

## HASAN SHUSHUD (1901-1988)

Bennett met Hasan Shushud, a Turk, in Istanbul on his return from India after his second and final meeting with the Shivapuri Baba in 1963. Shushud is an enigmatic figure who created very little stir during his lifetime. He had entered the Sufi path in his teen years, learned French and German and later worked as a school-teacher. He later worked in a bank and eventually became the private secretary to the Turkish Finance minister. He retired at the age of 50 and devoted his later life to studying, writing and teaching individuals and small groups. He was not affiliated to any of the traditional Tarikats in Istanbul, but had been influenced at an early age by a teacher he called Maksut Efendi, a Naqshbendi, who taught him the zikr that became the main technique he passed on. However, Maksut Efendi did not teach him the techniques of breath retention and fasting which Shushud says he later realized for himself while living in Ankara.

He termed his teaching İtlak Yolu, or the Path of Absolute Liberation.

His book, "Hacegan Hanedani" was published in Turkish in 1958 and is a commentary and review of literature pertaining to a number of great Sufi masters on the 12th to 15th centuries. This book was translated into English by Mukhtar Holland and published under the title "The Masters of Wisdom of Central Asia." His second publication "Fakir Sözləri" (1959) is a collection of aphorisms having particular relevance to followers of the İtlak path. In many ways, it bears an uncanny resemblance to both Gurdjieff's teaching of Kundabuffer, and also to Bennett's notions of Eternity and Being.

Bennett and Shushud did not become close friends until 1969, when Shushud came to London to stay with Bennett's family. Shushud encouraged Bennett to act independently and to go ahead with the plan he had for the school which eventually opened at Sherborne House.

In 1973, Bennett's publisher Alick Bartholomew commissioned a book which was originally to be entitled "Gurdjieff and the Masters of Wisdom" and was to be co-authored by Bennett and Shushud. However, Shushud pulled out of the project, telling Bennett that he did not trust the publisher, apparently on the grounds that he had deducted state income tax from the advance payment. What later became apparent was that Shushud did not agree with the connection Bennett wished to make between Gurdjieff and the Masters of Wisdom. In the event, Bennett divided the proposed book into two separate titles, "Gurdjieff: Making a New World" (1973) and "The Masters of Wisdom" which draws heavily on Shushud's "Hacegan Hanedani", published posthumously in 1975. There are number of mysterious things about Shushud, who certainly had unusual powers. Bennett makes a brief reference to these in "Witness", and many others have attested to them. One of his closest associates lives today in San Mateo, California.

