly the penal incarceration which I was enjoying when the following essay was penned.”[18]

Leary apparently first became interested in psychedelics when he read a 1957 article by Gordon Wasson published in Life magazine titled “Seeking the Magic Mushroom,” which brought knowledge of the existence of psychoactive mushrooms to a wide audience for the first time. Wasson, who was a vice president of JP Morgan and served as a chairman to the CFR, and had close ties to CIA chief Allen Dulles. Wasson and Henry Luce—Skull and Bones member and creator of Life magazine—were also long time members of the Century Club, a CIA front, along with John Foster Dulles, Walter Lippmann, and George Kennan.[19] Time-Life was created by Henry P. Davison Jr, also a member of Skull and Bones, who was Wasson's boss at J. P. Morgan.

Wasson was associated with at least six people suspected of being involved in the JFK assassination, including C. D. Jackson and Henry Luce. Wasson’s name was found in the address book that was retrieved from the briefcase of George de Mohrenschildt, a friend of Lee Harvey Oswald, after his death. The address book also contained an entry for “Bush, George H. W. (Poppy).” Although de Mohrenschildt denied any Nazi sympathies, his application to join the OSS during World War II was rejected, because, according to a memo by former CIA director Richard Helms he was alleged to be a Nazi spy. In addition to the Bush family, de Mohrenschildt was also acquainted with the Bouvier family, including Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy.

Wasson is considered the founder of Ethnomycology, the study of psychoactive mushrooms used for spiritual purposes, inspiring later researchers such as Terence McKenna and John Allegro. Wasson wrote in Leary’s The Psychedelic Review that the magic mushroom “permits you to see more clearly than our perishing eye can see, vistas beyond the horizons of life, to travel backwards and forwards in time, to enter other planes of existence, even to know God.”[20] In 1967 Wasson would publish Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality, which proposed that the ancient Vedic intoxicant Soma was the magic mushroom. Wasson would later discuss the Eleusinian Mysteries, in The Road to Eleusis: Unveiling the Secret of the Mysteries, co-authored with Albert Hofmann, the Swiss scientist who discovered LSD, who proposed that the special potion “kykeon,” used in the ceremony, contained psychoactive substances from the fungus Ergot, from which LSD was developed.

Wasson was also close friends with Robert Graves, the author of The White Goddess, a key book for modern Pagans and Wiccans, in which he proposes the existence of a European deity, inspired and represented by the phases of the moon, and which is the origin of the goddesses of various European and pagan mythologies.

Graves also wrote the introduction to Idries Shah’s The Sufis. As the secretary to Gerald Gardner, one of the key representatives of Wicca, whose rituals he developed with Aleister Crowley, Shah was responsible for popularizing that European witchcraft, as well as the occult tradition in general, was derived from Sufism.

Towards the end of the 1950s, Shah established contact with Wiccan circles in London and served as a secretary and companion to Gerald Gardner, the founder of Wicca, whose rituals he formulated with Aleister Crowley. Shortly before his death, Crowley elevated Gardner to the VII° of the OTO, and issued a charter decreeing that Gardner could perform its preliminary initiation rituals.[21] After Crowley’s death in 1947, Gardner was regarded as the chief representative of the OTO in Europe.

Shah met Graves in 1961, and later wrote to him that he was researching ecstatic religions, and that he had been “attending… experiments conducted by the witches in Britain, into mushroom-eating and so on.” Shah also told Graves that he was “intensely preoccupied at the moment with the carrying forward of ecstatic and intuitive knowledge.”[22] Graves encouraged Shah to publish an authoritative book on Sufism for a Western audiences, which became The Sufis. Graves’ introduction described Shah as being “in the senior male line of descent from the prophet Mohammed” and as having inherited “secret mysteries from the Caliphs, his ancestors. He is, in fact, a Grand Sheikh of the Sufi Tariqa…” Graves confessed, however, that this was “misleading: he is one of us, not a Moslem personage.”[23]

In June 1962, a couple of years prior to the publication of The Sufis, Shah had also established contact with members of the movement that had formed around the mystical teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. He was eventually introduced to J. G. Bennett, who became convinced that Shah “had a very important mission in the West that we ought to help him to accomplish.”[24] Shah gave Bennett a “Declaration of the People of the Tradition.” Shah declared that the Guardians belonged to an “invisible hierarchy” that had chosen him to transmit “a secret, hidden, special, superior form of knowledge.” It convinced Bennett that Shah was a genuine emissary of Gurdjieff’s “Sarmoung Monastery.”

In The Commanding Self, Idries Shah, contends that the Enneagram is of Sufi origin, and that it has also been long known in coded form as an octagram, two superimposed squares with the space in the middle representing the ninth point. In 1960, Shah founded Octagon Press, which was named after the octagram. One of its first titles was a biography titled Gerald Gardner, Witch, which Shah wrote under the pen name of Jack L. Bracelin.

Shah was also a member of the Club of Rome, a project initiated by the Rockefeller family at their estate at Bellagio, Italy.[25] The founders of the Club of Rome were all senior officials of NATO. These included Aurelio Peccei, the chairman of Fiat who was also chairman of the Economic Committee of the Atlantic Institute, and Alexander King, the co-founder, who was Director General of Scientific Affairs of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In 1965, Shah founded SUFI (Society for Understanding Fundamental Ideas), and dubbed himself Great-Sheikh, not only of the Naqshbandi, but of all Sufi orders. Several presentations were given by scientists like Alexander King to the Institute for Cultural Research (ICR), which was originally founded by Shah in 1965 as the Society for Understanding Fundamental Ideas (SUFI).[26] Other visitors, pupils, and would-be pupils included the poet Ted Hughes, novelists Alan Sillitoe and Doris Lessing, zoologist Desmond Morris, and psychologist Robert Ornstein. Over the following years, Shah established Octagon Press as a means of distributing reprints of translations of Sufi classics. Several of Shah’s books, Mulla Nasrudin, considered a folkloric part of Muslim cultures, were presented as Sufi parables, and which were discussed the Rand Corporation.[27]

Gurdjieff and Shah were important inspirations behind the hokey “spiritual” practices endorsed by the Tavistock-affiliated Esalen Institute which, according to Wouter Hanegraaff, in New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought, in addition of the Hippies, had been the second major influence of the 60s counterculture and the rise of the New Age movement.[28] Formed at Oxford University, in 1920 by the Round Table’s Royal Institute for International Affairs (RIIA), the sister organization to the Council on Foreign Relations, the Tavistock Clinic became the Psychiatric Division of the British Army during World War II. A successor organization, the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, was then founded in 1946 under a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

According to a former British Intelligence agent John Coleman, Tavistock became known as the focal point in Britain for psychoanalysis and the psychodynamic theories of Sigmund Freud and his followers. Its clients are chiefly public sector organizations, including the European Union, several British government departments, and some private clients. Its network now extends from the University of Sussex to the US through the Stanford Research Institute (SRI), Esalen Institute, MIT, Hudson Institute, Brookings Institution, Aspen Institute, Heritage Foundation, the Center of Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown, US Air Force Intelligence, and the RAND Corporation.

And, according to BBC documentary filmmaker Adam Curtis, in The Century of the Self, “The ideas and the techniques that were taught there in the 1970s have fundamentally transformed both society and politics as much, or possibly even more, than any right-wing free market theories.” As Adam Curtis explains:

[Esalen] gathered together a group of radical psychoanalysts and psychotherapists and encouraged them to give classes in their techniques. What united them was the belief that modern society repressed individuals inner feelings. Because of this the individuals led narrow, desiccated lives and their true feelings were bent and warped.

Esalen taught people how to break out of this prison, how to let their inner feelings out and so become liberated beings. It was a wonderful dream—and thousands of people who had turned away from radical politics in the 1960s came to learn how to change society by changing themselves.[30]

 Esalen’s goal was to assist in a coming transformation by exploring work in the humanities and sciences, in order to fully realize what Aldous Huxley had called the “human potentialities.” Esalen thus represented a fruition of The Human Potential Movement (HPM), whose founding has often been attributed to Gurdjieff, and which arose in the 1960s around the concept of cultivating the extraordinary potential that its advocates believed to lie largely untapped in all people.

Idries Shah’s student, Claudio Naranjo along with Oscar Ichazo, were important figures in the Human Potential Movement, and developed the Enneagram of Gurdjieff into a pseudo-psychological personality profile system. Chilean psychiatrist Naranjo, belonged to the inner circle at Esalen, where he became one of the three successors to Fritz Perls, the founder of Gestalt Therapy.

Naranjo was also a member of the Tavistock-affiliated US Club of Rome, and in 1969 he was sought out as a consultant for the Education Policy Research Center, created by Willis Harman at Stanford Research Institute (SRI). Naranjo is regarded as one of the pioneers of the Human Potential Movement, for integrating psychotherapy and the spiritual traditions through the introduction of Gurdjieff’s “Fourth Way” teachings.[30]

Naranjo was also a close friend of Carlos Castaneda, who is famous for having written a series of books that describe his alleged training in shamanism and the use of psychoactive drugs like peyote, under the tutelage of a Yaqui “Man of Knowledge” named Don Juan. According to Kripal, what Claudio Naranjo became known for was a creative synthesis of Asian meditation and western psychotherapy. Though his ideas were developed from Tantric Buddhism, he interpreted them in terms of Shamanism, and derived from what he called his “tantric journey” which involved a Kundalini experience, which he compared to both being possessed by a serpent and an alchemical process. As Kripal explains:

The “inner serpent” of kundalini yoga is simply a South Asian construction of a universal neurobiology; it is “no other than our more archaic (reptilian) brain-mind.” The serpent power “is ‘us’-i.e., the integrity of our central nervous system when cleansed of karmic interference,” the human body-mind restored to its own native spontaneity.

Put a bit differently, Naranjo’s “one quest” is a religion of no religion that has come to realize how “instinct” is really a kind of “organismic wisdom” and how libido is more deeply understood as a kind of divine Eros that can progressively mutate both spirit and flesh once it is truly freed from the ego.[31]

When Naranjo became disillusioned with Gurdjieff, he turned to Sufism and became a student of Idries Shah. Naranjo co-wrote a book entitled On The Psychology of Meditation (1971), with Stanford University psychologist professor Robert Ornstein. Both were associated with the University of California, where Ornstein was a research psychologist at the Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute. Ornstein, along with fellow psychologist Charles Tart and eminent writers such as Poet Laureate Ted Hughes and Nobel-Prize-winning novelist Doris Lessing, was profoundly influenced by Shah. Realizing that Ornstein could be an ideal partner in propagating his teachings, adapting them into the language of psychotherapy, Shah made him his deputy (Khalifa) in the United States.

Ornstein was also president and founder of the Institute for the Study of Human Knowledge (ISHK), established in 1969, with the aim of publishing books on ancient and new ways of thinking for American readers, and become the sole American distributor of Shah’s works of published by Octagon Press. Ornstein’s The Psychology of Consciousness (1972) was enthusiastically received by the academic psychology community, as it coincided with new interests in the field, such as biofeedback and other techniques to achieve shifts in mood and awareness.[32]

Oscar Ichazo, whose influence at Esalen is legendary, was heavily involved in psychedelic drugs and shamanism, and according to John C Lilly, who had been through the first levels of Ichazo’s Arica training, Ichazo claimed to have “received instructions from a higher entity called Metatron” and that his group “was guided by an interior master,” the “Green Qutb.”[33] Lilly, a friend to Timothy Leary and Allen Ginsberg, is known for his work on dolphin-human communication, as well as his experiments using hallucinogens while floating in isolation tanks. Lilly apparently gave dolphins LSD and told a story of one dolphin who seduced a man into having sex with her in a holding tank.[34] The 1980 movie Altered States, starting William Hurt, is partly based on his life.

Naranjo, who studied with Oscar Ichazo in Chile, passed on the Enneagram teachings to Jesuit Bob Ochs, who then brought it into Roman Catholic circles at Esalen, where Naranjo taught. However, the Christian tradition derived from Gurdjieff was one that rejected the belief in Jesus as a historical person, and instead insisted that religious experiences were derived from psychoactive substances.

Guénon’s leading disciple Frithjof Schuon established the Maryamiyya branch of the Shadhili in Europe and North America. Some of Schuon’s most eminent students include supposed converts to Islam, Titus Burckhardt and Martin Lings, best known as the author of a very popular and positively reviewed biography of Muhammad, first published in 1983. But according to Andrew Rawlinson, in Book of Enlightened Masters, Schuon was not as a pious Sufi but as a charlatan.

Although ostensibly a traditional Sufi order, Schuon’s community was an eccentric religious synthesis, combining a variety of Eastern religions, apocalyptic imagery, esoteric sexual practices, and a great deal of symbolism drawn from Native American traditions. The group was disbanded on October 15, 1991, after Schuon (then eighty-four years old) was indicted on charges of sexual battery and child molestation in connection with the group’s ritual dances. Because of certain legal technicalities, however, the case was dropped and the charges were never actually proven.[35] Some of Schuon’s most eminent students include several supposed converts to Islam, such as Traditionalist writer Titus Burckhardt (1908 – 1984), who expressed concerns about Schuon and episodes “involving women,” but reminded other Maryamis that the followers of a Sheikh [Sufi master] should judge him by his teachings, not his actions![36]

An important student of Schuon was Martin Lings (1909 –2005), an authority on the work of William Shakespeare, best known as the author of Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources, first published in 1983. Lings went to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he was a close friend of C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963), who was active in the informal Oxford literary group known as the Inklings, along with his close friend J.R.R. Tolkien, autor of the Lord of the Rings. Lewis is best known for his works of fiction, especially The Chronicles of Narnia. The most important event for Lings while he was at Oxford was his discovery of the writings of René Guénon and those of Frithjof Schuon. Lings met Schuon in 1938, prompting him to embracing Islam and the branch of the Alawiyya tariqa led by Schuon. From that point on, Lings remained Schuon’s disciple and expositor for the remainder of his life. [37]

In 1976, the Traditionalist views of the Maryamiyya featured prominently in the World of Islam Festival in London. It involved Queen Elizabeth II, who opened the festival, as well as the archbishop of Canterbury who received Guénon’s protégé, Abdel Halim Mahmoud, Grand Imam of Al Azhar, and who became an important source of inspiration for members of the Muslim Brotherhood. The festival was financed by the newly-rich United Arab Emirates and was administered by a trust dominated by Englishmen, including Harold Beely who had been British ambassador to Egypt under Nasser. Seyyed Hossein Nasr organized the exhibition of the Islamic science and technology at the Science Museum. Lings oversaw the exhibition of Islamic manuscripts and calligraphy at the British Library. Though books by Traditionalists and Maryamiyya featured throughout, the festival generated much favorable publicity for “traditional” Islam.

Burckhardt is read by Prince Charles, and according to Sedgwick, “Traditionalist influences are increasingly visible in some of his speeches,” which explains rumors of his supposed conversion to Islam.[38] Prince Charles has also written a foreword to Lings’ book on the esoteric meanings in Shakespeare’s plays. Charles’ close friend and spiritual mentor, Sir Laurens van der Post, a friend and follower of Carl Jung, introduced him to Temenos, a publication of Schuon’s followers. One of these was English poet and literary critic Katherine Raine, who studied spiritual magic with a group she identified as descended from the Golden Dawn. Prince Charles the encouraged Raine to establish the Temenos Academy, within his own Prince’s Foundation.

The current leader of the Maryamiyya is Iranian professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a personal friend of Alexander Dugin.[39] At a November 1977 Lisbon conference sponsored by the Interreligious Peace Colloquium—an organization set up by Cyrus Vance and Sol Linowitz—Peccei conspired with several leading members of the Muslim Brotherhood, particularly with Nasr of Teheran University, who was highly active during the Iranian revolution of 1979.[40] In 1974, Farah Pahlavi Empress of Iran commissioned Nasr, her personal secretary, to establish the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, the first academic institution to be conducted in accordance with the intellectual principles of the Traditionalist School.

Nasr also had close associations with several important American scholars such as Huston Smith. Wikileaks has recently published four cables relating to Nasr which establish his connections to Henry Kissinger and CIA Director Richard Helms, back in 1976.[41] Nasr, who was a close friend of the Shah of Iran, is Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University. During the days of the Shah, Nasr directed the academy’s journal, Sophia Perennis.

Nasr offered Peter Lamborn Wilson—also known as Hakim Bey, who founded the Moorish Orthodox Church of America (MOCA)—the position of editorship of the journal, which he edited from 1975 until 1978. Wilson is an American anarchist author, who spent time at Millbrook with Timothy Leary and later collaborated closely with both Kerry Thornley and Robert Anton Wilson, the founders of Discordianism.[42] Bey has also received criticism for writing for the bulletin of North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), a pedophile advocacy organization in the US that works to abolish age of consent laws criminalizing adult sexual involvement with minors.[43] Bey has also written on the alleged connections between Sufism and ancient Celtic culture, technology and Luddism, Amanita muscaria use in ancient Ireland, and sacred pederasty in the Sufi tradition.[44]

Nasr is the father of Vali Nasr, who is currently Dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC, and a Senior Fellow in foreign policy at the Brookings Institution. He appeared on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart. Due to the accuracy of his political predictions, Nasr has been hailed as a shrewd forecaster.[45]

Also a member of the Maryamiyya was Nasr’s friend, Huston Smith, a professor of Philosophy and Religion at Syracuse University, who introduced the Dalai Lama to the West.[46] Smith was appointed professor of philosophy at the MIT between 1958 and 1973, when he participated in experiments with psychedelics conducted by Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert at Harvard. Smith was also a close friend Joseph Campbell, and also a regular at the Esalen Insitute. In 1996, Bill Moyers devoted a 5-part PBS special to Smith’s life and work, The Wisdom of Faith with Huston Smith. Smith has produced three series for public television: The Religions of Man, The Search for America, and Science and Human Responsibility.

Also a member of the Darqawi branch of the Shadhili Sufi order, also descended from Ahmad Al-Alawi, Guénon’s friend who initiated Fritjof Schuon into the order, was Islam named Ian Dallas, a.k.a. Sheikh Abdalqadir al-Murabit, founder of the Murabitun movement. Dallas celebrates Hitler as a “great genius and great vision,” praises Wagner as the “most spiritual of men among men in an age of darkness,” and regards the black stone of the Kabbah in Mecca as the Holy Grail. He referred to Carl Schmitt as “the greatest legalist of the last century,” and to Heidegger as “the last century’s greatest philosopher.”[47] According to Dallas, “And Heidegger—not Ibn Abdul-Wahhab!—was the one to say ‘Allah’ after Nietzsche had said ‘le ileha’ [no god]. One billion muslims are enslaved because they think that the idea that they have of God is God!”[48]

Dallas claimed Ernst Jünger told him that the new “Nomos” to emerge from the “ruins of the old order,” predicted by Carl Schmitt, may be Islam.[49] In 1990, Dallas held a symposium in honor of Jünger which ended with a Masonic ceremonial. Also in attendance was Albert Hofmann, the scientist who discovered LSD.[50] Hofmann had told Timothy Leary about his informal “wisdom school” centered around psychedelic sessions with leading European intellectuals, which included Jünger.[51] In his memoir LSD, My Problem Child, Hofmann describes taking LSD several times with Jünger, who had had also experimented with drugs such as ether, cocaine, and hashish. As reported by Othman Abu-Sahnun, a former member of the Murabitun, in 1989, Dallas organised a symposium in honour of Ernst Jünger, at the Municipal Library of Bilbao, in Spain. On the inside flap of the symposium program cover, Jünger is clearly presented as a Freemason initiated in 1984 to the French Order by ex-president Mitterand. The session ended with a Masonic ritual in praise of Jünger as Doctor Honoris Causa.[52]

Gladio operative Claudio Mutti was appointed Emir in the notorious Murabitun Movement. Mutti was a protégé of Jean-François Thiriart’s, and fellow G.R.E.C.E., the founding organization of the French Nouvelle Droite, the leading organization of French post-war fascism. Mutti was also a friend of Luc Jouret, another Gladio operative and founder of the Order of the Solar Temple, a UFO cult famous for a series of murders and mass suicides that claimed several dozen lives in France, Switzerland and Canada in 1994 and 1995.[53] In 2004, Mutti, who is also close with Alexander Dugin, another purported member of the Maryamiyya, founded Eurasia, an Italian quarterly journal of geopolitics.

Dallas also played a pivotal role in the life of Mark Hanson, another convert to Islam who changed his name to Hamza Yusuf, who achieved a great deal of popularity in the Muslim community as a speaker.[54] Hamza has been listed in the top 50 of The 500 Most Influential Muslims, an annual publication compiled by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre in Amman, Jordan. The Guardian referred to Yusuf as “arguably the West’s most influential Islamic scholar,”[55] and The New Yorker called him “perhaps the most influential Islamic scholar in the Western world.”[56] In 1984, Yusuf formally disassociated himself from Dalla’s teachings.

Another influence on Yusuf was Martin Lings (1909 –2005), a student of Frithjof Schuon, founder of the Maryamiyyah, currently under the leadership of Dugin’s friend Seyyed Hossein Nasr. [57] Yusuf and Lings, an expert on Shakespeare, and produced Shakespeare and Islam, a DVD set described as including “three profound talks which take the audience on an enlightening journey to reveal the power of poetry, the literary brilliance of William Shakespeare and the dire need for great art and literature to help preserve and nurture the virtues of courage, wisdom and temperance.”[58] Yusuf is co-founder with Zaid Shakir (born Ricky Daryl Mitchell) of Zaytuna College, which has featured sessions by Alan Godlas, another member of Schuon’s Maryamiyyah.[59]

When Bennett, visited Sheikh ad Daghestani in Damascus in 1953, he gave Bennett an enigmatic message relating to the coming to his home in the West of “a Messenger from God,” which Bennett interpreted to mean Bapak Muhammad Subuh, the Indonesian leader of cult named Subud. Bennett believed that the “The Reappearance of Christ” as the “Avatar of Synthesis” prophesied by Alice Bailey must refer to Subud, and Bennett and many followers of Gurdjieff were initiated into the cult. Shah’s first published mention of Subud appears in his book The Way of the Sufi, published in the mid 1960s, claiming that Subud is of Qadiriyya and Naqshbandi origin. Shah slowly separated from Subud and started to gather his own disciples.

When asked as to his cult’s purpose, Subuh himself had said: “What is the purpose of spreading Subud? Well, primarily… it concerns the work people have come to call the… United Nations.”[36] At the time of Subuh’s death in 1987, the chairman of the World Subud Council was Varindra Tarzie Vittachi. In 1973, he had been appointed director of the UN World Population Year, after which he became director of information on public affairs for the UN Population Fund (1974-79). From 1980, until his retirement, he was deputy executive director of UNICEF, the UN Children’s Fund.

Gurdjieff’s visit to ad Daghestani and his instruction in the mysteries of the Nine Points was reported by Sheikh Kabbani, Chairman of the Naqshbandi Haqqani Sufi Order of America, in The Naqshbandi Sufi Way: History and Guidebook of the Saints of the Golden Chain, the foreword to which was written by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Sheikh Kabbani is the son-in-law and deputy of Sheikh Nazim al Haqqani, leader of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Order, who had also been a student of Sheikh ad Daghestani, and who went to Britain where made contact with Bennett’s circle from whom he developed his first group of followers.[37]

In 1991, Haqqani made the first of four nationwide tours of the US, in a number of venues, including churches, temples, universities, mosques and New Age centers. Reportedly, during these speeches and Dhikr gatherings thousands of individuals entered the fold of Islam through his efforts. Regrettably, these are not converts to Islam, but are attracted to a hippie-dippy version that is more about Sufism’s vague promises of “spirituality.” The key to Haqqani’s success is his openness to Muslims as well as non-Muslims, and his flexibility towards Islamic law. According to Haqqani, “One is not entitled to refute or object to any of the matters of his sheikh even if he contradicts the pure rules of Islam.”[38]

Haqqani’s liberalism was exemplified in his visit in 1999 to Glastonbury in England, where Joseph of Arimathea was to have concealed the Holy Grail, and which is now a center of alternative spirituality. Haqqani called on the people to aim for eternity without regard of their religion, and acknowledged the local legend that Jesus had visited the site. A Haqqani community subsequently established itself in the town, engaging in Dhikr meetings, which include musical performances, Whirling Dervishes and “Sufi meditation” workshops. Haqqani believes in the coming of the Mahdi is immanent, and gives his followers the impression that he is in spiritual contact with him.[39]

Among the vocal opponents of Wahhabism and Salafism today are important Sufis like Dr. Gibril Haddad and Muhammad Said Ramadan al-Bouti. Haddad, a well-known scholar and religious leader of Lebanese-American background who converted to Islam, was listed amongst the inaugural 500 most influential Muslims in the world. After also exploring Shadhili Sufism, Haddad became a disciple of Sheikh Nazim Al-Haqqani, leader of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Order.

Haddad was also a former teacher on the traditional online Islamic institute Sunnipath, and is a major contributor to the website ESheikh.com, which gives traditional teachings on Islamic spirituality. Sheikh Kabbani supervises Sunnah.org,which touts itself as one of the top Islamic websites in the world. Also associated with Kabbani’s wing of Shaikh Haqqani’s Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is Stephen “Suleyman” Schwartz, Jewish convert to Islam and author who has been published in a variety of media, including The Wall Street Journal. Schwartz is also a vocal critic of the “Wahhabi lobby,” having written The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa’ud from Tradition to Terror, and a defense of Sufism titled The Other Islam: Sufism and the Road to Global Harmony.

Al-Bouti, a highly popular doctor of Islamic Law from the University of Damascus and a noted critic of Salafism, is listed among the Top 50 of the 500 most influential Muslims in the world. Al-Bouti is also affiliated to the Naqshbandi branch in Syria, the only Sufi organization in the country to be allowed freedom of action by the Asad regime, with whom it is closely associated. This is despite the fact that the Asad family are members of the Alawi sect. Sheikh al-Bouti is the leading Islamic scholar in Syria. An active opponent of the Salafis, al-Bouti is the author of Abandoning the Maddhabs is the Most Dangerous Bid’ah Threatering the Islamic Shari’ah.

Also important to note that Nuh Ha Mim Keller features in this story. Keller belongs to the Darqawi Shadhili tradition, having been initiated by Al Shaghouri, a student of Ahmed al-Alawi, who was a friend of René Guénon, which links him indirectly to Schuon, Seyyed Hosein Nasr.

Although Keller openly denounces Guénon and Schuon, here merely represents a different branch of Traditionalism, having adopted its tradition of al Akbariyya, through the influence of Abdul Qadir al Jazairi, whom he regularly praises. And Keller has repeatedly attempted to justify Sufism as a legitimate science of Islam by referring to Ibn Khaldun, who apparently condoned it, but he fails to mention that Ibn Khaldun heavily chastised much of Sufi tradition as “Biddah” (heretical innovations) and names Ibn Arabi among the chief innovators. Ibn Khaldun also wrote a Fatwa declaring that Ibn Arabi’s books should be burned.[40]

Hamza Yusuf has been described as an exponent of “Islamic neo-traditionalism,” a branch of contemporary Islam that that correctly emphasizes adherence to the four principal Sunni schools of law (Mathhabs), belief in the Ash’ari and Maturidi schools of theology, but also muddles their agenda with of Sufism, particularly the teaching of the heretic, Ibn Arabi. Among them are vocal opponents of Wahhabism and Salafism today, like Dr. Gibril Haddad and Muhammad Said Ramadan al-Bouti. Haddad, a well-known scholar and religious leader of Lebanese-American background who converted to Islam, was listed amongst the inaugural 500 most influential Muslims in the world. After also exploring Shadhili Sufism, Haddad became a disciple of Sheikh Nazim Al-Haqqani, leader of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Order.

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Under the leadership of Ahmad Kuftaro (1915-2004), Grand Mufti of Syria, the Naqshbandi branch in Syria has been closely associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Kuftaro was on good terms with Shaykh Haqqani, and in particular his deputy Kabbani, who sends some of his key students to him.[69] Kuftaro has been long engaged in interfaith dialogue, and upholds the belief that the three monotheistic religions stem from a common source, and are all different traditions of the one universal religion. Consequently, Kuftaro has been involved in an “Abrahamic dialogue,” advocated by many other leading Christians and Jews.

Kuftaro was one of the editorial advisors alongside an impressive collection of representatives from all kinds of religions of A World Scripture, that “gathers passages from the scriptures of the various religious traditions around certain topics,” first conceived by Reverend Sun Myung Moon. He also participated in the Assisi interfaith service for peace led by pope John Paul II in 1986. He has gone as far as praying the Hail Mary with the Cardinal of Baltimore, Cardinal Keeler, who was the President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.[70]

In 2000, the UN organized the Millennium World Peace Summit consisting of more than a thousand religious leaders from the world’s religions, funded largely by private foundations such as Ted Turner’s Better World Fund and the Templeton, Carnegie and Rockefeller Brothers foundations. In addition to Kuftaro, the representatives included Francis Cardinal Arinze, president of the Vatican’s council for inter-religious dialogue; Konrad Raiser, secretary-general of the World Council of Churches; Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, the chief rabbi of Israel; Sheikh Abdullah Salaih Al-Obaid of the Muslim World League of Saudi Arabia.

The involvement of the supporters of the most fanatical fringes of Islam in the UN’s interfaith discussions betrays the true nature of their mission. Like Jamal ud Din al Afghani before them, they merely use the language of Islamic fundamentalism to assist their co-conspirators in the West in undermining Islam from within, towards its eventual replacement with a one-world New Age religion. The historical basis of this nefarious cooperation dates back to the relationship between the Templars and the Assassins who, though one being ostensibly Christian and the other outwardly Muslim, both shared not only an identical doctrine, that of the Kabbalah, but also a mendacious modus operandi which recognized the value of employing the guise of religion for manipulating the masses.

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