



Religious Gatheka – Hazrat Inayat Khan

15. The Message

There are seven grades recognized by the Sufi of those in the spiritual hierarchy - *Pir, Buzurg, Wali, Ghous, Kutub, Nabi, Rassoul*. These are the degrees which come from the inner initiations - the inner initiations to which one becomes entitled to, after having had the outer initiations, which are necessary. It is beyond words to express what inner initiations means and in what form it is given. Those to whom the inner initiation is unknown may explain it as a dream or as a vision, but in reality it is something higher and greater than that. I can only explain it by saying that the definite changes which take place during one's journey through the spiritual path are initiations, and it is these initiations which include man in the spiritual hierarchy.

In the life of a Saint or a Master there are five degrees known, and in the last degrees the progress of the Saint and the Master is silent. But in the life of a Prophet these seven degrees manifest to view. For a Saint or a Master there is one facility, that he can do his work by avoiding the notice of the world. But the life of a Prophet necessitates his coming into the world, and thus as he progresses from grade to grade through his life, he cannot very well cover himself, however much he may want to, from the gaze of the world, though the sage of every category, saint, master or Prophet, and every degree, always prefers not being known to the world, and as he progresses so, that desire increases more. But it is not only out of modesty or humbleness, but also for it attracts dangers of all sorts, by being exposed to the common gaze.

All beauty is veiled in nature, and the higher the beauty the more it is covered. And that makes it easy for a wise person to find out the difference between a true Prophet and a false Prophet, for one beats his drums and the other tries to keep in the background, - if only his work in the world would let him keep back. It is his efforts in accomplishing something that bring him to the notice

of the world. However, his longing is to be unknown, for the one who really deserves being known is God alone.

The work of the *Pir* is helping individuals toward the unfoldment of their soul. The work of the *Buzurg* is to help by the power of his soul those who wish to advance spiritually. The *Wali* controls a community, keeping it on the right track. The *Ghous* helps its spiritual well-being. *Kutub* spiritually governs a country, a nation. *Nabi* elevates individuals and bears a divine message. *Rassoul* is the one who has fulfilled the message he has borne.

But with all its forms the Sufi ideal has also the formless ideal of worship. The form is to help the one who can be helped by seeing the form, because all education is an education in names and forms. If there was no form and no name we would not have learned. The form is only suggestive of what is behind it, of the one and same truth, which is behind all religions.

Therefore this service is a teaching at the same time and yet every Sufi is free to take up a form or not take up a form; a Sufi is not bound by a form. The form is for his use, not to make him captive.

And one may ask, is there priesthood in the Sufi Movement? Priesthood, not in the sense as it is understood; priesthood only to conduct the service and to answer the need of a priest which is always in everyday life. Those ordained in the Sufi Movement are called Cherags and by other names. There is no distinction between woman or man; the worthy soul is ordained, who has the desire to serve humanity by this, showing the example to the world that in all places, in the church, in the school, in the house of parliament, in the court, it is woman and man together who complete evolution. But at the same time every Sufi is a priest, a preacher, is a teacher and is a pupil of every soul that he meets in the world.

Since the only ideal in working is to qualify oneself in order to be a proper servant to serve the cause of God.