



Religious Gatheka – Hazrat Inayat Khan

24. ABRAHAM

Abraham, whose name seems to come from the Sanskrit root *Brahma*, which means the creator, was the father of four great religions of the world. For it is from the descendants, who were called Beni Israel that came Judaism. Christianity, Islamism, besides Zoroastrianism.

Abraham was the first to bring the knowledge of mysticism from Egypt, where he was initiated in the most ancient order of esotericism. And the place which on his return he chose to establish a center, with the idea that some place must be the world center, was Mecca, wither not only in the age of the Islam did the people make pilgrimage to, but at all times the sacred center of Mecca was held in esteem by the pious who lived before Mohammed. The family of Jesus Christ is traced in the ancient tradition from the family of Isaac and Mohammed came from the family of Ishmael.

The prophecies of Abraham have always been living words though various people made their different interpretations according to their own ideas. But to the mind of the Seer the prophecies of Abraham have a very deep meaning.

With his great knowledge of esotericism, he has been a great patriarch among his people. He was interested in everybody's trouble and difficulty. He was thrown in the midst of worldly responsibilities, to learn all he has learned from it and to teach his knowledge and experience to those who looked to him for the bread of knowledge. No doubt the stories of the ancient times very often strike our modern ears as most childish. But it was the way they were told and by the people who told them, which made a great difference.

In the first place there was such a scarcity of lettered people in those days, therefore the stories were told by the unlettered, and certainly they must have improvised upon every legend they told and pictured it according the artistic development of their particular age. Nevertheless truth is there if we only know how to lift the veil.

Abraham's life does not only make him a Prophet but a *Murshid* at the same time. He was a mystic who gave counsel to those who came to him in need. He examined them, treated their minds, healed their souls according to their needs. The most remarkable thing one notices in Abraham is, that besides him being a prophet and a mystic, he lived the life of an ordinary human being, 'one with his fellowmen' in their times of pleasure and sorrow.

One story of the life of Abraham has been the source of great argument in the East is that is the sacrifice of Isaac. It is not only an argument in the East, but alarming to a Western mind. They can put a thousand questions forward, asking to give proper reason and justification to such an act. But at the same time if we looked from the ideal point of view, no sacrifice for a beloved ideal can be too great. There are numberless souls whose dear ones, their beloved mates, husbands or sons have been sacrificed in this recent war. They could do nothing else, they had to surrender their will to the ideal of the nation and offer the sacrifice for the cause of the nation, without thinking for a moment that it was unusual. When we think deeply on the problem of life, there is no path in the world whether spiritual or material which we can thread successfully without a sacrifice. Sometimes the sacrifice is great and sometimes small, sometimes the sacrifice is made before achieving the success and sometimes afterwards. As sacrifice is necessary in life, it is made by everyone in some form or other, but when it is made willingly it turns into virtue.

The greater the ideal the greater the sacrifice it demands, and if one saw wisely the process of advancement through life, in any direction of life, it is nothing but a continual sacrifice, and happiness comes from the understanding of this nature of life, and not being hurt or troubled by it, but knowing that it is by sacrifice made to the end, and that man attains the desired goal.