



A Sufi Message

Orientation of Consciousness and the Nature of Spirituality

Inspired by the Teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan

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In Hazrat Inayat Khan's words: Before speaking of spirituality, I must first explain what I mean by spirituality. There are people who consider spirituality as orthodoxy or piety: to be religious, to be a priest, a monk, a hermit, to fast, or to live a life of a certain discipline, to adopt a certain form of worship. A person may have all these outer forms without being spiritual, and a person may have nothing of these and be spiritual. Those who seek spirituality in such outer forms are mistaken, for it is more than that: real spirituality is spirit-consciousness.

To be spiritual means to be conscious of spirit, just as a material person means a person who is conscious of matter. So, it is not religion, orthodoxy, outer forms, or a certain kind of life which means spiritual life: **it is to be conscious of the spirit that makes one spiritual.**

There are others who think that those who perform phenomena, miracles, who work wonders are spiritual. It is not so. Many who are capable of performing phenomena are not different from a magician.

Then others say that to be spiritual means to tell fortunes, or to be clairvoyant, to see wonderful things. It is not necessary to do or to see wonderful things in order to be spiritual.

Others imagine that to be spiritual means sitting in the caves of mountains, or roaming about in forests, or to appear and disappear. All these things are but fancies of the imaginative.

To be spiritual means to be one's self, to be one's natural self.

How many of us are our self? If we were our self, we would all be spiritual. We are not our self; we are far from it! A great Indian poet expresses this idea in this way, "Apart from accomplishing things, for a person to be a person is the most difficult thing." It means that for a human being to be human being is the greatest difficulty. We are born a human being; yet the first thing we ought to be is what we are not, we are anything but a human being.

[Rabindranath Tagor] We are willing to be a solicitor, a doctor, a professor, but to be a human being-that is the thing we think of last, and mostly we do not even think of it at all.

Practice: Allah al-'ilah

[When] considering the sound of the word “Allah,” we notice that the initial “A” sound is a natural heart sound. It is opening out into the universe, into the infinite[, in to the transcendent. Beyond this material universe]. The “L” sound in Allah is a shimmering or a tingling in the heart. This thrilling sound is sometimes referred to as the “shimmering being.” Then you say “A” again, bringing the release of the heart, [and] the relaxation of the heart.

This shimmering is brought to the heart and then emanates back out. And finally, you pronounce the “H” sound, the aspirant, the breath sound. It is the breath of infinite compassion and the initial of hu, which transcends all qualities. The letter “h” (ha) is represented as a circle in Arabic, and this form also is a symbol for the infinite. The word “Allah” has another form, which is expressed as al-'ilah, which means the individuated God, meaning “the God.” [We could refer to al-'ilah as immanence or God’s presence within all of creation and within us as individual manifestations of God]

The ilah reveals individuation, and individuation is an important aspect of divinity. The meaning of al-'ilah can be realized when we become integrated in our own sense of self and know it as a divine manifestation not separate from the real self.

Hazrat Inayat Khan expresses this idea in his teachings on Metaphysics in this way: *This life is like a drop of water in the sea. The drop is existent and yet in reality non-existent when compared with the sea. And yet we cannot say that the drop of water is non-existent, for it merges in the same sea in which it once appeared; so nothing takes it away but its own source and its original being.*

People say that nowadays there is a great tendency in the world to discover spiritual truth, that there is an inner spiritual awakening. Murshid says, ‘Yes, I admit it, but what direction does it take? Very often it takes wrong directions.’

Those searching after truth often think that the best way to find belief in the spirit and the hereafter is mediumship: to become a medium themselves, or to go to a medium and when they have found proof by communicating with the dead. Then they think they have found

proof of the spiritual. They wreck their nervous system, many go out of balance. In this manner the way that would lead to spirituality leads to destruction.

There are others who wish to pursue the spiritual in the same way as a person does in a university or college. They want to read all things in a book. They think, "If there is anything like spiritual attainment one book must tell us about it." Among them there are many who think that the best way is the intellectual way. But what is intellectual? Is reading really intellectual? Are all books the same? Many times they only confuse a person.

Often people come to me and tell me - in order to help me - to have confidence in them, because for ten years they have been reading my books. Instead of having confidence I have to guide them on the path and to erase what they have learned first. Perhaps they are not willing to erase; they think that they have gained this knowledge by reading a hundred books. What knowledge? Is it spiritual?

The way to spirituality is the expansion and the widening of the heart. In order to accommodate the divine Truth the heart must be expanded. With the expansion of the heart divine bliss is poured out.

The true spirituality is the raising of our consciousness to that plane which is the abode of the Divine Being.

Practice: Allah al-'ilah

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