Ostad Elahi On Spirituality In Everyday Life

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by

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Foreword

According to the two pioneers in the field Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall (2004), spiritual intelligence is the means with which we can reach our purposes, meanings and motivations. If we refer to Marlow’s hierarchy of needs these elements would also be found in the top-most section of his pyramid. Although according to Zohar and Marshall the word “spiritual” may not have necessary connection with “religion, James Morris’s work is able to show that connection in the Islamic tradition. Morris’s rendition of “Ostad Elahi’s Spirituality in Everyday Life” is an important contribution in the Centre’s focus on mechanisms for enhancing ethics and values which are the bedrock of any civilisation. The centre welcomes analogous contributions from the other traditions.

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About the Author

Professor Dr. James W. Morris is an expert in the field of Islamic Philosophy and Theology. Currently he is Professor at the Department of Theology Boston College, Massachusetts. He has been a Fellow under the Danforth Graduate Fellowship (1971-1978), Whiting Foundation Dissertation Fellowship (1978-1979) and many other foreign research fellowships. Professor Morris’s contribution has earned him recognition/awards such as the University Scholar, President’s Scholar National Merit Scholarship, National Honor Society Scholarship, Goettler Political Institutions’ Prize and others.

He has also been actively involved in graduate studies and research abroad such as with the Iranian Centre for the Study of Civilizations, Tehran, Iranian Academy of Philosophy, The American University in Cairo Egypt, University De Strasbourg, France and the Arabic Program University of Texas, Morocco.

To date he has written more than 22 books such as "Ibn Arabi: The Meccan Revelations"; “Orientations: Islamic Thought in a World Civilization” and the “Master and the Disciple: An Early Spiritual Dialogue”, amongst others. He has also written numerous reviews, articles and conference papers.
OSTAD ELAHI ON SPIRITUALITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

I’m always drawing instruction from the details of everyday life. This world is the place for learning spiritual lessons, ... we (should be) able to learn to draw that instruction from it—even from the flight of an insect.

Ostad Elahi

As a number of interpreters have noted, one of the most distinctive features in the later spiritual teachings of the famous Iranian musician, jurist, philosopher and spiritual teacher Ostad Elahi (1895-1974), was his repeated and forceful insistence on the human universality of the basic principles and lessons of our spiritual life—principles which he constantly sought to clarify and explain in terms accessible to the many different cultures, languages, professions, religious backgrounds, and individual personalities of those students and seekers who came to consult with him during the last decade of his life. His conversations and words of guidance during that period were recorded in the two Persian volumes entitled Āthār al-Haqq (“Traces/Influences of the Truth”), and the sayings quoted in this essay are only a tiny sample of the many thousands included in those extensive collections. However, even these necessarily brief sayings are quite representative of the characteristic directness, simplicity and clarity—and colloquial