



## **Religious Gatheka – Hazrat Inayat Khan**

### **1. The Religion of the Heart**

If anybody asks you: “What is Sufism? What religion is it?” you may answer: “Sufism is the religion of the heart, the religion in which one thing is most important, and that is to seek God in the heart of mankind.”

There are three ways of seeking God in the human heart. The first way is to recognize the divine in every person and to be careful of every person with whom we come in contact, in our thought, speech and action. Human personality is very delicate. The more living the heart the more sensitive it is; but that which cause sensitiveness is the love-element in the heart, and love is God.

The person whose heart is not sensitive is without feeling, his heart is not living, it is dead; in that case the divine spirit is buried in his heart. A person who is always concerned with his own feelings is so absorbed in himself that he has no time to think of another. His whole attention is taken up with his own feelings, he pities himself, he worries about his own pain and is never open to sympathize with others. He who takes notice of the feeling of another person with whom

he comes in contact practices the first essential moral of Sufism. The next way of practicing this religion is to think of the feeling of the person who is not at the moment before us. One feels for a person who is present, but often neglects to feel for someone who is out of sight. One speaks well of someone to his face, but if one speaks well of someone when he is absent, that is greater.

One sympathizes with the trouble of someone who is before one at the moment, but the greater to

sympathies with one who is far away. And the third way of realizing the Sufi principle is to recognize in one's feeling the feeling of God; to realize every impulse that rises in one's heart as a direction of God; realizing that love is a divine spark in one's heart as a direction from God; realizing that love is a divine spark in one's heart, to blow that spark until the flame may rise to illuminate the path of one's life.

The symbol of the Sufi Order, which is a heart with wings, is symbolical of its ideal. The heart is both earthly and heavenly. The heart is a receptacle on earth of the divine spirit, and when it holds the divine spirit it soars heavenward; the wings picture is rising. The crescent in the heart symbolizes responsiveness; it is the heart that responds to the spirit of God that rises. The crescent is a symbol of responsiveness because it grows fuller by responding more and more to the sun as it progresses. The light one sees in the crescent is the light of the sun; as it gets more light with its increasing response so it becomes fuller of the light of the sun. The star in the heart of the crescent represents the divine spark, which is reflected in the human heart as love and which helps the crescent toward its fullness.

The Sufi message is the message of the day. It does not bring theories or doctrines to add to those existing already, which puzzle the human mind. What the world needs to-day is the message of love, harmony and beauty, the absence of which is the only tragedy of life. The Sufi message does not give a new law; it awakens in humanity the spirit of brotherhood, with tolerance on the part of each for the religion of the other, with forgiveness from each other for the fault of the other; it teaches thoughtfulness and consideration, so as to create and maintain harmony in life; it teaches service and usefulness, which alone can make life in the world fruitful, in which lies the satisfaction of every soul.