



Religious Gatheka – Hazrat Inayat Khan

5. The Present Need of the World

If one truly observes the present condition of humanity, no one with sense will deny the fact that the world today needs the Religion. Why I say the religion and not a religion is because there are many religions existing today called a religion, but what is needed to-day is the Religion. And now coming to the question what the Religion must be. Must it be a new religion? If it were a new religion, it could not be called the religion; then it would be like many religions. I call the Religion that religion which one can see by rising above the sects and differences which divide men, and by understanding the religion, we shall understand all religions which may be called religion.

I do not mean that all the religions are not religion; they are the notes, there is the music, and that music is the religion. Every religion strikes a note, a note which strikes the demand of humanity in a certain epoch. But at the same time the source of every note is the same music which manifests when the notes are arranged together. In this way I want to explain that all religions are different notes and when they are arranged together they make music. You may ask why at each epoch all the music was not given but only a single note? In answer I say, there are times in the life of an infant when a rattle is sufficient, for the violin another time in life comes. During the time of the Chaldeans, Arabs, Romans, Greeks, different religious ideals were brought. To the few music was brought, to the many only a note. This shows this music has always existed, only that man in general was not ready to grasp it, and so was given only one note. But the consequence was that the person who was given the C note and another the G note, they fought together, each saying: “The note given to us is the right note.” and there have always existed souls who have said: “G is right”, and others who said: “C is right”; all are right notes and when they are mixed together then there is music. This shows that there is an outer substance of religion which is the form, and the inner essence which is wisdom.

When wisdom has blessed the soul, then the soul has heard the divine music. And the words of Christ: 'I am Alpha and Omega' what do they mean? That it was only when he came as Jesus? No, that music belongs to Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.

Those who tuned their hearts to listen to music, who elevated their soul high enough, they heard the divine music.

But those who played with their rattle, their unique note, they disputed one with the other, they would have refused a violin, they were not ready for it, they would not have known how to use it. Today the world is starved more for religion than ever before, and what is the reason? The reason is that some simple souls, attached to the faith of their ancestors, held their faith with esteem, considering religion necessary in life. But many souls with intelligence and reason and understanding of life rebelled against religion as the child when grown up, he throws away his rattle since he no longer is interested in it. So today the condition is that religion remains in the hands of those who have kept it in its outer form, out of devotion and loyalty to their ancestor's faith. And those who are, so to speak, grown up in mind and spirit and want something better, they can find nothing. Their souls hunger for music, and when they ask for music, they are given a rattle, and they throw away the rattle and say they do not care for music, and yet there is the inner yearning for music, the soul's music and without it their life becomes empty. How few recognize this fact, and fewer still will admit it. The psychological condition of humanity has become such that a person with intelligence refuses the music, he does not want the music, he wants something but he calls it by another name.

I will tell you my own experience in the Western world. Traveling for 10 years I have come in contact with people of intelligence, thinkers, people of science, and in them I have seen the greatest yearning for that religious spirit. They are longing every moment of their life for it, for they find with all their education and science there is some space empty in themselves. They want it filled but at the same time if you speak of religion, they say: "No, no, speak of something else, we do not want religion." This means they know only the rattle part of religion and not the violin part. They do not think such a thing exists which can be different from a rattle and yet there is a perplexity in themselves, a spiritual craving, that is not answered even by all their learned and scientific pursuits.

Now, therefore, what is needed to day in this world is reconciliation between the religious man and the one who runs away from religion. But what can we do when we see in the Christian religion so many sects, one opposing another; and besides the Christian and Muslim religion, the Buddhist, Jewish and many others, each considering their own and thinking the others not worth thinking about. To me these different religions are like different organs of the body, cut apart and thrown asunder. Therefore, to me personally, it seems as if one arm of the same person were cut off and rising to fight the other. Both are arms of the same person and this person is complete when all these parts are brought together; then there is the Religion.

Then what is the effort of the Sufi Order? To make a new religion? No, it is to bring together the different organs of the one body which is meant to be united and not thrown away.

Now you may ask what is our method? How do we work to bring about reconciliation? By realising for ourselves that the essence of all religion is one and that essence is Wisdom; and considering that Wisdom to be our religion whatever be our own form. The Sufi order has persons belonging to many different faiths among its members. Do you think they have given up their own religion? No. On the contrary they are firmer in their own faith by understanding the faith of others. From the narrow point of view fault may be found because they do not hate, mistrust and criticize the religion of others. They have respect for the Scriptures that millions of people have held as sacred, though those scriptures do not belong to their own religion. The desire to study and appreciate other scriptures, and so to find out that all Wisdom comes from the one source: the Wisdom of the East and of the West. The Sufi Order is therefore not a sect, it can be anything but a sect.

And if it ever became one, it would be quite contrary to the idea with which it has been begun, because its main idea is to remove differences and distinctions which divide mankind.; and this ideal is attained by the realisation of the one Source of all human beings, and also the goal, which we call God.

*In October 1923, Sufi Movement became the name of the overall organization, and from that time on Sufi Order refers to the esoteric school of the Movement. COMPLETE WORKS OF PIR-O-MURSHID HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN ORIGINAL TEXTS: LECTURES ON SUFISM 1924 I: January - June 8, Source Edition, Omega Publications, New Lebanon, Edited by Prof. Sharif Graham, Rev. Berthi van der Bent Hamel, and Mrs. Mary Jane Parrish; published by the Nekbakht Stichting. ©2002 by the Nekbakht Stichting, page 26, footnote number 23.