



## ELĀHĪ II. TEACHINGS

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### ii. Teachings

The central focus of Elāhī's thought is on recognizing the underlying essence and common principles of all religions as a reality that can only be discovered through spiritual practice. His own writings (in Persian and Kurdish; see above) developed his ideas within both learned theological and popular mystical traditions of Islam. However, his oral exposition of those ideas in later years, for those who came seeking his guidance from many faiths and nationalities—a teaching recorded in the two volumes of *Ātār al-ḥaqq*—provides a more direct, systematic, and universal treatment of spiritual truths focusing on their practical implications and foundations.

Through these oral teachings Elāhī established a “spiritual university” (Dānešgāh-e rūḥ; *Ātār al-ḥaqq*, sayings 15, 366, 1999) addressed to all human beings, of every culture and creed, based on his answers to the three fundamental metaphysical and ethical issues: the origin and nature of humanity, our rights and duties, and our ultimate destination (*ibid.*, 178). His teachings provide a systematic practical account of all the stages, processes, and requirements for spiritual advancement (*ibid.*, II, 1025). A key theological contribution in this teaching is his understanding of the role of divine manifestations (*mazharīyat*; *ibid.*, 29, 141, 388, 1356, 1589).

Elāhī's teaching with regard to the spiritual nature of man (*ensānīyat*) focuses on the multidimensional nature of the human self and the indispensable educational role of the interplay between the angelic soul (*rūḥ-e malakūtī*) and



the constant imbalance due to the carnal, imperious self (*nafs-e ammāra*; *ibid.*, ch. 8-9). His rational exposition of the doctrine of “successive lives” clarifies the essential role of that reality in the soul’s process of spiritual perfection (*sayr-e takāmmol*). For Ostād Elāhī, spiritual maturity is not achieved by ascetically weakening the imperious self, but rather by strengthening the angelic soul and its will-power so much that the imperious self can no longer affect it (*ibid.*, 841). Thus spirituality can be defined as the constant concern for equilibrium in all things (*ibid.*, 94-96, 52, 849-51), a balance which must be attained and tested in the crucible of active social life (*ibid.*, 158, 370, 435, 451, 1924). Only in society can we realize our true nature and perfect the characteristics of true humanity (*ensānīyat*; *ibid.*, 729) within ourselves.

The teachings of Elāhī, restricted to a small group of Persian and French students at the time of his passing and promoting tolerance, unity, and peace, have spread—as he always insisted—above all through the practice and example of individual seekers. The publication of his recorded sayings (*ibid.*, with translations of his other writings now in preparation) and several summaries of his teachings (B. Elahi, *The Path of Perfection: The Spiritual Teachings of Nur Ali Elahi*, Shaftsbury, Dorset, 1993; and *Words of Faith. Prayers of Ostad Elahi*, France, 1995; now translated into 12 languages, including English, French, Greek, Italian, and Polish) has also aided in the diffusion of his thought to much wider circles. His devotees arranged elaborate ceremonies of commemoration with UNESCO’s participation in Paris, New York, London, and Los Angeles, with the collaboration of a number of universities, on the centenary of his birth in October 1995. Their organization in New York is called Nour Foundation.