



Religious Gatheka – Hazrat Inayat Khan

17. The Sufi Message

Beloved ones of God. My subject for this evening is the Sufi Message. The word message conveys a different meaning from that of an intellectual philosophy. There are two ideas prevailing in the world, the one is that man has evolved through years and centuries, and the other idea is that as Solomon has said, 'there is nothing new under the sun.' And that explains to us that divine truth has always been and always will be the same. No-one can improve upon it and nobody can give a new Message. It is the Divine Tongue which at times has spoken louder, and at times in a whisper and it is the consciousness of the Divine Spirit which makes Christ say: "I am the Alpha and Omega." Those who limit Christ to the historic period of the life of the Prophet of Nazareth surely limit the message, in spite of His open declaration that He is the First and the Last. Also Christ said: "I have not come to give a new law, but I have come to fulfil the law," which means that no new religion has ever been given, although the world has taken it so. Man divides, God unites humanity. Man's pleasure is in thinking and feeling, 'I am different from you', 'You are different from me' - by nationality, by race, in creed or religion. The animals do that. Did Jesus Christ come to form an exclusive community to be named Christian or Buddha to found a creed called Buddhism? Or was it Mohammed's ideal to form a community called Mohammedan? On the contrary the Prophet warned His disciples that they should not attach His name to His message, but that it should be called Islam - the message of peace.

Not one of the masters came with the thought of forming an exclusive community or to give a certain religion. They came with the same message from one and the same God. Whether the message was in Sanskrit, Zend or Arabic, it had one and the same meaning. The difference between religions is external, the inner meaning of all is one.

If only man had understood this, the world would have avoided many wars, for war has mostly been caused by religion. Religion given to the world to establish peace and harmony! What a pity that from the same source should come war and disaster!

The Sufi message is a reminder to humanity, not to anyone nation but to all, not to one but every creed, - a reminder of the truth taught by all the great teachers of humanity - that God, Truth, Religion are one, duality only a delusion of human nature.

Think then what a great service lies before the message. At this time when nation is against nation, race against race, when the followers of one religion are constantly working against the followers of another religion, class working against class; competition, hate, prejudice prevailing everywhere. What will be the outcome? What can poison produce? Not nectar only poison. The message is not for one nation, race or community, it is as already stated for the whole of humanity. Its one and only object is to bring about a better understanding between the divided sections of humanity by awakening the consciousness to the fact that humanity is one family. If one person in the family be ill or unhappy, certainly he must cause unhappiness in the whole family.

Even this is not the most appropriate simile. Humanity is one body, the whole life being one in its source and its goal, its beginning and its end. No scientist can deny this! If part of the body is in pain, sooner or later, the whole body is affected. If your fingers aches, your body is not free from pain. No action, race or section can be considered as a separate part of humanity.

To-day education, politics, all directions of life seem to be working with an individualistic view, but where must a tendency end, where will it lead humanity? If each says: "I must get the better of the other", where will be the harmony and peace for which all are longing, no matter of what race or religion they be?

No doubt this condition has been brought about by a long-continued materialism and commercialism, which have taught every soul the spirit of competition and rivalry, the whole life of each absorbed in guarding his own interests, trying too take the best in life for himself.

Life is one continual fight and only one thing can ease this fight - consideration for others, reciprocity, give and take of good instead of selfishness as the central theme. Progress will never lead to the soul's desire and aim. It must culminate in destruction and as at one time there was a call from everywhere to guard self-interest, now the moment has come that the message be given to men to understand and consider one another, for the happiness and peace of each individual depends on the happiness and peace of all.

There is an order of the Sufis, which is constituted of these who have the same ideals of service to God and to humanity, who have the ideal to devote a part of the whole of their life to the service of humanity, on the path of truth. This order exists throughout the world in most of the European countries and in America. This order has its groups, the members of which belong to all the different religions - all are welcome - Christians, Buddhists, Parsees, Muslims. No-one's faith or belief is questioned, each can follow his own church, religion, creed. No-one must believe in any special creed or dogma. Freedom of thought is given. At the same time personal guidance is given on the path, in the problems of life, and in the inner life.

Those who belong to the Esoteric school of this Order, besides personal guidance, are given the studies which are entrusted only to those who are fitted to receive them. There are subtleties of ideas, of spiritual, moral or philosophical ideas, which cannot be given to everyone at first, but can be given gradually to those, who are serious enough to walk in the path of truth. Every seeker after truth must remember one thing, that the first step on the path of truth is to become true to oneself.