



A Sufi Message

Building One's Ideal

Inspired by the Teachings of Hazrat Inayat Khan
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Buddha was asked one day by his disciples what he meant by ignorance. And Buddha answered by describing how a person was once clinging in distress to the branch of a tree in the utter darkness of the night, not knowing whether there was earth or a ditch or water beneath them. All night long the person trembled and wept and was clinging fast to that branch. And with the break of day they found that they were only one foot away from the earth beneath their feet.

Ignorance can be defined as fear, doubt, passion, confusion. Where do all these come from? They all come from our ignorance of one side of life, its deeper side. We may be clever in making the best of what we call the lighter side of life, but that is not all.

... **life is moving;** it is all moving. We cannot hold it. A person may have riches one day and the next be poor; a person may be successful one day and yet perhaps sooner or later they will meet with failure. Such powerful nations as Russia and Germany, who could ever have thought that they would fall down in a moment; nations which took hundreds of years to become strong and to build themselves up? But when their time came their downfall did not take long. If such great powers are subject to falling in a moment and their whole construction can be broken, if that is the nature and character of life, no thoughtful person will deny the fact that there must be some mystery behind it, some secret of which we would like to find the key. At least we would (or should) want to know what life is and what is behind it.

PRACTICE: Ya Nur (yaa NOOR) / **Ya Hakam** (yaa ḤA-kam)

Ya Nur: ([click for pronunciation](#)) All the various forms of wisdom and guidance are expressions of an-Nur. What continues to live on in God when we die is also a legacy of light.

Ya Hakam: ([click for pronunciation](#)) In its deepest sense, it is a seeing from the eye of the heart, by means of the light of God. A hadith says, "Be aware of the penetrating insight of the believer, because such a one sees by the light of God."

Those who have studied life and thought long enough about this subject, have arrived at the same point as the thinkers who lived as much as eight thousand years ago. Buddha has said and has realized the same things that a really wise person would realize and say today. This shows us that wisdom is the same in all ages. We may be evolving or going backward, but wisdom never changes and will always be the same. The same realization will come to all those who think deeply and try to realize what life is. In order to realize life it is not necessary for us to follow a certain religion. It is not necessary for us to be great or good, pious or spiritual. The first and most necessary thing is that we **become observant. We should look at life more keenly than we do** instead of living superficially. It would cost us nothing. It only takes us away from our everyday occupation for a few minutes. **Life always gives an opportunity of thinking, however busy we may be.**

It is not necessary for us to leave our occupation, our work in life, and go into the forest and sit in silence and meditate upon life. We can meditate upon life in the midst of life if only we want to. **What happens is that as we begin our life by action and the more active we become, the less we think. Then our action becomes our thought.** (In other words, we do things automatically without thought – without mindfulness.) **But if we considered what exists besides the action and thoughts which are connected with everyday life, if we also gave thought to the deeper side of life, we would have more benefit.**

The ideal life is at least to try to live up to one's ideal. But in order to have an ideal one must first awaken to an ideal. Not everyone possesses an ideal; many people do not know of it. It is no exaggeration to say that the wars and disasters we have gone through, the unrest that all feel, and **the disagreement among the people which is sometimes seen and sometimes not seen, are all caused by one thing and that is the lack of an ideal.** We are progressing commercially, industrially. But in all walks of life progress will be stopped one day or another if the ideal is destroyed. **If there is anything which can be said to be the means of saving the world, it is the awakening of idealism. It is the first task that is worth considering.**

Besides for the average person to consider even one thing, that is to live a life of balance, would already be of great importance, and it is not very difficult. When we are working we should realize that recreation is also necessary. **When we tire it is necessary to take repose; when we think too much it is necessary to rest the mind at certain times, during which we must try not to think.** But life is an intoxication, it is like drink, whatever be our motive, whether we are compelled and thrown into it or not. It is all an intoxication, going at our object with all our might and thought and feeling, till either we have accomplished what we want, or we are destroyed. **If we used balance in everything we did, we would find the key to a life of greater happiness.**

People often fight and argue and discuss. Over what? Over a reason. When two persons dispute, each has a reason. Each thinks their reason the right one. They may dispute for years and yet will arrive nowhere because the reason of each is different. **Therefore to think more is to see behind the reason.** And **the moment we have begun to see behind the reason, we will look at life quite differently.** Then we find that behind what we blame the other for there is perhaps something to praise; and where there is something to praise there is perhaps a reason for blame. We shall begin to see what is beyond all appearances and that will give us the proof that the whole of life is a kind of unfoldment. The deeper we look into life the more it unfolds itself, allowing us to see more keenly. Life is revealing.

Ibn Arabi's teachings on the Sufi path emphasize the importance of seeking to know the deeper truths behind the apparent realities of life. "Seek to know what which transpires behind that which appears." This one statement calls into question, "What are we doing here today? What are we doing with our practices? With our life?" – Are we seeking deeper truths behind the apparent realities of life? Or are we like the person clinging to a branch in utter darkness?

My prayer and my hope is that we are looking at the deeper side of life seeking insights into the spiritual journey and the transformation and evolution of our consciousness. And by doing so, may I pray we are coming to think more clearly, developing spiritually, and living more peacefully while appreciating beauty in all aspects of life.

It is not only human beings who speak; **if only the ears can hear even plants and trees and all nature speak, in the sense that nature reveals itself, reveals its secret. In this way we communicate with the whole of life. Then we are never alone, then life becomes worth living.**

The thoughtful of all ages have considered the source of creation to be one and the same. A scientist will tell us today that the cause behind creation is motion, vibration. But if from motion and vibration this manifestation has come into our view then that motion is not lifeless. If that motion is life itself, then it is intelligent. It is of course not intelligent in the sense we understand this word. We know the limited side of it; we call the function of the brain intelligence. We say that one thing is intelligent because it is living, and another thing where we do not distinguish life we call unintelligent. But an Indian scientist has pointed out that even trees breathe. If that is true, then the trees are living. And if **today it is proved that trees are living, it will also be found that stones are living. Then one will realize that all life comes from one source which is the very life of all things, and not only life but intelligence also; this is what religion calls God.**

Rumi's life shows a great phenomenon and a lesson at the same time: that an intellectual could be as devotional as Rumi was. Most often there is intellect and devotion is missing, or there is a devotion and intellect is missing. But in the life of Rumi we see the example of intellect and devotion in the same measure. Rumi was one of the most educated persons of his time.

Rumi was a statesman, a politician, a man of law, and a man of letters, and at the same time so simple that when first he saw Shams-i-Tabriz, the one who was to be his *murshid*, he said, "God, whom I have worshipped all through life, today came before me in the guise of man." That great devotion in an intellectual man! Here a simple dervish comes to him, scantily clad, and the leader of the city, a man of position, with power and authority, listens to him like a simple child, and appreciates him. **By Rumi's ideal he raised Shams-i-Tabriz to that stage where a really devoted *mureed* raises their teacher. This shows the ideal and intellect both together.**

Rumi's teaching is that God can be best understood not by thinking that God is in heaven, but by recognizing God in all manifestation. In other words, bringing heaven on earth, and raising earth to heaven. Rumi is the first mystic who does not inflict or impose upon people a forced renunciation or asceticism. He is the first mystic who came forward in the world and said that **the essence of spirituality is the quality of heart.** No mystic will ever say it as Rumi has:

"Whether you love person or whether you love God, at the end of your destiny you will be brought before the Throne of Love."

This is more daring of Rumi to have said this, especially at that time in the reign of theology, when one could never say such words. But Rumi had the courage to say it. *"Whether you love person or whether you love God, at the end of your destiny you will be brought before the Throne of Love."*

Practices for the next month:

1. Ya Nur/ Ya Hakam
2. Review the study guide, and concentrate on the areas emphasized in **bold lettering**. *Read, Study, Contemplate, Meditate upon these words in relationship to your own life.*

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Closing Prayer and Dedication

References

Sufi Message Volume VI, The Alchemy of Happiness, The Deeper Side of Life
The Message Papers, Jelal-ud-din Rumi, July 20, 1926
Ibn' Arabi, "The Meccan Revelations" and "The Bezels of Wisdom"