



The Secret Rose Garden

Mahmud Ibn 'Abd Al-Kar Shabistari

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The mystic verse of Shabistari, written during a period of fierce conflict between Christianity and Islam in the fourteenth century, must be considered among the greatest poetry of any time or land. Restating ibn 'Arabi's ideas in poetic form and treating such themes as the Self and the One, the Spiritual Journey, Time and This Dream-World, and the ecstasy of Divine Inebriation, Shabistari's work is a perennial witness to the capabilities and destiny of humanity. While Shabistari was deeply rooted in the Sufi mystical tradition, there are no cultural gaps which need to be bridged, for he was keenly aware of that one unique truth which all religions strive to approximate. Thus he writes: "'I' and 'you' are but the lattices, / In the niches of a lamp, / Through which the One Light shines. / 'I' and 'you' are the veil / Between heaven and earth; / Lift this veil and you will see / No longer the bonds of sects and creeds. / When 'I' and 'you' do not exist, / What is mosque, what is synagogue? / What is the Temple of Fire."

This work will be of interest to all students of Sufism. It contains a concise and very informative introduction, by the translator, to the symbolism of Sufi poetry, and is re-typeset from the first edition, published in 1920 in the Wisdom of the East series. It is estimated to have sold over 15,000 copies in English translation.

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