

The Blaketashi Darwishes are dedicated to the continual re-incorporation of the Perennial Philosophy into Western Culture, a function performed in the East by the Sufis.

The Perennial Philosophy is native to all lands and all times, and arises by its own Accord from the Ground of Being. It arises in a manner which is fructifying, providing Spiritual Nourishment in ways often Unexpected.

The Unexpected, rather than being surprising, hides unexpectedly amongst Common Things. As William Blake says:

*How do you know but ev'ry Bird
that cuts the airy way,*

*Is an immense world of delight,
clos'd by your senses five?*

In a culture which increasingly seeks novelty and calls it Nourishment, the Blaketashi happily points to the Providence and Abundance which is our collective birthright.

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From: <http://web.archive.org/web/20080717060213/http://www.blaketashi.com/>

What are the origins of the Blaketashi Darwishes?

Legend has it that the Blaketashi Darwishes (pronounced Black-tashi Dar-wishes) were founded by a group of seven

Oxford professors in 1894. These professors, which included the grandson of William Hazlitt, had met in the prior years with famed explorer and Sufi Sir Richard Burton, during which time many features of the Eastern philosophy were discussed. In 1894, there was a collective realization that much of what Burton had brought back to England, once it was de-rated from its linguistic and cultural context, was in fact little different from the utterances of the English romantic poets. Seeing in Sir Richard a foreshadow of things to come in the approaching 20th century, the Blaketashi Darwishes were established in order that "Englishmen should no longer be driven to 'go native' when perfectly serviceable English spiritual materials go unexamined."

What is the mission of the Blaketashi Darwish organization?

The Blaketashi Darwishes are a non-denominational, universal expression of Western Sufism, based upon principles and the spiritual realization of our putative founder, William Blake. The mission of the Blaketashi Darwish is the active fostering of spiritual growth, on a personal and a collective basis, using the gems of Western spirituality as a source of contemplation and reflection. Ultimately, the Blaketashi Darwish seeks the enlightenment of Western society as a whole.

Is the Sufism of the Blaketashi Darwish only directed at the West?

The Sufism of the Blaketashi Darwish is a native product of Western civilizations, and is naturally addressed to persons raised in a Western culture. Its spiritual reference works were written by Western poets and artists, who are our saints and masters. As the works to which we address our attentions were written, in relatively recent times, by members of our own

culture, in our own languages, they have a unique ability to have an appropriate spiritual impact on Western individuals.

How can it be said that your poets are your saints?

Something which was learned from Burton was that, in the East, the great saint and the great poet were often the same person. Further, we also learned that the ability to create great poetry was often a key sign of sanctity. The Blaketashis came to the understanding that many of the English poets who were 'only' considered poets, were, in fact, saints. To demonstrate this point, allow us to quote from the Forward to the works of William Blake, written by David Perkins of Harvard, (1967):

'Born in London on November 28th, 1757, Blake was the second son of a well-to-do hosier. From childhood, the world was to him visionary. As he walked through the streets of the city or the green fields he saw angels and talked with spirits, and in later years he always spoke of his paintings as 'copied' from the visionary world and of his poetry as having been 'dictated' to him. In the earliest of these visitations, when he was four years old, God looked through the window at him and set him screaming. When he was eight or ten he saw a tree filled with angels, bright wings shining from every bough... .. In later years the world would think him mad, so far as his work and existence were known at all. But from Blake's point of view, the world was mad, with its anxiety and bloodshed, its cruelty and repressive morality, and selfish lovelessness.... A root cause of our warped civilization is a failure of imagination, an inability to even conceive nature and society other than as they now appear. To Blake such passivity seemed a slavish bowing down so unnecessary and desperately mistaken that one could hardly understand it. His poetry and painting are a lifetime's effort to explain how this passivity comes about and how it can be

changed. As he puts it "My Work... is an Endeavor to Restore what the Ancients call'd the Golden Age."

The Blaketashis view the sainthood of Blake to be self-apparent.

In what ways are the Blaketashis similar, and in what ways are they different from other Sufis?

The Blaketashis' primary concern is the inner life of man, and in that concern it is aligned with Sufis of all times and all cultures. The Blaketashis share certain similarities with other Western expressions of Sufism in regards to its universalism, liberality of spirit, and use of Western cultural motifs in order to convey perennial truths. In this regard, certain casual similarities may be observed between the Blaketashis and the Sufi Order of Pir Vilayat, the Threshold Society of Edmund Helmski, and of course, the work of Idries Shah. The Blaketashis are Western and are not primarily Moslem, and while certain of these characteristics are different from the Sufic expressions of the East, we consider the apparent distance between these expressions to be largely a matter of superficialities. On a conceptual basis, the Blaketashi understanding of *innovation*, which is based on the writings of both Blake and Hegel, provides an important difference between the Blaketashi and other Sufi groups. The Blaketashi views progression as the *raison d'etre* of human history.

And innovation requires, at least in a quiet, gentlemanly sense, conflict. "Without Contraries there is no Progression," says William Blake. "Opposition is true Friendship." The Blaketashi, set, as he or she is within the democratic matrix of Western culture, is a firm advocate of innovation and progression in all matters physical and intellectual, but especially in religious and

spiritual matters. While Moslems often seem quite suspect of innovation, the Blaketashi applauds all creative steps, both successful and unsuccessful. This respect of innovation, which is a key feature of Western culture, is believed to be an important difference in the relative robustness of Western versus Eastern cultures. The Blaketashis believe that the carry-over of this bias against innovation into Western expressions of Sufism, from its Moslem roots, has ham-strung the efforts of many modern Sufic exponents, who have been trying, with limited success, to make a meaningful contribution to the improvement of the inner life of Western man.

From:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20080804160826/http://www.blaketashi.com/blaketashifaq.htm>

***The Intercontinental Downtown Hotel lounge,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. An interview of WE Blake
by Professor
Doris Longrood, Associate Professor of Theology,
Marquette University, March 4, 2008.***

Doris Longrood: I appreciate your willingness to meet with me, Mr. Blake. Thanks for the information that you sent me. It's been very helpful.

Whitman Eliot Blake: Good, I'm glad it helped.

Doris L: I was pretty excited by your message to me, because you now seem willing to discuss the Blaketashi Darwishes in, how did you describe it? *complete candor* at this meeting. Are you still willing to do that?

WE Blake: Of course. We have nothing to hide.

DL: Perhaps, then, we can start out with your real name? Certainly, you were not christened 'Whitman Eliot Blake' I assume?

WEB: Right to it, I see. No, of course, WE Blake is my Blaketashi name. My real surname is 'Widmer.'

DL: No offense intended, but I rather like 'Blake' better.

WEB: None taken. Me too. *(The professor puts on a pair of reading glasses, and takes some notes from a manila envelope.)*

DL: Mr. Blake, for many years, on Wikipedia.com, the origin of the Blaketashi Darwishes was given as having been established over a hundred years ago, by Oxford professors. About a year ago, the origins of the Blaketashis were removed from Wikipedia. Why was it removed?

WEB: Well, it seems that Wikipedia finally realized that their published origin of the Blaketashis was complete rubbish. About time.

DL: *(surprised)* The Blaketashis are complete rubbish? Are you telling me that they are made up?"

WEB: I said that the legendary origins of the Blaketashi Darwishes are rubbish. Not that Blaketashis are. Mostly.

DL: So you were not founded by Oxford professors, then?

WEB: We were not.

DL: *(professor Longrood sat up straight)* The published materials about your organization have always maintained at

least the

implication that you were an organization of significant age and founded by credentialed persons. Don't you feel as though you have been deceiving people all these years about your origins?

WE Blake: What deceiving? What deception? Apparently you have not done even a little research on us, internet or otherwise, prior to this interview. We stated *what we were about* from the first moment of our existence, which is information that is captured, for example, in many of the directories or websites that reference us.

Doris L: I'm sorry that I have never encountered those sites. (*Professor Longrood shifted uneasily in her chair*) I must apologize.

But if I may, let me ask you, now...what do those websites say?

WEB: Well, it says that we are an investigation into the manner in which cults are formed and maintained. The Blaketashis are our extended, hopefully amusing example, an organization built on the Idries Shah mold.

DL: On the Idries Shah mold?

WEB: Yes, in the manner of Idries Shah. Hopefully, the Blaketashis have provided a good deal of useful spiritual wisdom, that has been enclosed beneath a wrapper of pseudo-mythic, well... pseudo-mythic bullshit.

DL: Are you asserting that Idries Shah enclosed his teaching in, what was your term? Pseudo-mythic BS?

WEB: Well, of course he did. He made use of the Gurdieffian and Blavatsky veins of pseudo-mythic BS, and made them his own. And of course, added to the canon. Did you ever read 'People of the Secret'? Sheesh.

DL: I didn't know Shah resorted to such maneuvers.

WEB: Well, Shah was not above praising his own work, writing as a third party, under a pseudonym, in order to legitimize himself. He wasn't above stirring a little BS into the mix. He was appealing to people's imagination in order to get their attention. So the Blaketashis can be understood as the conducting of an experiment designed by Idries Shah.

DL: Did your readers understand that the Blaketashis were an experiment? Or did some of them conclude that the Blaketashis were a legitimate branch of Sufism with a distinguished past?

WEB: Well, I take umbrage with your assertion that we are not a legitimate branch of Sufism. Just because we are made up does not make us illegitimate. But if you mean by your question, how many people understood that the Blaketashis were a spiritual experiment, and how many people believed Wikipedia, I would say it was about half and half. Of the thousands of messages we have received over the years, about forty-percent of the people who got in contact with us believed in the shallow narrative, another forty-percent understood it

immediately to be a spiritual joke; and the balance wandered between these poles.

Doris L: So some people truly believed that the Blaketashis were a venerable branch of Sufism?

WE Blake: Well, we were invited by UNECSO to speak at a conference in Warsaw on 'A Dialogue Amongst Civilisations' or something like that, some years ago.' So, legitimate enough.

DL: You were invited to address the UN?

WEB: Yes. A hoot, isn't it?

DL: If the Blaketashi Darwishes were not in fact started by Oxford Professors, who in fact founded the Blaketashi Darwishes?

WEB: The Blaketashi Darwishes were, in fact, founded by Khidr.

DL: Mr. Blake. Or Mr. Widmer. You have pledged that during this interview you would tell the complete and factual truth about matters. Are you going back on your word?

WEB: I have told you that I would tell you the complete and factual truth about the Blaketashis, and I will, I promise, do that.

DL: Thank you. So let me ask you again, who was the real founder of the Blaketashi Darwishes?

WEB: The real, factual and true founder of the Blaketashi Darwishes is Khidr.

DL: Please, Mr. Blake. You have just confessed to us that the Blaketashi Darwishes is an experiment in pseudo-mythic bullshit, your term, not mine... and you expect us to believe that you were somehow founded by Khidr?

WEB: Believe as you will. But perhaps you make the mistake of being, well... overly literal, even now. Your interest, if I recall, includes the Ba'hai and Islam, is that correct? Well, since that is the case, what is it that you know about Khidr?

DL: Al Khidr? Well, Khidr or Khzr is the Green Man, a prophetic figure who plays a role in many Middle-Eastern religions and traditions. He is often a teacher of people who have no earthly teacher, and many great Sufis were supposedly students of Khidr, such as Ibn al Arabi, for example...

WEB: And when we say that we were founded by Khidr?

DL: You were founded by individuals who were not guided by an embodied teacher?

WEB: That's correct. The Blaketashi Darwishes were created by students of Khidr, the people of the secret wound, who were enlightened, if you will, without resort to the guidance of any physical teacher, than He. This is the same manner in which our patron William Blake was enlightened, the manner of TS Eliot, Walt Whitman, and the pantheon of others.

DL: How many of you are there?

WEB: Blaketashis? Or persons enlightened by Khidr?

DL: Blaketashis.

WEB: Well, that is a hard question to answer. The Blaketashis are an organization of the heart, not the membership card.

But over the years, the Blaketashi site has been visited millions of times, and the numbers of messages sent us are in the

many thousands. People from around the world, from Asia, Russia, the Middle East, South America have read and contacted us. Blaketashi materials have been translated into a dozen languages, and have woven their way into the remotest portions of the cyber-universe.

DL: Remotest portions?

WEB: Well yeah. We are, for example, read in Yemen. The existence of the Blaketashis, the idea of the Blaketashis has called together thousands of 'recruits,' from around the world. So it is an organization that grew a population around it, around its own idea, and is, as such, an organization made by attraction.

DL: I see. Which brings you back to the Idries Shah experiment.

WEB: That's is correct. I see you finally see. The experiment has drawn various Friends together, and a not-insignificant group of like-minded people; and so it can be shown that the Idea can collect an assemblage around it.

DL: Lets see (*she said, checking her notes*). I have heard some grumbling from some of your readers that very little new material has found its way onto the website now, for some time. Why is that? Has it not been a productive time over the last years?

WEB: No, it's been a highly productive few years. It's simply that the energies once directed here were directed at a book, rather than the website.

DL: A book? What is it called?

WEB: It's called *The Workings of the Subtle Heart*.

DL: What's the significance of the words 'Subtle Heart'?

WEB: A significant portion of the book discusses the Lataif, or Subtleties, and the 'Subtle Heart' refers the use of these subtleties.

DL: Why was a book created, rather than the content posted on the internet?

WEB: Reading materials on the computer, or on a website, is rather glancing experience, and cannot be expected to carry the full weight of the sort of impact we hoped to convey in the book.

DL: So books carry a greater potential impact than the internet?

WEB: They do. Although much of the content is now being made freely available on the internet as well, as a source of information for the merely curious. Although to read it in this manner is to deflate its impact.

Doris L.: Good luck with the book!

WE Blake: It'll do what it needs to do.

DL: Thank you very much for meeting with me today. You've been able to shed some light on a number of important topics today, and I really appreciate your candor.

WEB: You're very welcome, my dear. I like your shoes, by the way.

The above interview is taken from the following pages:

http://web.archive.org/web/20080804160815/http://www.blaketashi.com/3rd_Qutb_Interview1.htm

http://web.archive.org/web/20080906143202/http://www.blaketashi.com/3rd_Qutb_Interview2.htm

http://web.archive.org/web/20081121080537/http://www.blaketashi.com/3rd_Qutb_Interview3.htm

(The Blaketashi website is now, unfortunately, extinct.)