

# On Sufi Mysticism

## An Interview with Dr. Stewart Bitkoff

Also with Sadiq M. Alam

**Sadiq:** *The word 'mystic' to general people creates a lot of confusion. If you were to define, how would you describe who or what is a 'mystic'?*

Dr. Stewart Bitkoff: The word mystic comes from the word mystery; someone who seeks the mystery. What is the mystery? For different people, this is always different. In terms of the mystery school, the student or traveler was/is taught about the mystery of the universe- in hidden, mysterious, non-traditional, ways. Throughout history, traditions abound concerning the mystery schools and what was actually taught there. Keep in mind, if this knowledge was not a mystery and others knew about it; for practitioners often it would mean death. Throughout time, traditionalists would have required the execution of those involved, because what was taught was not the standard form of religion. It was the inner current, or perception, connection, and alignment with the Truth/Light.

My teacher used to say, as he reflected the Light across our hearts, this was the mystery and learning that was taught in the great pyramids.

**When one use the word 'mystic' in the context of sufi path - what is the emphasis here?**

People always need to define something; put it into a category, so, it is understood. Followers of the Path are given names so others will understand what is going on. Sufis do not call themselves Sufis; this is considered egotistical. Limiting, and not accurate. Others have called Sufis the original mystics; once again, this is an attempt by them to understand what the Sufi is doing.

For followers of this Path, the mystery or emphasis is connection with the Divine; Love of God and direct perception of the Truth/Light. The traveler does not believe there is a God/Light; the traveler knows there is a God/Light. Through the intervention of the Teacher, the traveler connects, is one with this primordial energy, and aligns their own inner essence (heart) with the Light.

As love, in a worldly context matures, the lover does not say, I think/believe that I love my wife and daughter, the traveler knows he/she loves their family member. It is the same with spiritual studies and knowledge of God. We do not talk about God, or say we believe, we know and experience the Divine Essence.

**What does a mystic school consist of?**

A mystical school consists of a teacher/Master, student/traveler, and the Path; which is an aspect of the Light. It is the Baraka (grace) of the Path, which the teacher uses to do his/her work. The Light is the life force and the way we connect with God; fused together in a glorious way- which is perceived, known, experienced and loved. Here, words are limitations. Just as Christians speak of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the Path, Light, and God are One interconnected and expressed on infinite levels. The traveler speaks of glimpsing only a small fraction of this; a lock of hair from the beloved.

***Can a person be trained to become a mystic? If the goal of a mystic school is that, in person day's respect how an ideal mystic school should / may look like?***

All learning requires training, innate capacity, preparation, and hard work. It is no different with spiritual studies. Each traveler is born with a life plan or destiny; we come here with an agenda of sorts; some of which we choose and some of which is chosen for us. This life plan or agenda presupposes a skill set, or inner sense of what we like and wish to accomplish. Once again, spiritual studies, mystical training, and any other endeavor are linked through pre-existing factors; some of these factors stretch across lifetimes, experience in other realms, and our present requirements. To answer the question, yes, travelers can be trained to be a mystic. This is the natural Way to experience God, before there was formal religion. It has always existed. Does every traveler require this training? Right now. In this present experience? That is up to each traveler and God. Remember, each is given what they require. No one's experience is better than another's; it is different, specifically for them, and guided by the Unseen Forces.

***How do you see the concept of a 'complete person'?***

A completed person has added a level of spiritual capacity and aligns their action with the higher potential. In order for this to occur, the traveler must be balanced and reasonably adjusted to ordinary life. Spiritual capacity is in addition to all other capacities and serves as an integrating factor; a foundation from which a complete life may be lived. We were created to participate in the world; helping to make it a better place, by aligning personal action with the highest potential in each moment. Now, how does one do this sort of thing? That is the mystery and is at the heart of the Path and mystery school. It begins by submission and love. Because we love, we are willing to do for another.

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Dr. Stewart Bitkoff is the author of the book, *A Commuter's Guide to Enlightenment*. Dr. Bitkoff is a doctoral graduate in education and an expert in Therapeutic Recreation, Psychiatric Rehab and Psychiatric Treatment. He has been on Faculty, serving as Field Instructor (Social Work/Psychology) for New York University, Herbert Lehman College, Iona College, College of New Rochelle, East Stroudsburg University, and Northampton Community College. He has written many works centering on the topic of the completed person and the original human development system. For more, see: [www.thedeeganproject.com](http://www.thedeeganproject.com).

