

## Irina Tweedie

### General

"**Irina Tweedie** (20 April 1907,[Russia](#) – 23 August 1999)<sup>[1][2]</sup> was a Russian-British Sufi and teacher of the [Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiya](#) order. " (Source [Wikipedia](#))

### Life

"**Irina Tamara Karpov** (Ирина Тамара Карпов) was born in Russia.<sup>[3]</sup> Her family escaped the [Bolsheviks](#) to Central Europe, and she eventually lived in Austria, Switzerland, Italy, France, and then finally England. She studied in Vienna and Paris. After [World War II](#) she married her second husband, an English Navy officer surnamed Tweedie. Due to her second husband's premature death in 1954, she went through a personal crisis that launched her on a spiritual quest. She became an active member of the [Theosophical Society](#) and eventually she travelled to India in 1959.

On 2 October 1961, through her friend [Lilian Silburn](#) (1908-1993),<sup>[4]</sup> a Sanskrit scholar and translator at the [Sorbonne](#), she met her guru, [Radha Mohan Lal](#) (1893-1966), a Hindu Sufi sheikh from the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiya order, living in [Kanpur](#). She became one of the first Western women trained in the Naqshbandi system.<sup>[5]</sup>

Her teacher's first request of her was to keep a complete diary of her spiritual training—everything, all the difficult parts, even all the doubts. He predicted that one day it would become a book and would benefit people around the world. Indeed, it became the book, *Daughter of Fire: A Diary of a Spiritual Training with a Sufi Master*.<sup>[6]</sup>

This diary spans five years. It is an account of a spiritual training with a Sufi Master and is the most detailed account of the relationship between disciple and teacher that exists in Western Literature.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> The book is written in diary form. From a psychological viewpoint, the diary maps the process of ego dissolution, gradually unveiling the openness and love that reside beneath the surface of the personality.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

The book was first published in its abridged form as *The Chasm of Fire* which has sold over 100,000 copies and has been translated into five languages. Later the unabridged book, *Daughter of Fire: A Diary of a Spiritual Training with a Sufi Master*, was published. This title has sold over 40,000 copies worldwide and is now being published through The Golden Sufi Center.<sup>[7]</sup>

After her guru's death in 1966, she returned to England where she started a Sufi meditation group in North London. Gradually the group spread throughout Europe and North America. Irina Tweedie retired in 1992 after having named [Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee](#) as her successor.<sup>[8]</sup> She died in 1999, aged 92." (Source [Wikipedia](#))

### OSL view

One interesting fact about Irina Tweedie's spiritual journey is in our view, that she was trained in the tradition of the [Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiya](#) order, which is a quite traditional order, as a western woman. Furthermore her teacher was [Radha Mohan Lal](#) (1893-1966), a Hindu Sufi sheikh, what means he was born in Hindu family, but sent from his father to a Muslim sufi teacher. In her biography "Daughter of Fire" she described in detail and openly how she spent 3 years with her master. The biography is a long read, but shows accurately all the sufferings and doubts that occur on such path. Another interesting aspect is that teachings given by her master was a mixture between Hindu and Islamic traditions, which can be seen as a bridge between these two very different religious traditions.

### References

1. In *Daughter of Fire: A Diary of a Spiritual Training with a Sufi Master*. The Golden Sufi Center, 1995, page 49, Irina Tweedie lists her maiden surname as "Karpow". This is a German transliteration of the Russian surname Карпов, "Karpov" in English transliteration.
2. "[Irina Tweedie birth, marriage & death results](#)". *Ancestry.com*.
3. In *Daughter of Fire*(p. 91), Tweedie alludes to two sisters.
4. [Lilian Silburn profile](#), at *Projet Sahaj Marg*, April 2014.
5. [Neither of the East nor of the West: The Journey of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya from India to America](#), goldensufi.org; accessed 14 November 2016.
6. The Golden Sufi Center *Daughter of Fire: A Diary of A Spiritual Training with A Sufi Master*, goldensufi.org; accessed 14 November 2016.
7. Available Translations *Daughter of Fire* (English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish), goldensufi.org; accessed 14 November 2016.
8. [Irina Tweedie biodata](#), goldensufi.org; accessed 14 November 2016.

### See also

1. [Wikipedia Naqshbandi](#)