



## Religious Gatheka – Hazrat Inayat Khan

### 3. Religion

In the ancient Sanskrit language the word for religion is *Dharma*, which means duty. Now, there are two things in the world, one of which we may describe as free choice of action and the other as duty. Everyone follows either the way of free choice or the way of duty. As an example we may think of the child who sees the fire, and wants to touch it., and does so. This action will show a certain disagreeable result which teaches the child a certain thing. This teaching might also have come to the child as a warning from the parents, telling the child that the result of the action would be burning. The child might thus refrain from doing a certain action for the reason that it accepted the warning of the parent before burning its hand.

Every child is born in life a pupil, one who is willing to learn and willing to believe. As the Prophet Mohammed says: “ Every soul is born on earth a believer, it is only afterwards that he turns an unbeliever.”

It is certain if one had not been born a believer one would never have learned the language of one’s country, because if anyone had tried to teach the words and one had refused to accept the teachings as true, one would never have learned the names and character of things. For instance, if it were said, “This is water,” and one had not believed it, and had thought, “It is fruit,” then one would never really have known what was water and what was fruit. Child is born with the tendency to believe and learn what it is taught.

The divine life has a certain capability to give life, and it gives this life as teaching to the children of earth, and this teaching is called *Dharma*, religion. Religions are many and different from one another, but only in form, for water is one channel which holds it and which it uses for the accommodation; and so the name water is changed into river, lake, sea, stream, pond, etc. So it is with religion; the essential truth is one, but the aspects are

different. Those who fight about external forms will always fight, those who recognise the inner truth will not disagree, and thus will be able to harmonise the people of all religions.

*Dharma* has been given from time to time to the world, at times quietly, and sometimes with a loud voice; but it is a continual outpouring of the inner knowledge of life, and of divine blessing. Those who stick to their old forms, closing their eyes from the inner truth, paralyse their *Dharma* by holding on to an old form, while refusing the present stream that is sent. As life is the cause of activity, so such persons lose their activity; they remain where they are and are as dead. And when man has been thus paralysed and shut out from the spiritual progress, he clings to outer forms which are not progressing. There was a time when the message was given while the people were wanting a messenger to come. During the time of Jesus Christ there were thousands and millions waiting for a messenger to come from above. The Master came, and did his service, and went away. Some realised then, and some are still waiting. But the One Who claimed to be Alpha and Omega is never absent; sometimes he appears on the surface, sometimes he is reserving himself.

When directed by the new spiritual inspiration, law, morals, education, and all departments of life come to a new life; but if the spiritual current is lacking, then there is no further progress in the forms of life. People mostly think that the spiritual message must be something concrete and definite in the way of doctrines or principles, but that is an human tendency and does not belong to the divine nature, which is unlimited and life itself. The divine message is the answer to the cry of souls, individually and collectively; the divine message is life, and it is light. The sun does not teach anything, but in its light we learn to know all things. The sun does not cultivate the ground nor does it sow seed, but it helps the plant to grow, to flower, and to bear fruit.

The Sufi message, in its utter infancy, strikes the note of the day, and promise the fulfilment of that purpose for which, now and then, the blessing from above descends, for spreading love and peace on earth and among men.