

# **THE SUFI TEACHINGS**

## **OF**

### **HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN**

#### **Volume XII**

#### **The Vision of God and Man, Confessions, Four Plays**

##### **PART I:**

##### **THE VISION OF GOD AND MAN AND OTHER LECTURES**

##### **PREFACE**

The first part of this twelfth volume of The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan consist of a number of lectures the Master gave at different times, and which for various reasons have not been included in the proceeding volumes. They are published here for the first time, except "Wealth." Which appeared in the Sufi Quarterly of June 1931.

In his Confessions, which were published in 1915 in a limited edition, long since out of print, Inayat Khan gave some reminiscences of his early life. He tells us about his home life, which was centered round the towering figure of his grandfather, the celebrated musician, Maulabakhsh, who so profoundly influenced him, about the career he himself made as a musician, and about his searching on the spiritual path, and how these led him to the Realization that he had to bring the message of Sufism to the Western world.

Thirdly this volume contains the four plays written by Hazrat Inayat Khan. Their style is very different from that of the plays we are accustomed to see performed on Western stages; it is much closer to the traditional Indian theater. But they form an important part of his teachings and convey to those who read them or see them performed the reality of the deeper side of life, a reality that manifest when the way had been opened for the attainment of Self-realization, in which lies the fulfillment of the purpose of life.

To Inayat Khan it is God who is acting through man in order to realize Himself. Thus he wrote in the Vadan," The scriptures have called Him the Creator, the Masons have called Him the Architect, but I know Him as the Actor on this stage of life."

##### **PART I:**

##### **THE VISION OF GOD AND MAN AND OTHER LECTURES**

##### **THE VISION OF GOD AND MAN**

When we speak of men we all understand this to mean human beings, but of God everyone has his own conception. To one person God is an abstract concept, to another he is a personal God, and again according to others there is no God at all. In this age of ever-increasing materialism the God-ideal has become so obscured that its light is no longer evident. People in the past waged wars and battles, they killed and robbed and in many ways showed a primitive nature, but when it came to the ideal, to God, they all surrendered to it, they all believed in it. Today many people question the idea of God. Among the so-called civilized nations there are some who have erased the word God from the textbooks used in their schools. Children educated in these schools have grown up with the idea that there is no God, they call him 'higher powers', or gods', putting something into the plural that which is singular, bringing the highest nature humanity can conceive of down to the sphere of variety. Many others who have been educated in science and literature think that it is unintelligent to believe in God or to use the word God. They think that as it is used by so many primitive people, who are not intelligent, they had better forget the

name of God. And so a path, which has been traced for thousands of years by great masters, has been blocked by the pride of man.

Once, after I had given a series of lectures, a man came up to me and said, 'All your lectures appeal to me very much. I think every word is true; I have always thought of those lines. I would be most happy to follow your guidance, but only on one condition: that you not mention the name of God. For a man like you, who can touch the depths of life, a man of high principles and lofty ideals, does not need to use the old name, which every simpleton uses and believes in. We are making a new kind of life today, and we look at it in a different way.' New? I said, 'there is nothing new under the sun. The newness is only in your conception; it is new to you because you did not know it before. It may be new to you, but to someone else it certainly is not new!'

A material scientist today finds out something and says, 'Here is a new discovery!' Another says, 'No, it is not true; here is another discovery, which proves it wrong.' And so it goes on; every year there are many new discoveries. Sometimes, too, one scientist does not think like another; they may belong to the same school, and yet each has his own idea, which does not agree with the other man's. But when we consider the mystics and thinkers who look at life from a spiritual point of view, they all agree, be they Yogis, Sufis, Buddhists, or Christians- it does not matter which. When they arrive at a certain stage of understanding they all agree, they all have the same experiences, they all have the same realization to which they come in spite of all differences of form: those who look at the surface see variations, but those who look below the surface see one

and the same truth hidden beneath all religions, which have been given at different times by different masters. Naturally, therefore, the method of expression is different, but when one comes to the essence it is all one and the same, and those who are spiritually evolved come to the conclusion that they do not differ one from the other in their belief.

One should, of course, understand the real meaning of belief. Very often it is his belief which keeps a man back from spiritual attainment, but more often it is belief which helps him to go forward. Belief is like a staircase. Each step takes one higher, but when one remains standing on a certain step of the staircase one does not progress. Belief may nail the feet to the ground and keep one there where there are millions of believers in God, and thus there are many simple people who do not get the full benefit from belief. But this does not mean that belief has no function. It simply means that these people do not understand the real meaning of belief; they only know how to remain standing on a certain spot on a staircase.

As a person evolves so his belief evolves, until he comes to that stage where he harmonizes with all the different beliefs, where he is no longer against any belief. Then he is not nailed down any more; he is above all the different beliefs. Very often a person says, 'I cannot understand what God is. Can you explain God to me? But if God were to be explained He would not be God. To explain God is to dethrone God.

God apart, can one explain anything fine and subtle such as gratitude, love, or devotion, in words? How much can be explained? Words are too inadequate to explain great feelings, so how can God be explained in words? Nevertheless, in the language of metaphysics the Absolute is the omniscient Spirit, the essence of Intelligence itself in its original condition. In the East they call it Nur, which means radiance; and the nature of radiance is to centralize; it is the centralizing of the radiance which illuminates. Physically one can say that the sun is the centralized all-pervading radiance; therefore the sun which we can see is only in that center, but wherever the light reaches in our houses and outside the sun is there. Its manifestation is indirect, yet it is all the sun.

When we look at the all-pervading Intelligence as centralized intelligence we call it God, because it begins with centralizing; from this point manifestation begins. For manifestation there must first be centralization. It is this which forms an entity, and the wise have called it God; but this does not make it a being which is separate from manifestations, just as the sun cannot be separated from the sunlight. Light is as much the sun as the sun we see before us, and in the same way manifestation is God as much as God is the origin and source of manifestation.

Now, when we study the sun we see that there is the sun and that there are rays. In the rays the sun is manifest in variety. But what are the rays? The sun. This is only an action of the sun where the radiance has been centralized. The first action is to project itself, to manifest in the form of various rays. And if I were to explain what we human beings are and what God is, I would say that our relationship with God is the same as that between the rays and the sun. Every soul is a ray of the sun, which is God. It is not our body or our mind which is the ray but the soul, whose nature it is to attract a garb from whichever sphere it touches in order to cover itself so that it can live in that

particular sphere. It is this garb which the soul has borrowed that we call our physical body, a clay which has been kneaded for many centuries to make the body of man, a clay which once appeared as animals and birds. This same clay, in its finished form, has given the soul of man a garb, which he calls his body.

It is in this belief that the mystic differs from the scientist, not however in the understanding of the process. The scientist believes in the same process; that from dense earth the mineral and then the vegetable have gradually developed. Biology rests on this principle. The mystic, however, does not attribute to this garb the origin of the body, which the soul takes for its use; he attributes it to the spirit, which takes the garb upon itself. This origin does not belong to the dense earth; it belongs to God; it is the ray of the sun. And is the ray separate from the sun? Never, and for the same reason man is never separate from God. In this material world one only sees that one lives on food, that one eats, that one needs air and water, and one does not see any other source of life; but in reality all these things which sustain man's body only sustain the garb which is earthly. Its real sustenance is different and belongs to the source from whence it comes and to which it is attached. It is thence that man draws all strength, vitality, and illumination every moment of his life. Therefore the proper name for God is 'origin.' The word 'God' is related to the Arabic Djod, which has this meaning. When man neglects the knowledge of self and of God, and only knows about the garb he wears, he does not know about himself. Whatever his learning and qualifications may be, they all pertain to the garb he wearing, but it is through the understanding of the spirit and the soul that man really acquires the knowledge of the self and of God.

Some people think that the physical garb is the only one the soul wears, but this is not so; in order to come to this plane of the earth the ray, the soul, must pass through two different spheres. The first sphere may be called the angelic sphere, and the next the sphere of the jinns. One may ask, 'Then why do I not see them, if I also have garbs from these other spheres?' But one can see them too if one has studied human nature minutely. Eating, drinking, and sleeping, all these faculties come from the physical world; but there are others: the love of music, appreciation of poetry, the tendency to invent wonderful things, all intellectual pursuits and phenomena come from the jinn world. Poets and thinkers show the garb of that sphere in the work they do in the physical world. This garb is hidden, but where? It has become their mind, and therefore the mind is the inner garb, while the body is the outer garb, which covers it. The mind is the garb which man has brought from the jinn sphere. But even before this man had still another garb, and this comes from the angelic sphere. Do we see any sign of it? Yes, in his devotion, in his idealistic tendencies, in his innocence, in the love and beauty of his nature, in all the qualities man shows the garb of the sphere of the angels.

Innocence always goes with a loving nature. A person who is loving is generally innocent also, whereas a person who is very clever is least loving. For the very reason that he is clever he has little love, for then love is buried in his cleverness. I do not mean to say that innocence is the most valuable quality; every quality has its place; nevertheless innocence is an angelic quality. Great prophets, saints, and sages, those, who have healed the wounds of humanity, were most innocent people. Innocence is the proof of spirituality. However great a person's cleverness may be, without innocence he cannot be spiritual; also, spirituality produces innocence.

The garb that man has brought from the angelic sphere is revealed in the form of unselfish love, devotion, high ideals, a worshipful attitude, and love of beauty. The first tendency shown by every infant from the time it opens its eyes is love of beauty: beautiful colors, beautiful things, all these attract it. Perhaps it does not see beauty as we do, for our sense of beauty has been spoiled by our experience and our ideas, but the infant comes to the earth with a natural sense of beauty. That which is really beautiful strikes the infant, and it loves it.

### **THE VISION OF GOD AND MAN (continued)**

RUMI says in his great book, the Masnavi that the reason why a child cries the first moment after it is born on earth is because it realizes its exile from the higher spheres. It is unhappy because it finds itself in a different sphere, a different world. The soul seems captive in this mortal body.

There is a beautiful story in the Qur'an which explains symbolically the idea of the captivity of the soul. It says that God made a statue of man, of the first man, and asked the soul to enter into this body. And the soul refused saying, 'Lord, I do not want to be imprisoned in this physical body'. Then God told the angels to sing and dance, and on hearing their song and with the rhythm of the dance the soul went into ecstasy, and in that condition it entered the body. Rumi says that the reason why every soul is yearning to attain something is that it is in exile, a captive in this physical body which for a while it considered to be itself, with which it identified itself, but which in reality it is not itself. It is only a garb, but because it has identified itself with this garb it is unhappy; it has lost that freedom

which belonged to it, which was its own.

The vision of man is small, narrow, because of his limitation in this physical body. In other words, the eyes cannot see farther than the soul can. Because the soul is dependent upon the mind the vision becomes limited. It is the vision of the perfect One, which, by means of the captivity, has made the individual; thus individual means the limited experience of the soul. Whether man knows it or not, whether he believes it or not, there always comes a time when he finds that nothing pleases him. Sometimes he thinks that he is unhappy because he has no money or comforts; he imagines that if he had a comfortable home with pleasant, congenial surroundings everything would be all right; but when he has obtained all this he is dissatisfied just the same. It is because of man's innermost being that he is only satisfied for a short time by outside factors. His lack of freedom causes a continual craving; the soul which is captive in mind and body and which cannot express itself fully cannot experience life as it would wish, because by identifying itself with its garbs it has accustomed itself to be ignorant of itself. Therefore spiritual attainment is a matter of finding the secret by uncovering the soul beneath the garbs.

No one can say how God looks upon the world, how God sees life. Yet there are souls who attain to the divine vision, in other words their outlook becomes God's outlook. In Sufi terms this is called Akhlak-e Allah, which means the manner of God. When man has reached the stage of spiritual attainment where he has developed the outlook of God his manner becomes the manner of God. The greater man's evolution the wider his outlook on life; the wider his outlook the higher he stands. But at the same time, as life is today and in so far as we are able to see our fellow-men, it seem that people care little to distinguish themselves in this way. In the modern

world the pitch, it appears, has become smaller and smaller, the pitch of human understanding. Why is this so? Because of the lack of the individual progress. As man is busy with mass-production the general tendency is to keep everybody on the same level of understanding. People all read the same newspapers as if they were afraid of ideas being unlike. So they remain all at the same pitch; and if any man has a tendency to go forward he is considered a dreamer, an eccentric, strange. There is no encouragement for individual development, and therefore society keeps the progress of the whole within certain limits and does not allow it to develop further.

And now the question arises, if God is absolute, then what is the use of worship, or prayer, or of believing in God in some form or other- as King, or Judge, or Creator, or the Superior Being? What is the use of it? It is very easy to read in a book that it is the absolute that is God, that it is the abstract. This means no one and nothing, or all and everything! Indeed, there is some truth, in this. But the idea of God being the absolute is larger than man's mind. The mind wants to understand, but the brain cannot grasp it. Many intellectual people have lost their way by reading somewhere that God is abstract. It means nothing to them, for they have not yet arrived at that stage of evolution where they can assimilate such an idea. Before getting to that stage they have swallowed a pill they can never digest. On top of this come people who have new ideas and thoughts, who give lessons about these. They say, 'You are God'. In their way their insolence becomes greater and greater. The lofty ideal of God, the ideal, which uplifted the seekers of all ages, is being lost. Those who have arrived at realization do not speak about such things in connection with the God-ideal; they realize it in their hearts and keep quiet. But those who have the God-ideal only in the brain, who speak about it and want to touch it, do not touch the ideal. And where do they get to? Nowhere.

Man can only conceive of an idea in the way he is able to conceive of a thing. For instance, if one speaks about fairies no one will think of them as trees or plants but as human beings. If an artist is told to paint an angel he will paint it in the form of a human being. He will conceive it in the form to which he is accustomed, which is near and dear his mind.

Naturally every man conceives the idea of God differently. One conceives God as the Judge; he does not see justice in the world, so he sees it in God. Another conceives God as the Creator; man knows himself to be a creator, so he thinks that God is the perfect creator. It is natural for man to make God that which he thinks to be best; therefore whether people belong to the same religion or nation or not, each one of them has his own God, depending on the way he looks upon Him. To have one's own belief is the first step on the spiritual path. It is not right for a person to say, 'Believe in my God.' Someone else may not be capable of believing in the same way he does. He believes in his own way, so let him believe in that way. After all it is a first belief; it is nothing but a garb, a garb made by one's own imagination. In order to kindle that tendency to imagine, to idealize, to worship, the wise in olden times said to those who were not capable of imagination, 'Here is a statue of God.' Those who worship these statues, the Chinese, the Greeks, the Hindus, were they mistaken? No, each person's God is as he looks upon Him; and if one says that there are as many gods as there are people in the world, that is true also. Behind it is God,

one and the same God of all. First there is the conception, the imagination, and in this way everyone proceeds. And if someone wanted to use another person's imagination the wise said, 'Well, take this little picture; there is your God.'

It is a pity that it was not only in the past that people were primitive: today people's imagination is even worse. Man has become a machine, toiling from morning till evening. He has very little time to imagine; if he had he would be another being. Any scientific discovery that is made is thought most wonderful, but it must be expressed in a simple statement. Formerly things were expressed in terms of poetry, in the form of music, in symbolic pictures, so that a person might think and penetrate and understand, so that his soul might be touched after it unfolded itself by the fineness of what he saw or heard. All the great scriptures of the past were given in such a form, never in a crude form.

Today a man comes and says, 'will you tell me about truth. I want truth in simple words.' But truth is never told in simple words; besides, that which can be spoken of in simple words cannot be truth. Truth should be distinguished from facts; it is something that must be realized, discovered. Sometimes when I meet those who want to find tangible truth I feel inclined to write on a piece of stone TRUTH, and to give it to them and say, 'hold it fast; here is tangible truth!'

How does one benefit by a belief in God? How is the knowledge of God acquired if belief in God is sufficient? The thousands and millions of people, who believe in God, are they all progressive and happy? It is not so, Belief is the first step; the second step is to know the relationship between God and man. In order to understand this one must be able to concentrate, to contemplate, to meditate, and so as to forget the false identity, which one has conceived in one's mind from the time one was born on earth. All the different methods that sages and seers have taught humanity are to help one to forget that false conception of self. And the method one can adopt to discover truth is the knowledge of God, and by making proper use of this in one's prayers, in one's concentration, in one's practices. In these one benefits by means of the God-ideal and one comes in this way to the self-realization, which is the fulfillment of life's purpose.

## MYSTICISM

MYSTICISM is a means to an end. Mysticism is not the goal, but through it one arrives at the goal. If you ask me, what is Sufism, it is a philosophy or it is mysticism, the answer is that it is both; and here I would like to explain something of the mystic side of Sufism.

The mystic side of Sufism may be recognized as seeing and hearing. To see further than one sees, to hear more keenly than one hears; in other words to see that which the eyes cannot see, to hear that which one cannot hear. This experience brings one to realization: to see without eyes, to hear without ears. No doubt to the mystic seeing and hearing, these two words, have a different meaning. When we say 'seeing' we mean seeing through the eyes, when we say 'hearing' we mean hearing through the ears; but to the mystic seeing is not only through the eyes, nor is hearing only through the ears. It is seeing even without eyes and hearing even without ears. The English word 'seer' means someone who can see equally well with or without eyes.

Now the question arises, if there is such a seeing and hearing would not every soul be most happy to attain this, for it would be just like having wings to fly? Who would not? Everyone. And if there is this possibility of hearing and seeing why is not everybody seeking after it? The reason is that not everyone believes it, although it can only be attained by belief and never without it. Therefore it is something that every soul seeks after, yet about which every soul has doubts. Even if a soul believes, the question is whether he has enough patience to go through with it, and patience is required because a certain preparation is necessary in order to hear and see. For everyone would like to see and hear, but if a person were capable of it, would he be strong enough to endure the disadvantages? For instance what would happen if mankind, ready as it is to criticize its fellow men, could see still more faults in them? Or if a man who is absorbed in life's interests sees a disaster coming upon him, upon his dear ones, will he be able to endure this? If a person who cannot keep his own counsel were to know, through this power, the secrets of his fellow men, what terrible things could he not do! Moreover, should an affectionate person, always afraid of any harm or hurt touching his dear ones, see it coming, his nerves would be shattered to pieces?

Thus we realize that in every soul there is a possibility of seeing and hearing, and that every soul would be most delighted to attain to this power, but at the same time that not every soul is ready to have it, nor would it be good for every soul to possess it. Food is for the hungry. If one is hungry one must seek food. If one wishes, one will

naturally see more, but if one does not wish it, it does not matter. It is according to one's appetite; if there is appetite there should be food. If it is a sin to see more, then it is also a sin to see with the eyes. The eyes are given to see with, the soul to see further. Nevertheless to seek for extraordinary powers, for phenomena, is going backward instead of forward. If one proceeds along the path of beneficence all that can be will be given.

If there is any secret in mysticism this is the only one. Before a person has developed his outlook he must not hear, he must not see. Therefore it is not in order to make one see and hear but to change one's outlook that the teacher gives initiation. But when the pupil says, 'I come to see and hear' the teacher says, 'Wait!'

I will tell you my own experience. Before I started looking for my teacher the faculty of seeing was being developed in me. It is this, which awakes the desire to seek a teacher, for the teacher can give the explanation of life. I did not tell my teacher about this faculty, for I was too impressed, too respectful, to speak of what I could see and hear. But one day, after having been with my teacher for some time, I ventured to speak about it. And what was his answer? 'I'm sorry.' I was expecting a word of encouragement! But he added, 'It is not seeing or hearing, it is acknowledging it that hinders one's progress.'

When this seeing occurs it is called clairvoyance, and this hearing is called clairsaudience. How wrongly these words are used today! Anyone who is troubled in his mind, who wants to know the future and speak about it, is called a clairvoyant. In reality this gift of seeing and hearing is a gift from the divine Being. The one who has this power is entrusted with the secret of life. The more he claims and the more he attracts people, the more he sins against the law of divine nature. It should be understood that at the time when this seeing and hearing begin an initiation is given, and man becomes responsible for the secrets revealed to him. Besides, if a man was not prepared, if he had not reached a certain point, what would be the benefit of it? On one occasion I was amused to hear a man say, 'The condition of our country? We have so much freedom that we do not know what to do with it!' It is the same with a person who can see and hear; he finds so much to see that he does not know what to do. The Sufi, therefore, is grateful for what he sees and hears, and also grateful for what he does not see and hear. He learns resignation on the path of the divine voyage.

Now one might ask, what kind of preparation is needed? The answer is: a moral preparation; but not in the sense that we understand the word 'moral' in everyday life. What we understand is selfish, because we judge another according to this law. According to the Sufi idea moral is a different thing, especially in regard to this preparation; it is consideration of the law of friendship of the relationship with one's elders or superiors or those who are younger or inferior. Although friendship is a simple thing to consider, it is most difficult to practice it. If we live a life of friendliness there is nothing better we can live for, and if we know the principle of friendship we do not need the moral of the world. If instead of his own advantage and rules of conduct a man considers the advantage and rules of another person, then he begins to see that person's soul, but as long as he sees the other as a separate being different from himself he will see him wrongly.

Therefore, what Sufism offers are facilities for becoming acquainted with these ideas. After this acquaintance naturally the soul unfolds, and as a natural consequence of the soul's unfoldment it gradually hears more and more.

## **THE PATH OF MEDITATION**

THERE is a trace of the meditative to be found in all ages, and yet no one can fully explain in words why people perform their meditations or what they experience while doing so. In order to make this more tangible I would like to say that life can be divided into two sections: the outer life and the life within. There are very few even among the intellectual who will readily agree when I say that there exists a life within, since their intellect has kept them occupied with the life outside; the experience they have had of the outer life by the help of reason and logic is their only experience, and it is this which they call their learning or knowledge. If one speaks of anything else to them they will say, 'This is a mystification, it is confusing, what we would like as proof is a phenomenon!' Besides, words can say so little about something that is only experienced by the meditative. How can a person who has had a certain pain, a pain which is not experienced by anyone else, explain to another how it feels? It is the one who experiences the pain who knows what it is. Therefore we can put into words all fine experiences in life and yet express so little of them.

In order to simplify this idea I would like to divide these two aspects, the meditative and the worldly, into two categories. One is connected with action, the other with repose. Much as action is needed in life, repose is just as necessary; and sometimes repose is even more necessary than action. All such complaints as nervous illness and

disorders of the mind come from lack of repose. This realm of life, which is explored by meditation, is the world of repose. And as one can say that by a certain kind of work one has gathered this or that experience, or has a certain success, or has added a particular aspect to one's knowledge, so one can also say that by this method of repose one has acquired a certain strength, illumination, and peace.

And when we go a little further we will find that it is this concept of repose which the wise turn into a method, considering it most sacred, for by this process they attain to something much more valuable than anything our actions can bring us.

The first step on this path of meditation may be called concentration. This means the ability to control our mind, which is sometimes active with our will and sometimes without it. What we call imagination is an automatic working of the mind, and what we call thought is an action of the mind and will. Therefore such words as 'imaginative' and 'thoughtful' distinguished the condition of the mind: that we either allow our mind to work as it wishes, or use our mind to work according to our will.

Another thing that can be accomplished by concentration is the following. The mind is a storehouse of all impressions that one has gathered through the five senses; and the most wonderful phenomenon that one can perceive is that every one of those impressions is at hand as soon as the mind asks it to present itself before one. They instantly come to be used. For instance an artist wants to paint a wonderful picture. He would like it to be a picture of a man, but at the same time an unusual one. As soon as he closes his eyes images of the horns of an animal, of the wing of a bird, and of the body of a fish present themselves, and then he paints a figure with horns, wings, and the body of a fish, combining all into one fabulous whole. Now what would one call this action? This action is an action of the will of the artist, who wanted to produce something wonderful, and the mind was instantly ready to supply from the storehouse all that the artist wished.

Another side of this question is that imagination also helps concentration. As soon as a person has imagined a running stream, he also imagines the rocks near by and the beautiful scenery, which is round the spring. From this we learn that concentration is not only something that is practiced by a mystic or a philosopher, but everybody- in business, in his art in industry- practices concentration to some extent. At the same time it is concentration, which makes a person a genius, it is concentration which brings success, and it is concentration which is the mystery of the accomplishment of all things.

And when one goes a little further on the same path one finds that there is contemplation, which means the retaining of the same thought or thought-picture. The distinction between concentration and contemplation is that the former is the composition of form. It is difficult to explain to what extent the power of contemplation works; those who are acquainted with the workings of contemplation can only call its results a phenomenon. The reason is that the mind is creative because the divine spirit is creative, and because the spirit is creative therefore the mind inherits, as its divine heritage, the faculty of creating. No one, however material, will deny the fact that all beauty and art, through whatever realm it is manifested, through science or industry, is a phenomenon of the mind. All the wonderful things made in the world in the way of inventions, architecture, of art, have come as a phenomenon of the mind. But they are mostly the phenomenon of the active mind, and one does not realize how great the phenomena are when produced by a controlled mind, controlled through concentration and contemplation.

And when we proceed still further we come to the aspect we call, meditation, an experience which is brought about by a perfect control of the mind and by rising above the action of the mind, an experience by which the inner side of life begins to reveal itself. For instance if you ask a person, 'Tell me about your being, what you know about it,' he will say, 'I have a physical body composed of five senses, subject to sensation, pleasure, pain, decay, and disease. And if I have anything more, perhaps somewhere in the brain I have the faculty of thinking. Perhaps, as many scientists say, it is an impression in my brain of all the things I have seen; and that is what I know of my mind. If there is anything else I know about myself it is a feeling, which I may call love or sympathy, but I do not know where it is; perhaps it is a sensation like the other sensations which I perceive. Besides this I do not know anything about myself except the affairs that I have to attend to in my everyday life.' This shows that the majority of people, and a very large majority, know very little about themselves; what they know about themselves is that limited part which cannot be compared with the part that is to be found within.

Should not this part then, which is much larger and of the greatest importance, be explored? And is it not great negligence on the part of man, which may be called sleep, that he goes on, day after day, without giving even a thought to that part of his being which is of much greater importance than the part he knows? In spite of all the

wealth that one may earn, and in spite of all one's success and the rank and position that one may attain, one has lost a great deal, if life is lost. And if that part of oneself is not found which is so much higher and greater, and which can be called sacred or the heritage of the divine Being. It is the inner self, and it can be explored by the path of meditation. When once this part of oneself is discovered then realization comes in the form of light, and light becomes like the lantern of Aladdin, which was found with great difficulty, but when it was directed on to life it made life reveal itself.

In India there is an amusing story which illustrates this idea. A young lad was sent to school. He began his lesson with the other children, and the first lesson the teacher set him was the straight line, the figure 'one'. But whereas the others went on progressing, this child continued writing the same figure. After two or three days the teacher came up to him and said, 'Have you finished your lesson?' He said, 'No I am still writing "one".' He went on doing the same thing, and when at the end of the week the teacher asked him again he said, 'I have not yet finished it.' The teacher thought he was an idiot and should be sent away, as he could not or did not want to learn. At home the child continued with the same exercise, and the parents also became tired and disgusted. He simply said, 'I have not yet learned it, I am learning it. When I have finished I shall take the other lessons.' The parents said, 'The other children are going on further, the school has given you up, and you do not show any progress; we are tired of you.' And the lad thought with sad heart that as he had displeased his parents too he had better leave home. So he went into the wilderness and lived on fruits and nuts. After a long time he returned to his old school, and when he saw the teacher he said to him, 'I think I have learned it. See if I have. Shall I write on this wall? And when he made his sign the wall split in two.

What does this story tell us? It tells us that there is another direction of learning, which is quite contrary to what we generally understand by learning. When this lad was taught to write 'one,' he could not see beyond 'one.' He thought: two is one and one is one. What is four? It is one and one and one and one. It was to this 'one' that he put his mind, and when he went into the wilderness what was his contemplation? Every tree suggested the same figure 'one' to him; every plant, everything in nature he saw as 'one', because everything in nature is unique, and it is the uniqueness in nature, which is the proof of the oneness behind it all. This symbolical story of the wall being split in two explains that when the meditative person has developed the sense of oneness, wherever he cast his glance, on a human being, on an object, it will open itself just as the wall opened into two, and it will show him its character, its nature, its secret, and its mystery. People who read occultism say that there are three eyes, and that the third is the inner eye. What does this mean? It means that the very two eyes we have turn from two into One, and when he realizes One, then his eyes become one; and in becoming one this eye obtains such power that it pierces all things and knows all things. It is for this knowledge that the eye opens.

But now one might ask a question. Today we live in a world of struggle, where there is only struggle to gain things of our choice and longing, but even the struggle for a living, the struggle for existence. What can one do under such conditions, and what shall we attain by coming to the realization about which I have spoken? The answer is that this difficulty of life, which we experience just now, is not a difficulty which arises from the conditions; it comes from our individual selves. It is we who cause this difficulty; it is not that the conditions have made it difficult for us. It is not true that the world is small and its population vast; the world would be large enough to accommodate a population ten time greater, if only man were as he ought to be,

if he were humane, if his feelings toward others were what they should be. It is not that in this world there is a shortage of all that is good and beautiful and of all that we need. The shortage is in our hearts: we do not want others to have anything. And it is the culture of humanity, which will bring about better conditions, and not this outer change with which many occupy themselves, thinking that through this change the conditions of the world will improve.

Man experiences a kingliness of soul when he gets into touch with his inner being, and he experiences slavery, in spite of all that he may possess in life, if he has not come into touch with his inner self. But, one may say, can a meditative person not explain in words the knowledge that he receives, so that others can read such a book and thus acquire this knowledge? But I should like to say that if a man who had traveled to Venice gave an account of what he had seen there, it would entertain you for a moment, but it would not give you the same joy as you would experience by traveling to Venice yourself. That which a meditative person experiences in his meditation is not a speculation, neither is it a kind of conception or idea that a man can clothe in the form of poetry, that he can explain, that he can express. Besides, what is our language made of? It is composed of names, which were given to objects, to things that are intelligible to us. There are no words, which can express that which is unintelligible; and the help of explanations cannot experience the experience, which is beyond words. When not even our everyday



experiences when not even our everyday experiences such as gratefulness, sympathy, pity, devotion, can be explained in words, then such a feeling as is experienced by the help of explanations. When not even our everyday experiences, such as gratefulness, sympathy, pity, devotion, can be explained in words, then such a feeling as is experienced by coming into the state of meditation, by being in communion with one's inner self, is so sacred that it can in no way be explained in words. That is why in the East this way is sought under the guidance of those who have trodden this path.

## THE SUFI IDEAL

THE word Sufi, although it comes from a Greek root, which means 'wisdom,' has yet another meaning, which is from the Arabic and that, is 'pure.' One often wonders what this purity implies. In our everyday life we have corrupted many words, and we interpret such words according to our own understanding; thus many of us speak of goodness as purity, while others call moral character purity. But to a mystic purity means something quite different.

A mystic gives to purity its natural meaning. Pure water means that nothing is mixed with the water, that there is no other element in it, and therefore purity is that substance within oneself, which is pure. As soon as this substance is realized one finds that all qualities such as good and bad, right or wrong, exist outside purity, since there is no goodness which is not touched by what may be called evil, nor is there any evil which has no touch of goodness. There is no wrong, which has no right side to it, and there is no right, which has not got a wrong side to it. Therefore as one comes to realize this purity one becomes reluctant to express an opinion about anything or anybody. It is always the foolish who are readiest to express their opinion about others; the wiser the person the less inclined he feels to form an opinion of anyone else. If he has to say anything about someone it is only good. Besides, no one who has once realized this purity tries to force his belief or his opinion upon another, because as soon as the purity, which is within, is realized, he no longer has an opinion, which can be expressed with words.

There are three steps to this purity. When a person takes the first step he distinguishes between right and wrong. When he takes the second step he only sees the right and overlooks the wrong. But when he takes the third step then his heart can see even the right of wrong. One might say that a realization such as this would upset the whole conception of right and wrong, and also the standard set by the nations or by religion. Yes, this is true; but at the same time keeping in harmony with the world, with those one lives with, does not mean that one should close one's eyes and not see the truth. It is for this reason that the Sufi says: do as others do, live as others live, think as others think, but feel as you yourself feel and realize life as your soul guides you.

There is one sin, if ever sin existed, and it is expressed in the story of Adam. This sin becomes apparent from the time that the infant begins to come to childhood: the soul experiencing the kingship of infancy and beginning to feel 'I,' 'I am separate from the others' - that is the exile from the Garden of Eden. As soon as the soul begins to say 'I' he is exiled from heaven, for all blessings belong to the state which the soul experienced before he claimed to be 'I,' a separate entity, separate from others. It is because of this that man, whatever his position, whatever his situation in life, is not fully happy. The trouble of one may perhaps be greater than that of another, but both he who resides in heavenly places and the inhabitant of a grass hut have their troubles; both have their pain. But man finds the reason for all afflictions in the life outside him. The Sufi finds it in that one sin: that of having claimed to be 'I.' with this claim came all the trouble, it continued, and it will always continue. This sin has such a hold upon the soul that it is just like the eclipse of the sun, when its light is covered and cannot shine. In everyday life one may sometimes find this claim and the spirit of 'I' helpful, and so the practical man looks upon a person who has less of this element as weak; he thinks that he is unpractical. If this person seems more simple he calls him dreamy, he will say that he is floating in the air. But after all, how long does this practical sense last, and to what end does it lead? The end of the one who was practical and the end of the unpractical are the same.

There is the story of a Sufi who met a young man while traveling and said to him, 'Come and see me if you pass the village where I live; you might call on me.' This young man asked, 'May I know the name of the place where you live?' The Sufi said, 'The place of liars, it is near the temple.' This young man was very confused; he thought the Sufi was speaking all the time the truth, and yet saying he lived in the place of liars! When he arrived at the village he tried to find the Sufi, but no one knew where the place of liars was. He only found it in the end when he came near the temple and saw the Sufi there. He said, 'The first question that arises in my mind is why do you call this place the place of liars?' The Sufi said to the young man, 'Come along with me, we shall go for a little walk in the graveyard, which is close by.' Then he said, 'They say that here the Prime Minister was buried, and here the king was buried, and here the chief judge was buried, and here a very great general. Were they not liars? Here they

are proved to be liars. They are nothing but the same in the same ground; they are buried with everybody else. They had the same end as all others. If that is the end, then think of the beginning. In the beginning there was no such thing as distinction either. No infant is born into this world saying, "I am so and so, my name is so and so, my position is such and such." All this, the soul has learned after coming here. The soul has learned the first lie in saying "I," as a separate identity; and after the first lie a man tells numerous lies.' Thus the teaching and the occupation of the Sufi is to erase that error from the surface of his heart, and therefore the first and last lesson the Sufi learns is: I am not, Thou art. And when the false claim no longer exist in his consciousness, then the claim can be made which is expressed in the Bible that first was the Word, by giving himself to that Word, the Sufi experiences the heavenly joy which is incomparable, the joy which is ecstasy.

There is only one thing in the world that cannot be defined, and that is the idea of God. If it could be defined it would not be God, because God is greater than His name and higher than our comprehension of Him. We call Him God; if we did not call Him God then what would we call Him? But by giving a name to the nameless, by making a concept of someone who is beyond conception, we only make Him limited; at the same time, if we did not do so then we would not be doing what we ought to do. My meaning is this, that in order to respect a great man we should have some conception of what greatness is; but our conception is not of that great man as he really is, it is the idea that we have made of him. Twenty admirers of a great personality would each have his own conception of that personality. And I might also say that each of the twenty has his special great person, and that thus there are twenty great persons instead of one; only, the one name causes these twenty persons to unite under it. The Hindus have said: as many men, so many gods, and it was not an exaggeration; it only meant that every man has his own conception of God. It is necessary first to have a conception of God in order to reach the stage at which one realizes Him.

Belief in God leads to that perfection which is the quest of the soul. But it is not only belief, for there is numberless souls in this world that believe in God; but do you think that they are very far advanced? Often you find that those who claim to believe in God may be much more backward than those who make no such claim. Belief in God should serve the purpose of purification, the purity which is the ideal attainment for man; and which is attained by meditation. In this purity is fulfilled the purpose of life.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY**

IT IS as important to think about the development of personality as it is to think about spirituality. A poet from Delhi says, 'If God had created man to offer Him prayers there are many angles to do this. Man was created to become human.'

Many think that nature is greater than art. I say: art perfects nature. Someone proudly told me, 'I was brought up by my parents just like a plant.' And I said, 'It is a great pity.' When people say one should let children alone, let them go their own way, this means that although they live in the world which is itself a work of art they do not give their children any education in that art, which is needed for living in this world. By doing this I do not mean that one should not be natural. One should develop naturally, for if one remains undeveloped one loses a great deal. Even if one were a spiritual person and the personality was not developed one would be missing a great deal in life. The personality must be developed. Parents think very little about this nowadays; they think that these are old-fashioned ideas; to be new-fashioned is to overlook all these things. But I say that it is not so at all; it is just the fashion to think about it in this way.

Individuality is one thing and personality is another. A soul is born an individual, but without a personality. Personality is built after one is born. What the soul has brought along is hands and legs and face, but not personality; this is made here on earth.

Very often people have taken the ascetic path and have gone where they could keep away from the world. Because they did not care for the personality, for the self, they kept themselves aloof from the crowd. In this way they are free to be as they wish to be; if they want to be like a tree or a plant or a rock they may. But at the same, when it comes to personality it is a different thing. You can either have a manner or not have it; you can either have an ideal or not have one; you can either have principles or be without them; you can either be conventional or not. All these things have their place; manner, conventionally, principle, ideal, all have their value in life. And the person who goes about without considering any of these things is just like a wild horse let loose in the city, running here and there, frightening everybody and causing a lot of harm. That is what an untrained personality is. Real culture is a matter of personality, not mathematics or history or grammar. All these different studies are practical studies, but

the real study is how to develop personality. If you are a businessman, a lawyer, a professional man, an industrialist, a politician, whatever your occupation in life, you are forced, expected, to have a personality in every walk of life. It is the personality of the salesman, which sells not always the goods. In the case of a doctor it is his personality which can heal and cure a person much sooner than medicine can.

There are four different grades of evolution, and these differ according to the four different kinds of personality. A person is either born in it or a person evolves through it. The first grade is called *Ammara* in Sufi terms, and it denotes a person who is coarse and crude, thoughtless and ill-mannered. And ill-manner is connected with ill luck, and so whenever there is thoughtlessness there is failure connected with it; whenever there is blindness there is always a disaster. This is the first kind of person.

When a man is a little more evolved then there comes a certain consideration, a civilized manner, a refinement, and a choice of action. This is called *Lauwama*. A person who has advanced to the third stage, *Mutmaina*, is still further developed. It is not only that he is thoughtful but he is sympathetic, it is not only that he is considerate but he is kind, it is not only that he has a civilized manner but he has a natural politeness, it is not only that he is refined but he is tender-hearted. And when a person goes still further then he has even greater charm and personality, then there is calm, quietness, gentleness, mildness, tolerance, forgiveness, and understanding of all beings.

It is when this fourth personality, or *Alima*, is developed that a person is entitled to embark on the spiritual path. Until then he is not entitled to go on it. The modern way of recognizing the wrong kind of equality has taken away the idea of better personality. That respect and appreciation which were due to a higher personality is taken away by this madness of equality. If a person has no ideal before him to reach up to then he has no way in which to progress. People who think, 'I am satisfied as I am. I earn so much money every day, is this not sufficient?' have nothing to reach up to. In spite of all the faults and errors of the ancient peoples they at any rate always kept this thought alive.

There is a story of a dervish, who was standing in the middle of the street when the procession of the king came along. First the pages who ran before the procession pushed him and said, 'Don't you see the king is coming? Away!' The dervish smiled and said, 'That is why.' Then he went forward again and stood in the same place. When the horsemen, the bodyguard, arrived they said, 'Get out of the way, the procession is coming!' The dervish smiled and said, 'That is why.' Then the courtiers came and saw the dervish standing there. And instead of telling the dervish to get out of the way they moved their horses a little to one side. And again the dervish said, 'That is why.' Finally came the king. When the king saw the dervish he greeted him first and the dervish in answer said, 'That is why.' An intelligent young man who had seen and heard this asked, 'What do you mean by saying this? And the dervish said, 'You can see, that is why they are what they are!'

We have wiped this ideal from our minds. Where is the real democracy? The kingliness of greeting the dervish first, that is democracy. But when a man who is not evolved is pulling the most evolved down to his level, that is the wrong democracy; it is going downward instead of going upward. If mannerlessness and thoughtlessness can be democracy it takes away its real ideal and true spirit. Democracy is the result of Aristocracy; when the spirit of aristocracy has evolved enough then it becomes democracy. Then a person thinks, 'I am the equal of any person in the world; there is no person lower than me; ' but if a person says, 'There is no one higher than me,' that is not democracy.

I will give an example of true democratic religious feeling. The people of Burma are Buddhists, and they are of a wonderful type. Here you will find the one race who for centuries has believed that there is no religion inferior to others. Just think of it today, when the followers of a particular religion look down upon the followers of any other religion! But these people say, 'Whatever be the religion, Christian, Muslim, or Jewish, it is not worse than ours. Perhaps it is even better.' This is something wonderful, but when a person says, 'No one is better than I,' that is not democracy; it is going down, for it means closing our eyes to that which is greater, higher, and better. And if we cannot appreciate cannot see, then we cannot rise to it. We can only rise towards that which we value and to which we aspire.

If, instead of telling people simple things like this, I were to speak about the occult power, psychic power, spirit communication, breathing practices, they would be glad to hear me. But suppose one did not develop personality, what about spirituality? A man should first of all be a person; then only should he be spiritual. If he is not a person then what is the use of being spiritual? Man is born to fulfill the purpose of his life; he is made to be a man, a

human being, a man who can be relied upon, a man whose word can be accepted, who uses thought and consideration, to whom we can entrust our secret; a man who under all conditions will never humiliate himself, who will never go back on his word, who will not deceive or cheat anybody; a man who will carry out what he has once undertaken. All these qualities make a man a human being. Today our condition is such that we cannot believe each other's word. We have to have a stamp on a contract. Why are we in such a state? Because we are not evolving toward that great ideal which the ancient people had, that is why we cannot trust each other individually, that is why nations cannot trust each other. Human beings live only in order to exist from day to day, to strive and work for a loaf of bread. That is all. But is it all? If it is only to earn a loaf of bread we do no better than dogs and cats.

Rich and poor, all are wretched in every walk of life, because there is nothing but competition between individuals, nations, parties, and communities. We have made our life wretched. What are we here for? If we were only born to meditate and to be spiritual then we had better go into the forest or to the mountain caves; then it would not be necessary to remain in the world. And if we only had to live as animals do then we could do as worldly people are generally doing today, and accomplish nothing. Therefore the first necessity for those who are seeking after truths is to develop the spirit of personality. I remember a quotation: 'If one has gold and jewels it means nothing; if one has no personality they are valueless than wealth. How strange it is that there is such a large population in this world, and that there are so few personalities. It is as the Greek philosopher said, who was going about with a lantern in daylight, and when people asked him what he was looking for he answered, 'For a human being.'

This subject has only been overlooked; it is not that man is not capable of understanding it. Man is capable of it more than ever before, because he has so much to suffer. This life as we live it is a most painful life. It crunches and grinds him to make him a better man. If he gave his thought to it he would profit by it and would become a better person. In ancient times people underwent different ordeals, trials and tests. We today do not need to do this. We have other trials today; we do not need to seek for them. If we only knew how to profit by them! At this time, when every little bone and piece of skin of every animal is used for something, we yet do not make use of our own life's experience, which is more precious than anything else. If there is news of an oil-well or a gold- and silver-mine everyone is interested, but people are not interested in this gold- and silver-mine, this mine of jewels and gems, the cultivation of which will produce all that can be produced! They do not think about the most valuable thing of all. Nevertheless, the great gurus and teachers of all times have put much emphasis on this one point, that those who wish to seek after truth must above all give their thought and mind to the development of personality.

## **SUFI PSYCHOLOGY**

THERE is much in our lives that depends upon suggestions, suggestions which come from outside, either consciously or unconsciously, as well as suggestions which come to us from ourselves. The superstitions which existed in ancient times and which still exist in some countries tell us something of the psychology of suggestion. If a person saw a certain bird, a certain animal, before beginning his work, that impression affected his work. If a man, when starting some business or industry or new enterprise, met with an unpleasant incident or a disagreeable person, naturally this brought him ill luck. On the other hand, if he encountered desirable conditions and people with good influence his whole life might be changed. People called this superstition; in fact it is a science, it is the psychology of impressions. It is in accordance with every impression, which is made on us that our life works.

The greatest impression is made by the word. The Bible says, 'In the beginning was the Word...and the Word was God,' which tells us of the creative power of the word: that the word is as creative as God Himself. In the East, in good families, children were taught when quite young to avoid words which might cause ill luck; such expressions as boys use, 'I will kill you,' 'I will shoot you,' or as is used by girls, 'I wish I were dead,' 'I wish that it was all destroyed.' The children were taught never to use words with a destructive meaning; for as far as we know at a certain time a universe may be connected with the word of man, and the word he speaks may come true. If he had spoken of something he did not wish to happen it would have been better not to have said it. People do not think about this. They say things as a joke, things that might cause serious trouble in their lives or in the lives of their friends, not realizing how great is the power of words in our lives. Therefore the great teachers have made a science of words, so that the repetition of certain words a definite result can be produced in one's character, in one's circumstances, or even that a person can help another by the use of a certain word.

Man's character can be changed by the repetition of certain words, entirely changed; the results brought about by their repetition are wonderful. Thus suggestion often proves to be the secret of a miracle. It is a field which still remains unexplored by science, and the more man gets to know about it, perhaps in five centuries from now, the

more he will begin to believe that behind suggestion the spirit of God is hidden, the secret of the whole of creation.

Now coming to the question of attraction and repulsion, why are we drawn towards some people, and why do we feel repulsion in regard to others? I would say that it is the same with souls as with notes in music. It is their combination, which makes the notes either harmonious or inharmonious; it is not the notes themselves. Every note is harmonious enough if put with other harmonious notes, the notes which blend and make a consonant chord. Therefore it is wrong to say. 'That person is inharmonious,' or 'harmonious.' It is the blending of persons that proves either harmonious or inharmonious in accordance with their grouping.

It is the same with color. No color is inharmonious, however striking or however pale. If it is in its right place, if it is well blended with other colors, it is harmonious; it is inharmonious if it is not put next to colors that blend with it. And it is exactly the same with human nature. The wise person can get on with another who is near to him in wisdom, or he can get on with a foolish person; but a wise man has difficulty getting on with the semi-wise, because the semi-wise make it difficult for him. With a strong person another who has strength himself will get on all right, as well as the one who is quite feeble, but not the half-strong. This proves to us that there are two principles to be understood. The person must either be of the opposite quality, or he must be of the same quality to blend harmoniously with the other. In other words, with a black coat either a black tie will be worn or a white tie; when the tie is of another color then there is disharmony.

The reason why the same quality is attracted is that like attracts like. Water attracts water, fire attracts fire; all elements attract their like, so every person attracts his like. A thief, wherever he goes, will find another thief; wherever a gambler goes he finds another gambler; wherever a drunkard goes he finds another man who drinks. And it is extraordinary that very often the first person these people will meet when they come to town will be of their own kind; they attract each other unconsciously. If they are traveling they will be sitting in the same compartment, brought together by destiny. The wicked will be attracted by another wicked person, just at the meeting of a glance. They instantly become friends. But if a person is half-wicked he will not get along with the wicked one, although the wicked might get along well with a good person because then he finds his opposite. The reason for the attraction of opposites is that the one lacks what the other has, and therefore one has power over the other.

Then there is the law of positive and negative forces. Where there are two people of positive nature there is always trouble, nor can two people of negative nature get along either. But a positive person can get along with someone who is negative, because the negative person needs what the positive has. A talkative person is never happy with another talkative person; he wants someone who will listen to him

Besides these laws there is an attraction of quality. There is a noble quality in every person, and there is a common quality. A noble quality is repulsed by commonness, and the common quality is irritated by the noble quality. It is such an amazing thing to see that someone of noble quality can be repulsed by a person of common quality. He gets irritated and cannot stand it, for the one quality cannot be compared with the other. It is the same with the quality of sincerity and that of insincerity. An insincere person is as antagonistic to a sincere person as a sincere person is to one who is insincere. The insincere cannot conceive of another being sincere; even if he saw it he could not believe it, because he does not know anything except insincerity.

Among Hindus there is a custom, a custom which still exist, that when a marriage is contemplated a Brahmin is consulted, a special priest, and he comes with his books of horoscopes. And after he has made his calculations he decides whether the marriage can take place or not. But in reality the drawing of the horoscopes is an excuse. He is a psychologist, and he considers the question whether the two who are to be married have the same qualities.

The Brahmins conceived of three qualities: Manusha, Deva, and Rakshasa, which means the human quality, the angelic quality, and the animal quality. The one left out was the devilish quality; may be they did not have it at that time! And then they saw if the two young people who were going to marry both belonged to Manusha, Deva, or Rakshasa; and if they found that for instance the girl was of the angelic quality and the man of the animal quality, then they thought, 'It will never go right'; and they advised against the marriage. But if they thought that the man was of human quality then they allowed it, because then there was only a difference of one degree, not of two degrees. The great and countless difficulties that are experienced today in marriage come from lack of consideration of these qualities. There is now a kind of false conception of equality; everyone says 'I am as good as you,' but therefore there is no chance to be better.

I shall always remember an old man in India telling me, 'The moment you think you are good, learned, wise, you close your heart's door to goodness, learning, and wisdom.' The spirit of today is that a child begins to say, 'I know what you do not know.' There is no regard for the idea that another knows more, there is no appreciation of it. It is because something is missing in education; the children are not taught that way. What they are taught is self-pride, and even that is a false quality. True pride should be based upon a stronger foundation: the nobility of the soul. False pride must break on day or another. That is why the consideration of individuality seems to be lost.

A poet once said, 'Lord let me not live in a world where camphor, cotton, and bone are all considered white.' Now our world is becoming more and more like that every day. If there is a distinction it is of money, or rank, of position, but not of human quality. The real distinction is not recognized; if there is any disparity it is what sort of house one lives in, what position one holds, or how much money one has in the bank. Therefore instead of evolving mankind is losing its opportunity.

## THE MEANING OF FAITH

OFTEN people use the word 'faith' in the sense of the particular religion they follow, whether they belong to the Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, or another religion. And in this way they obscure the real meaning of faith, which is light itself. Faith is not necessarily a belief, but faith is the culmination of belief. Belief is a conception; a conception which one has formed oneself or a conception of a certain idea arrived at by reading something. A person will hold this belief as long as his reason is not strong enough to root it out, or as long as he does not meet someone who will dig it out, or as long as he has not had an experience which entirely destroys it. How many does one see in the world around, counting spiritual words on their rosary, sitting in churches with eyes closed, worshipping every Sunday; and yet when someone who is more intellectual and whose reasoning is more powerful meets them he is able to change them completely. From being orthodox such a person has become a practical man, from a dreamer he has become wide-awake!

No doubt one belief can be stronger than another. A sheep-like belief is a belief, which everyone holds without admitting it. People think that they have a reason for believing that which they believe, but this is not always so. Often a person thinks that he has a reason for something, but he may be wrong. Religious questions apart, when one comes to political matters, a man may be raised up by one person's influence and the whole country follows him; he becomes the man of the day. Everyone follows him with his eyes shut. But then he may be despised by someone else and the crowd despises him too. That is crowd psychology. At the same time everyone says, 'I am an intellectual. I always tell the truth for I know what I am speaking about.' But is it so? It is not. When I went to Russia I saw pictures of the Czar and the Czarina in every little shop. Do you think the people did not have a feeling of adherence to the Czar? Was it all hypocrisy? It could not have been. And what happened the next day? They broke the crowns in the street with hammers and carried them in their processions. Where had that belief gone, which on day was so great that they thought that the portrait of their Czar was sacred? Next day the belief was changed; it took no time. You may think, 'This happened in Russia'; but you will see it in every country just by studying the psychology of the crowd.

Therefore wise people have never depended upon the praise of the crowd. They have always known that it was worth nothing. Buddha, with all the worship and praise given to him did not even look at it. He kept his work before his eyes, his service to humanity, and so did all the sages and prophets and seers and thinkers; they never believed in the praise of mankind, in its love and affection. What is it? The man who has not reached the realm of faith is not living; he does not yet know his mind. One day he believes something, the next he does not. Therefore faith is not only adherence to a certain religion or belonging to a certain church; faith is much greater than that.

The next step on the path of belief is that one does not believe something because the crowd believes it, but because it comes from a certain authority. This is the child's belief, but at the same time this is the way one has to go. The child progresses when the mother says, 'This is called water,' and it repeats, 'Water.' It does not argue and say, 'It is not water, it is bread.' It just listens and believes and that is the way it begins to learn.

Then there is the third step, when the belief has a reason, when one says, 'Why do I believe? Because I have a reason for it. I can explain my belief; therefore I believe it is such and such.' This belief is more dependable. Yet, is reason always dependable? Reason sometimes proves to be so tricky that one day a person may reason out a certain thing, and the next day he has every reason to root out his belief. For is it not reason that makes the evildoer commit evil? No one does anything without reason. One day a person reasons how to do something, and after only a couple of hours he may discover that it was not a good reason.

But there is a fourth belief, which alone can really be called belief, a belief which does not even depend upon reason, a belief which is a natural belief; one cannot help having it. Nothing can root it out, no argument, no reasoning, no study, not practice, nothing can take away from one, for it is a natural belief. This is what faith is. A person who has not reached this belief is still on the way, and he cannot say that he has faith.

Faith is such a great virtue. Even in everyday life one cannot value enough a companion, a relative, a servant, or a friend who is faithful. There is no price for it, it is beyond price to have someone who is faithful, someone in whom one can have confidence, upon whom one can rely with closed eyes, of whom one can say that one is sure that he will never change his affection, his love, his kindness, his right feeling. If one has someone like this one should be most thankful, for it is more precious than any worldly treasure.

If I had to describe the meaning of faith I would say that faith means self-confidence. The secret of faith is that it can be used as a medicine and better than medicine, as wealth and greater than wealth; it can be religion and greater than religion, happiness and greater than happiness. For nothing can buy or sell faith. If there is anything that can be called the grace of God it is faith and self-confidence. It is something one can neither teach nor develop; it must be in one, and it can only be strengthened by loving it, by enjoying it. It develops by itself. If a person comes to me and says, 'I believe in you so much that I will believe anything you say; but I do not believe in myself,' I will say, 'Thank you, I will not believe in you either. You had better believe in yourself first; then I can depend upon you.' What kind of belief is this? If a man does not believe in himself he will say one day, "I believe in you," and the next day, 'I do not believe in you.' Besides, faith is inspiring, faith causes a man to be brave, courageous, successful, and faith makes life wonderful.

Faith can be observed in five different aspects: faith in one's impulses, faith in one's reason, faith in one's principle, faith in one's ideal, and faith in God.

It is the mystical temperament that causes a person to have faith in his impulse. When a mystic thinks, 'I must go to the North,' he goes there. He does not ask himself why; he accepts the divine impulse, and he goes toward the North to meet whatever he may. If an impulse arises to do this business, to enter this profession, accomplish this or that, and a person does it there is something wonderful about it. Columbus is an example of this. He had the impulse to go and seek for India, and indeed he found a continent. The outer form of the impulse was wrong, but the inner right.

The mystics of all ages have believed in this. They cannot help it; it is the mystical temperament. If a thousand people say, 'No, it is not right,' they say. 'Yes, it is right, I must do it.' It is not necessary for everybody to become a mystic in order to have these impulses and listen to them. Listening to one's impulses is a question of temperament. There may be one man who has it, and another, perhaps a very intellectual man, thinks, 'Is it right or wrong? Shall I do it or shall I not do it?' And the time passes and the chance is lost. Out of a hundred people only one will follow his impulse, and ninety-nine will wait to see if something is right or wrong, light or heavy.

The second aspect is faith in reason. The success of great inventors such as Edison depends upon faith in reason. If they had not had this faith they would not have been able to create successfully, but by having it they made wonderful inventions.

The third aspect of faith is faith in one's principle. Principle makes one strong, if only one has faith in it. There is a story of the young Prophet, who was taking care of the cows on a farm. When some young men of his own age came and said, 'Mohammad, come along, we are going to town to have a good time!' Mohammad answered, 'No, I will take care of your cows and you go and have a good time, I won't leave my cows.'

With this principle the Prophet began; and eventually the same principle made him what he was, so that thousands and millions of people for fourteen centuries have held the name of the Prophet as their strength and power.

And then there is faith in the ideal. Those who had a high ideal for the welfare of their nations, or their race, of humanity, held their lives cheap. To give their life was nothing to them; their ideal was always greater. Not every man has faith in his ideal, but it gives great power and uplift, and raises a man from earth to heaven.

Finally there is faith in God. People may say, 'Is it not imagination to have faith in God?' But he who really has faith in God can work wonders. Someone said to a Brahmin, 'How foolish, O Brahmin, to worship an idol, calling it God!' The Brahmin answered, 'If you have no faith and you worship the God who is in heaven He will not hear

you. But if I have faith I will make this God of stone speak to me.'

A preacher once told his audience, 'When you speak the Name of God with true faith you can walk on waters.' There was a farmer standing there who was very pleased to hear this. He went home pondering upon it. Next day he went to the preacher and said, 'I could not understand all the dogmas and morals you preached, but one thing impressed me very much. Will you do me the great honor of having dinner with me? The preacher accepted, and the farmer said he would come to fetch him the next day. This, the farmer did, and on their way they came to a river which they had to cross. So the preacher said, 'Where is the boat?' The farmer said, 'Boat?' You taught me that if we pronounced the name of God we could walk on the water! Therefore I did not take my boat but walked on water, as you said.' The preacher was very much afraid that he would have to walk on water, too, for he had never tried this. He said, 'Will you do it, please? And the farmer did; but the preacher could not.

Such is the phenomenon of faith. We may say, 'We have so much to do, so much to think about.' But to have faith is beyond all this; it is something which words cannot explain, something which springs up from the heart and which elevates man, raising him from the earth to the sky.

## **THE UNIVERSE IN MAN**

IF one would ask what is the cause of all misery in life, the answer would be that there is one cause only and that is the limitation of life. Misery, pain, or sorrow of any kind comes from limitation; and this has been found out by all the prophets and teachers of humanity. When Buddha was young he saw that there was great pain in the world, and his first thought was to find out what was behind it; and so it has been with all the great teachers. They all wanted to solve this one question, to find out what is the cause of all misery.

The answer is this: if a person who lives in poverty is given all the money he wants, is he then perfectly happy? Or a sick man may have become well again, but is it enough for him to be well or does he want more? This shows that man is always searching for something, he does not know what. And when he tries to find out what he is looking for he thinks that it must be the thing, which he lacks in life. But if that which was lacking is given to him, then he wants something else. Well this shows that it is not only greed or a defect in man; it indicates a great mystery in his soul, and that mystery is that the soul of man has all that it needs, and yet it has lost it. The story of Adam's exile tells us of this: by the exile of man is meant that which man lacks in life.

What remedy did the teachers of humanity find at last? They discovered that in the depths of man was the universe itself, that man was a universe in himself. And when we look at it more closely by throwing a spiritual light upon this question, we shall find that the entire mineral kingdom, rock, stone, diamond, or ruby, it all to be found in man. There is a kind of man who is just like a rock. There is the heart of man, which is just like a ruby. The more you study this the more you will realize that everything that is to be found in the mineral kingdom, rock, stone, diamond, or ruby, is all to be found in man. You will find the fire of sulfur in man's mentality, and you will find the resonance of the metal of the gong or bell in the heart of man. You will find the quality of sandalwood in the character of man, and you will find the value of the pearl in his intelligence. Fruit and flower, everything there is in the world, all is to be found in a man's character. And chemically speaking you will even find that in the body of man the essence of all things is to be found.

Also, when we think of the sun and the moon, and of the stars and planets, we find that even the essence of these is to be found in man. It is this science that was known to the ancient people as alchemy, from which the word chemistry is derived. But the science of the ancients was concerned with the understanding or the study of man, of his body and of his mind. All other sciences they studied came from this particular science called alchemy. They discovered that all of man's searches for outwardly he can find inwardly through the knowledge of this science.

Of course, a person might then ask if we find all the objects or things that we can get in the world in ourselves. I will say, yes; even this is possible if one has come into touch with one's self. I can give you an example of a man whom I have known who lacked a certain quality in his blood. The scientists and physicians had given up all hope of saving him, for without this quality he could not get better. By giving him injections they sometimes made him feel better, but his sensation of improvement was only outward, and therefore it could not last. Then this man began studying and practicing this science of which I am speaking, and after two or three years he found that that quality which had been lacking in his blood was now coming by itself.

Human nature is very much inclined towards what is called intoxication. The reason is that this intoxication gives a



man a certain relaxation and temporary comfort. But to gain this comfort and relaxation he depends upon something from outside, and by doing so he becomes a slave to something which is outside himself. I have seen many mystical or spiritual people who practice this experience and they call it ecstasy; it is however not a real ecstasy or intoxication although it may seem to have the same effect, for a real intoxication does not take away one's vitality and it never causes illness. On the contrary, it gives greater health and greater strength; that is why you will always find that the health and strength of a mystic who knows and practices this science are in perfect order.

The aim of this science is to come to the understanding that the whole universe is to be found in man. It is a science intended to make a person self-sufficient. For whatever man possesses, though he may be called rich or considered comfortable, this is only his possessions; it is not himself. The enriching of the self is the real riches; and to develop this power in oneself is the real, dependable power. Besides, what is called intellectuality today is mostly book reading. A man goes on reading and reading for many years, and when his head has become tired he knows only what has been written in the books he has read. I have often seen people who have read a whole library, or had written many books, but if you asked them one question about life they could not answer it. It is not books that can teach us; it is life that is the greatest teacher, but when the mind is engaged with books then one is not open to read life.

When I left India and went straight to New York my greatest astonishment was to see that in every train, bus, or car, every man had a newspaper in his hand. And what is a newspaper generally for? To amuse the most ordinary man in the street. Once a reporter came to see me and asked me about my philosophical ideas, I explained some of them to him; but the next day when I read his newspaper, I saw that everything that I had said was turned upside down. I was most disappointed. I went to the journalist and said, 'What did I tell you, and what did you make of it?' He said, 'If I had written in the paper what you said nobody would understand it. We have to please the man in the street.' Now imagine a professor, a doctor, a lawyer, and a businessman, all reading the same thing that the man in the street reads! This shows where man's thought is today. What he calls education is only book-learning; but what we need today is learning from life, for if we want to gain a thorough education it can only be gained by a keen observation of life.

The most important subject to study in this whole life is ourselves. What we generally do is to criticize others, speak ill of them, or dislike them; but we always excuse ourselves. The right idea is to watch our own attitude, our own thought and speech and action, and to examine ourselves to see how we react upon all things in our favor and in our disfavor, to see whether we show wisdom and control in our reactions or whether we are without control and thought. Then we should also study our body, for by this we should learn that the body is not only a means of experiencing life by eating and drinking and making ourselves comfortable, but that it is the sacred temple of God.

Besides, this breath which we breathe from morning till evening, we hardly consider what mystery is behind it. This one subject is of such great importance that if we really studied this science we would be able to understand the whole thing. Yet this is the very thing of which everyone seems to be ignorant. People never think about it; they think we breathe and that is all, and they do not know how and why. In point of fact there is something in the breath which connects the body with the soul, and the day when the breath leaves the body this connection is broken. The body remains on the earth, and the soul goes on; and therefore that which links the soul and body together must be of the greatest importance. The man who knows how to breathe and how to communicate with his soul begins to realize that the universe is within himself, and it is through realizing the universe in himself that man comes to real spirituality. Even in the Bible there is a hint about this science, though it is generally not interpreted in this way. I mean where it is said, 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.' If there is the possibility for the soul to attain perfection that perfection lies in realizing the universe in man.

The secret of this is that we are as small and narrow as the horizon of our consciousness. And if our consciousness rises above these barriers which make us small we naturally become wide, and we naturally become great. Therefore spiritual perfection is attained by concentration and meditation. In the Western world today there is the school of the Sufi Movement, so that people need not go to the East in order to search for these things; and so that the same mystery, in a modified form-in order not to hinder their busy life- may be given to the Western people who can be trusted with it. For a Western person has many responsibilities in his life; he does not have time to meditate and to concentrate. Yet if a man of the West finds time for cricket or billiards, he can just as well find time for meditation and concentration, If he only believed in its benefits he would certainly do his best to spare some time for this most valuable thing. No doubt it is not at all our wish to awaken those who are asleep. Those who are asleep had better sleep, because for them sleep is good; they need sleep and they should sleep. But to those

who are tossing in their beds, who are trying to get up, we offer our hands to help them to rise. It is this wish we call initiation in the esoteric school of Sufism. Sufism is not something secret; only, as not everybody can understand it, we do not wish to give it to everybody to ridicule it. It is only entrusted to those serious people who will steadily go on in the path of divine wisdom.

The Sufi Movement is a society of members from all the nations of the world, and the task they have is to serve in the cause of bringing people together, making them meet in wisdom. If we come together it is not for the sake of business or politics or industry, for that is a transient, not a stable unity. The stable unity lies in the understanding of the truth of life, in which we can all become friends. Two people who understand life well become closer than brothers; they become greater friends than any other friendship can produce. There is nothing that divides them, neither nationality nor race nor any other difference. But this task is only intended for those who are seriously inclined towards the understanding of the deeper side of life.

## WEALTH

WEALTH has always proved to be a central object in the life of the world, an object towards which every mind is naturally attracted and which can solve most of the problems of life. However earthly they may seem, all things become good or bad by their use or abuse. In all ages man has made coins of gold, and there man proves again his soul's longing for light, for gold is the color of light and among metals gold reflects the light most. In the Qur'an it is said, 'All that we have created on earth and in heaven is for thy use,' which means: not for you to fear it or hate it or to renounce it, but to use it. It is easy for the poor to ridicule wealth and the wealthy, but once the poor man possesses wealth then the question is whether he holds it or throws it away.

We realize from this that it is important that man should learn first in his life the right use of wealth. This problem can be solved by first considering the question from all points of view, from the moral as well as from the psychological, and also from the social and political point of view: in what way wealth can be rightly acquired. The present chaotic state of the whole world is caused by the lack of this particular knowledge. Today man only knows one thing: he needs money, he must acquire money, and if he has money he must hold on to it. But still the question remains: why does he need money, how can he acquire money, and for what purpose shall he acquire it? Through lack of this knowledge both rich and poor are at a loss. The rich everywhere are anxious to hold what they have and are nervous; for if conditions go on as they are now, what will happen tomorrow? Their heart is not at rest, even with money locked up in their safe. The moneyless, striving every moment of their life to possess all that the wealthy have got, win it perhaps at the cost of the destruction of a nation or race, of a moral code, or of culture and beauty and goodness. They only think of how to achieve this and how to take the wealth away from those who now possess it, but not how far they are justified in having the wealth which belongs to another, nor what use they will make of this wealth. This fight for life has so blinded humanity today that man is intoxicated in the struggle of life. He has no time to think of anything else, yet a thorough study of the problem from all points of view is the first thing necessary, and it can be the greatest help in living a better life and in doing good to one's fellow-men.

Money being the principal thing for which man toils, he should know the best way to acquire it. He must first judge his talent, his capability, his art, profession, or work. He must judge fairly, without a personal thought, what he really deserves for what he does. Everyone is blind to this. A person only thinks of what another man earns, how very rich another person is, and how good it would be if he were in his place. Today man's cry for democracy is in order to pull down another man from his high place, instead of taking enough trouble to rise to high places by his own efforts and with the justification in his own conscience of deserving that place. Whatever man earns in life, and however great and rich he becomes through it, without the development of the sense of justice he is like a blind man. Externally a wealthy man seems enviable, but in point of fact, if one only knew his true condition, one would not envy his circumstances for a moment, for they not only blind him but blind those who surround him too; he has not only enemies among his adversaries, but he has enemies among his dearest friends. He may have an enemy in his brother or sister, in his wife or child. It is not their fault; it is that wealth is blinding. When a man develops his qualification, his merit, his talent, and when by that right he earns his living, he is quite justified in demanding what he really deserves. But man cannot be very just when there arises the question of self; therefore, he must also be open to compare his idea of his qualifications with the opinion of others, and he should be ready to recognize the superiority of someone else's qualifications.

In business the honor of the word is the first lesson that every businessman should learn. Honor in business is the first commercial virtue. At the same time, to fight avarice is the duty of every businessman, and also to think of the advantage of both sides, of himself and of his customer. In modern trade, externally there is little bargaining, but

the bargaining spirit still exists inwardly. Business today is a battle between buyer and seller, the one wanting to succeed at the expense of the other. Therefore it is not a business; it is a battle, and a battle mostly results in destruction. Now, after all the profiteering during the war years, is there peace in the commercial world? Every businessman is crying out with grievances, no matter to what country he may belong. This shows that in reality it is the profit of each, which is the profit of all. Whether in art, industry, labor, the professions, or commerce, one thing must be kept in view, and that is consideration for others, with an eye open for justice and fairness.

Today there is great conflict between capital and labor. The capitalists wish labor to be under their control and to work for their profit, so that they depend solely upon the power of capital. This spirit of selfishness, reacting upon the mind of the workman, revolts against the profit that the capitalist makes. The consequence is that this selfishness on both sides causes trade to dwindle. On one side the war has destroyed lives and wealth and food that nature had supplied for humanity, while the remaining destruction is caused by this dwindling. If labor absorbs all the capital, then the capital is in the hands of labor; however, the evolution of life in every direction, social, educational, moral, or religious, mostly depends on the mentality of those who are well off.

There is a side issue of the present state of affairs, which is its natural consequence, and that is the difference between the circumstances of a man who works with his hands and those of one who works with his head. Today, as conditions are, an intellectual man has the greatest struggle to live, and if they continue thus it will mean the ruination of the intellect in general, and instead of evolving the world will naturally go backward. The answer to the question whether the work of the hands deserves more wages than the work of the head, depends on whether the hand rules the mind or the mind rules the hand. Just now man is going from bad to worse. Doctors, professors, thinkers, teachers, poets and learned people have hardly enough money to live on, as labor demands higher wages than intellect does. Unions of workmen have spread all over the world, all in this way the conflict between the intellectual and the labor world becomes sharper every day.

Now the question is, what can the solution of this problem be? Can the workman be at the same time a capitalists? Can a man who works with his hands not be a thinker at the same time? The answer will be: not necessarily, since for everything certain conditions are necessary. If the workman is a capitalists he is no longer a workman. While working, if he is going over his accounts in his mind he will spoil his work. Can a man of action be a man of thought at the same time? This is difficult too. Can a man be running after trains and buses and write poetry at the same time? For poetry he wants tranquility of mind, comfort, ease. What is possible is this one thing; that the workman should have every opportunity to become a capitalist. In this way he could know both; how to be a workman and how to be a capitalist. The man who works with his hands should have the opportunity to develop intellectually. Every working man should be given a chance, so that if he has the faculty in him to become a thinking man he may grow up to become a thinking man, and so that he will not die at his work.

There are two methods of progress, one right and the other wrong. The right way is to give equal opportunity to each to rise to his highest ideal; and the wrong way is when a man, revolted by present conditions, pulls down another who seems to him on any kind of eminence in the life of the world, so as to bring everyone down to the same level. This latter idea of equality can be pictured as a piano of which the strings are loosened to the same tone, perhaps of the lowest key. When each key sounds the same note, it cannot be a piano any more.

The present tendency of man seems to be to try to pull another down instead of himself rising to the place where the other is. It takes a long time to build, but it takes only a moment to destroy a thing. It is the rising to the height, which is difficult; it is not difficult to walk down the slope. Man today seems to seek the way of least resistance; to strive to rise needs patience and perseverance. Thus in order to become equal with others he wants to pull the others down to his own level.

There is a great deal of talk going on in the world just now about communism. Yet if communism is devoid of a spiritual ideal, it could be only a change of condition on the surface. The extreme principles which man wishes to introduce in the form of communism may have the effect of destroying individual beauty and culture. There is more uniformity to be seen in the West than in the East. No doubt it has worked to the great advantage of the West, but at the sacrifice of individual progress; no thoughtful person can deny this. Great personages in any country of the East or West have become so by their individualistic progress, and it is the law of uniformity, which hampers the progress of an individual. It also hampers the progress of art in all its forms, in architecture, in music, in poetry; for the majority pulls the minority back from progress. Under present conditions the man above is enjoying his place, and he tries in every way to prevent others from rising to his pedestal. The man who stands below is therefore waiting for every opportunity to pull him down.

A world where such a conflict exists between classes cannot promise harmony, order and peace; and a definite change is necessary in the attitude of both classes. The struggle between higher and middle class is a story of the past; it hardly exists any more. Today's conflict is between what is called the intellectual man and the working man. The solution to this problem is every community should provide adequately for the five principal needs of every individual: food, clothes, a roof, education, and medicine. It is intolerable to think that many are dying without food and clothes. If humanity would open its eyes to the most critical moment that has ever come to the world, the solution of this problem would become its first task.

Now the question is, how can this be arranged? It might be conveniently provided if only those who have an income higher than what is necessary to live comfortably would give half of this to the community; and if those who leave their property to their children would leave half of this property to the community. Otherwise if this question is not considered, the present revolt of the average man will end in violence and the destruction of art, morals, religion, beauty, and culture.

When religion decays, when materialism reigns, and when commercialism pervades all the world, it is then that man overlooks the fact of how he acquires his wealth, and his only object is to become wealthy. It is then that all manner of unhappiness breeds in the multitude and among individuals. Man is not only a child in his childhood, but he remains a child in many things all through life. There are things that man can digest, and there are things he cannot digest; it depends from what source they come. The Prophet calls wealth that can be digested Halal, and the wealth that cannot be digested he calls Haram. It is not the particular aspect of wealth that is digestible or indigestible, it is the attitude with which man has acquired it. It makes a great difference whether one acquires it honestly or dishonestly, honorably or dishonorably, by force or by work.

Money rightfully earned must certainly bring peace, but money earned by causing pain to another, by ruining the life of another, by dishonestly or by injustice, man cannot digest. It is not a question of having wealth; it is a question of living happily with wealth. Today the average man has no education of that kind. He toils through the day and looks for his wages in the evening. Perhaps he goes to church once a week, but this education still remains to be given. The man with wealth has so many things with which to occupy his life that he hardly thinks about these things. Yet the life of a wealthy person is perhaps more unhappy than that of a working man. At the root of this whole question a psychological secret lies hidden; how did one earn one's wealth?

Now coming to the use of wealth, there is a door to man's heart; it is either closed or open. When he holds a thing and says, 'This is mine,' he closes the door to his heart; but when he shares his goods with others and says, 'This is yours as well as mine,' this opens his heart. We must learn consideration for others; it does not matter whether they are rich or poor. We may have only one slice of bread, but when there is another sitting by our side we share that slice with him. By doing this, even if our bodily appetite remains unsatisfied, our heart is filled with joy to think that we shared our happiness with another. It is this spirit, which is necessary just now to change the condition of the world, not political and commercial disputes. We must be awakened to the main truth, that the happiness and peace of each can only be the happiness and peace of all.

'The one, who earned and used what he has earned, had gained. The one who earned and collected, and departed, has lost,' says Sa'di. We learn from this that it is not only important to earn money, it is of greater importance to know how to use it. There are many in this world who possess wealth and yet are unhappy; they cannot profit by it themselves, nor can they benefit anyone else. The one who earns money and keeps it in the safe is not the possessor of that money; he is the doorkeeper of his treasure.

There are four different ways of spending money; by extravagance, by profiteering, by using it, and by saving it. No one can judge another man for his way of using money, but everyone can judge for himself for the method he employs in using what money he possesses. It is not necessary for a man to be rich in order to show these tendencies; even a poor man can be extravagant.

Extravagance has three forms. One is caused by ignorance: a simple man who does not know the value of money spends his pearls for pebbles. Another form of extravagance is when a man who is in charge of another person's money spends it without any qualms; he thinks that anyhow it is not his property. The third form of extravagance occurs when a man has no control over his will and is attracted by anything that appeals to his weakness; he then spends more than he should. But the one who is master over his will, who is a lover of beauty and generous of heart, even if he spent his last penny for his ideal he cannot be called extravagant, for he is the master. He who is not able to spend what he possesses is the servant of his wealth; he does not know life.

When a person demands more than the things he possesses are worth, when he wants to make more profit than he is really justified in making, when he strays away from fairness in his business dealings, that is profiteering. Although for the moment it may seem a profit, yet sooner or later it must end in a loss. That is because selfishness and injustice are plagues, and they are likely to spread. Thus a man who makes an excessive profit from one person will then be brought in contact with someone else who is cleverer than he, and who will try to make a still larger profit from him. This is not only a theory; it is the normal condition nowadays. The present state of trade and business is working more or less to the disadvantage of every nation.

The normal way of using money is to understand life's needs and necessities, and to preserve a right proportion between the earning and spending of money. One thing should always be kept in mind, and that is the thought that one does not exist alone; the world is beside one. Of course everybody is not in a position to help the world, but to think about it even for a few moments every day can awaken the spirit of beneficence, which is generally asleep in the heart of man.

No doubt charity begins at home. One's first duty is to consider those who depend upon one. He, who has no consideration for those who depend upon him, while perhaps being generous to others, certainly lacks a great virtue in life. Surely, as it is taught in the Bible, one's neighbor should be considered. Neighbor means friend, relative, fellow-country-men; and as long as one does not stop at this but extends one's consideration still further and reaches humanity, then there is no doubt that one progresses in life, in whatever condition one may be.

Saving certainly is a consideration, but there is a limit to it. In some cases saving is wise, but in other case it is avarice. It is a fact that the great gifts given to charitable works in the world mostly come from those who were wise enough to save. It depends whether one saves with a good intention, or only from a tendency to save. This tendency comes from considerations for tomorrow. From the practical point of view this consideration is necessary, and the philosophy of Omar Khayyam, to forget about tomorrow, only means to give up the extra worry and anxiety about tomorrow, as one also learns from the teachings of Christ, where he points to the lilies of the field. This teaching should not make a man careless, especially in the conditions of life today, but it should relieve a man who has nothing to save from the worry and anxiety about tomorrow.

## **THE MYSTERY OF TELEPATHY**

TO some, telepathy is a mysterious phenomenon, but to those who understand it, it is as easy and natural as ordinary conversation in our everyday life. Everyone can understand that thoughts have existence, and many scientists nowadays perceive that thoughts are made of vibrations, which mystics and sages have understood throughout the ages.

As the physical body is made up of physical atoms, so our mind is composed of vibrations; every activity of the mind is thought. Now thoughts are of two kinds. First there is imagination. This is an activity of the mind as well as thought, but in imagination the activity is not controlled by the will. When a person is resting in a chair without thinking about anything in particular, the mind has a habit of wandering. In this respect it is like a wild or untamed horse that runs off into the jungle at will. It goes off without knowing whither or why, for it is its habit just to wander about. So the imagination is not specially directed and wanders about on various lines just as it pleases, yet at the same time following the lines to which the mind is accustomed. This is why a musician's imagination naturally dwells on music and on musical things, and an artist's imagination on artistic things. A thief's imagination will dwell on how to rob and that of a writer on what he has been writing about. All this is imagination; that is, it is not controlled by the will.

This is what takes place in the average mind. From morning till evening the will is actively working on the lines to which the mind has become accustomed, the lines which the mind has already formed. For example, consider a person who is always thinking of construction, of how to construct a factory or how to build up a certain type of business. During this time he has been forming lines in this area of his mind or mental being. These lines are open to the imagination, and so the mind goes on working along the same lines which his thought has previously been following, even when he is not thinking specially of those subjects. He still follows the same line he has been thinking on.

The lines, which the will has made in the mind, are the directions along which the imagination unconsciously travels. As it is said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Secondly there is thought proper, when the power of the will is directing the activity of the mind. This explains the words "thoughtful" and "thoughtless". The thoughtful person is he whose will directs his mind, whether he is doing something or speaking or thinking. It is he whom people will call a thinker. But the one who does not control his action, speech, and thoughts by will is thoughtless; his thought is really imagination, his speech does not make sense, his actions become thoughtless and inconsiderate. In brief, these three things—thought, speech, and action—reveal the character of the thought. If they are controlled by the will they show thoughtfulness, but if they are not so controlled the person is called thoughtless.

Now we have been given two main faculties of perception: the senses of touch, smell, and taste, which form the lower senses, and the hearing and seeing faculties called Sami and Basir in Sufi terms, which are the higher or principal senses. These two groups both work with the physical body, the latter with the ears and eyes, but in reality they work in the mind; it is the mind which listens and sees. The mind is listening when it is aware of things without people telling us. We notice when a person is displeased. A person may say, "Thank you", and yet the mind perceives that he is not really thankful but is using these words as a formality, or even out of sarcasm. So it is the mind which discriminates; the ears of the mind listen. The more developed the mind is, the more it can listen even without help of the ears; it listens to another person's thought without the utterance of a sound. The mind can see the form of the thoughts and discriminate between them, and this is what a seer does; however, it is easier for the mind to perceive by hearing than by seeing.

This brings us to the subject of concentration. A person who is sitting with closed eyes is not necessarily concentrating; he may just be resting or he may be asleep. If he is dreaming, that is not concentration either. Concentration is an act of the will during which the mind sees, during which the seeing faculty of the mind acts as well as the hearing faculty. To concentrate well one should think of a hot pan in which the oil is always fluid, so that things cook quickly in it. Do not let that pan cool through extraneous occupations. If one's mind is strongly concentrated on one thing, whatever else comes in the way will be done as well.

Whereas our physical being uses five senses to perceive things, our mental being uses only two: seeing and hearing. When we visualize we see things with the help of the mind. It is not everyone who can visualize. When there is no power to visualize it is because things seen that way seem so vague and insubstantial compared with the things we see in the external world. It is difficult for us to think of such visualized things as real. Everything that is before our eyes and ears we consider to be real, whereas whatever comes before the mind's eye we regard as imagination, as something passing, as a dream. It is the same mind that perceives and hears the things of everyday life, yet what it perceives in the other way we think of as being just imagination, although it is actually these things which are the true realities.

To a mystic the reality of the external world is not more real than the reality on the mental plane, for just as the first is subject to change so all things on the mental plane are subject to change too.

Two conditions must be fulfilled before external vibrations can become audible. You hear me speak because there is no wall between you and myself. A wall prevents communication. Then when a person is speaking out in the open with the same pitch of voice as I use at this moment, you cannot hear his voice as well as mine, for the house we are in gives the sound a place to echo in and become clearly audible. Thus these are the conditions: first a current must be established, a channel or opening through which the sound or the words can reach another person; and secondly the sound must not be able to scatter in all directions, but it must be directed and concentrated towards the other, so that it can reach the inner or mental process which we call thought.

If we wish to retain thought, or transmit thought, we must learn the process of "throwing the ball" to hit a certain goal. We must direct our aim right, and we must put enough force in it to enable it to reach the goal. It is the force of the will that sends the thought to reach another person, and the aiming, whereby one focuses one's mental eye upon the other in telepathy, is concentration. In brief, two things are necessary for telepathy: strength of will and power of concentration.

There used to be a sage living in Hyderabad, and people went to him for help. But he never came out to see them unless he was in a mood to do so. So after a while people came to think of him as so disagreeable that they would not seek an interview unless they had great confidence in his power.

One day a man came and said, "My case is coming before the court, but I have no money, and so if I lose the case it will go hard with my children." Thereupon the sage wrote on a piece of paper the words, "I see nothing in this

case; I will dismiss it", and he told the man to go home and not trouble himself further about the matter. In due time the man went to court, and he answered all the questions put to him. The judge also asked various questions of the barrister on the opposite side, and finally he wrote down his opinion, using the exact words, which the sage had written down. What had the sage done? He had engraved on the mind of this judge the selfsame words that he had used.

What a wealth of power is latent in man, and yet his lack of confidence bars him from it! Sometimes he is afraid to offend his religious belief, sometimes he is afraid of unknown dangers, sometimes he may think he is offending friends, enemies, people in high places. But we are in this world not just to roam about and eat and drink and sleep and amuse ourselves, without ever getting to know and understand this world around us, to understand ourselves, to understand life and the powers latent in us, the inspiration and unused power. We may have become wholly absorbed in some power in our daily life, but this does not mean that we are to go no further towards the realization of our real self. No, if on the road along which we pursue our real self we meet with some realities and powers not before suspected, surely it is worth our while to take notice of them, to understand them, and to use them for a good purpose.

Mystics know that a certain moral evolution is necessary before a person can attain a certain power, so they do not teach it indiscriminately; this is not out of a desire to reserve a monopoly or to hold back something which they possess, but what will a child do if you give it a loaded rifle to play with? It does not understand what killing means. Yes, if we stop to examine our aims, our aspirations, the pursuits in life to which we attach such great importance, perhaps we shall discover that we are not very far removed from children. The world as a whole is not prepared or ready to use spiritual powers. The sages and mystics ask of someone, "Will he do real justice to the power if he has it?" This explains why they select a few awakened souls and leave the children to go on playing. They think it is a sin to take little children from their play when they wish to continue to play; why make them grave, serious, anxious, and sorrowful? Surely it is better for the present to give them more toys, more of the occupations they are so engrossed in, more of the sports they love so much.

In the East it is regarded as a sin to awaken a person from his sleep. Let him rest; he is comfortable; it is not yet time for him to wake up. So if one went and woke him up one would make him unhappy and even resentful. Let him go on sleeping till the time comes when he will wake up naturally. A person is asleep when he says that there is no such thing as telepathy, no such thing as heaven, no such thing as God. Let such a one be; he is not ready.

So the mystics do not talk openly about mysticism but keep their knowledge for few who have awakened. And when a person wakes up he will see for himself. The only purpose which the sage or the mystic fulfills is to take this person's hand when this happens, when he thinks "It is now his time to awaken; I must give him help." This is called initiation, and from that time a person is ready to enter into the mysteries of life.

Should everyone learn mysticism? The only difficulty in learning mysticism is man-made; it is not of God's making. The higher life is so much simpler than life on the surface of the earth, but man does not know what he is. He does not know that he is a drop on the surface of the ocean, and yet an ocean himself in his innermost part; that there is nothing that is not within him. A person who says to himself, "I do not possess this faculty", "I cannot put up with this", "I am sorry but I could not think of such a thing", and so forth, well, all these ideas are his imagination, part of the confusion of his thought and lack of understanding of what he is. If a person understood what he is he would never say, "I cannot do this." Instead he would become a real man, that which a man ought to be. The mystic only says, "I cannot" or "I have not" very seldom, and he believes these words still less often. When God is with you everything is with you; when God is in you everything is in you. Inspiration, knowledge, light, all are then within you. But if you find joy in confusion, if you confuse yourself and keep yourself in darkness, you may do so. However, you have inherited from the heavenly Father His inspiration, His Light, His power. You have inherited might from the Almighty God; you have inherited light from the Light of the universe. Therefore you are blessed with all these things, if you can only open your eye and see the blessing.

What is the sign that one is ready to awaken from sleep? It is when a person begins to think, "All that I have learned and understood seems so unreal; there are some realities of which I am vaguely aware, and yet compared with them all I have studied and done seems to be of no account." As the dawn comes after the night of darkness, so he sees light appearing; but he has not yet seen the sun; he is only beginning to awaken.

People think that life is simple: the things that seem good to them they believe to be good; the things that seem bad they just think are bad, and so on. But the time comes when a person asks himself in a bewildered manner whether

these things are really good or bad, whether the ideals of his people are really high or low. He is beginning to see things in a different light; he sees joy in sorrow and sorrow in joy, right in wrong and wrong in right, low in the high and high in the low. And at this point he does not know where to turn, so he has to speak to himself and unlearn what he has learned all his life. He discovers that there is a knowledge in the light of which everything appears the opposite to its previous appearance. In fact everything is different. It is like a person who admired a theatrical performance and found how different everything was the next morning. On awakening to the day, how different the view of the world becomes!

Before the awakening, man with his little knowledge thinks he knows so much, but now his pride is broken. He finds that all he has known hitherto is useless, that he has to begin all over again. But this is the very time when inspiration and power come. The power of concentration is the means by which to acquire not only the power of telepathy, but will power, moral power, inspirational power, moral courage, mental strength, physical strength, and all the different kinds of development in life. It is the first stage, and maybe it is the last stage, when a person's eyes open to real light.

There are three different steps in concentration: observation, concentration, and vision. Observation is developed by singleness of glance. For instance, if I look at a person I can see that one person much better than if I look at many people and it is thus with everything in life. The first step in learning mysticism is just this: to develop our observations. We are always looking at a hundred things around us, and hardly ever study one thing properly at all. To understand and know a thing better we must keep looking at it; if we keep looking at everything we look at nothing. Such is the law of observation.

The next step, concentration, implies steadiness of mind. We cannot concentrate until we have made the external part steady. Just think: can we keep our eye fixed on one spot for some time without moving it? Can we sit in one posture without fidgeting? Why, many people cannot sit still even for a photographer! This shows us that the vehicle given us to control and utilize is not completely in our power, and if the lowest vehicle we have is not in our power, though this is the simplest thing to control, how then can our mind be in our control? How can we acquire more pure and more powerful thoughts?

Various postures have been recommended to enable us to acquire control. The body has to be made our obedient servant first, and when the body has been subdued the mind will learn obedience from it, for order teaches order. The inner self cannot be in order if the external self is not in order, for our mind is always affected by the body. In order to learn to control the mind we must therefore first learn to control the body.

The third step is vision. When concentration had been mastered the vision becomes clear, and when the vision is clear we can aim clearly, like one who has learned to aim a ball at a certain spot and hit it. If he does not throw the ball properly how can it reach the goal? To hold the ball in our hand and aim it at and hit the desired goal we must master three things: observation, concentration, and vision.

## **THE DIVINE PRESENCE**

OUR relation to God can be understood in five different ways: in idealizing God, in recognizing God, in communicating with God, in realizing God, and in attaining Perfection.

**Idealizing God.** Every sincere and earnest believer in God experiences this stage. It is the stage in which he stands before God in humility and gentleness or with repentance for his sins and faults, or looking up to the heaven and asking for pardon. Whether the Being or Person he idealizes is much greater or only comparatively greater than himself, he understands that he is a mere drop in comparison with the ocean, that he is a most limited being as against an unlimited God, that he is most feeble while the other is almighty. He realizes that there is a Being filled with all the virtues and goodness and justice and mercy and compassion imaginable. Everyone, whatever his religion, experiences this first stage during which he is a faithful believer in God.

This is the ideal taught from childhood even in ancient times. Today some teach it, and some do not. Education has taken a different turn, with the result that the idealization of God has been disappearing from the stage of life. However, in the East this ideal is still taught to little children by instilling in them a respect for the father and mother, and they are also taught to consider their elder brother or sister as well as the friends of their parents. In this way the child is brought up with a feeling of respect; he is given a kind of ideal to look up to and to understand. He will be shown that he must not contradict his father, because he is not yet old enough to understand



the full meaning of his father's words. For instance he would not understand that it may be better to say an untruth rather than a truth in a case where the former would make for harmony and the latter for disharmony. Many things seem to be untrue for the moment, yet as we grow up to understand things better we find that from another point of view they may be true. Therefore a child should show consideration for his elders. The Prophet rebuked his grandson for not calling the servant "uncle"; the servant, being older, must know more than he.

Gentleness, sense of respect, and veneration make man different from the animals. If men did not behave like animals the past war would not have been possible. Dogs bark at each other. Not only one but also all of the prophets have brought the message that man should show himself higher than the animals in this respect, and that they should give way to one another instead of barking at each other. The first lesson imparted to humanity has been that of idealizing. It is not only the Bible that calls the humble, the gentle, and the meek blessed; the Qur'an and other sacred books say so too. It was even taught in ancient Rome. Each nation, which has arrived at a certain point of understanding and acts according to true humanity, has come to realize that man is different from the animals only to the extent of his idealizing. This is greater than art, greater than religion, and greater than anything is; and it is the source of great joy. Before we can enjoy life we must become delicate, sensitive, and evolved. When this is attained person experiences a kind of joy in bowing his head such as is not experienced by ordinary people.

If we study the lives of the prophets, saints, and sages we notice that however exalted a position they might occupy, their manner was most humble. The customs, the forms and ceremonies and dogmas taught in temples and mosques and other places of worship and prayer were all for the express purpose of increasing the knowledge of this first lesson in approaching God. All the various modes of expressing veneration and respect and worship were given to one Being, in recognition of the fact that there is only one Being worthy of such expression. By practicing this continually we succeed in reproducing the same attitude in ourselves.

But if this were the end of our way of life, then what should we think of those who took the other four steps? For truly, this Shariat, as the Sufis call it, is only the first step.

Recognizing God. This is the second step; it is called Tariqat. At this stage the believer in God thinks of Him not only as in heaven where all praise, worship, honor, and respect are due to Him, but he recognizes that God is on earth also. If you take a man called John, and you ask him the name of each part of him, he can give a certain name for each, for every part of his body has a name. But which is John? Which part of his being is John? How shall I recognize John? If I recognize him from his head, why not call his head John instead of "head?" If I recognize him from his hand, then why do we not call his hand John; why call it "hand?" If I recognize him from his body, why not call his body John, instead of "body?" But if the body is John, and the body dies, then where is John? There were the dead body is, is John there? No, surely John is different from his body, yet at the same time he represents himself with his body. It is his inner self that is really John, yet it is not his inner self that he shows to our external eyes, which are limited; it is his limited self, which we call John, that he shows us. John is behind his limited self. Our eyes are only the vehicle for seeing, but we can see something beyond our eyes; and the ones who see thus are the seers.

If we study this more carefully we come to realize that God is the Creator, and that therefore He must have something to create from. When a sculptor sets to work he has something in his mind before he starts; he has to have a piece of wood or stone to work on. Every worker has a certain thing besides himself to create from. So we may ask: was there anything besides this world for God to make it from? Where did God get the things to make the universe from? If he created it out of something already made then this substance out of which He made the universe must have been made by some other god, or perhaps by thousands of gods and even then we may not have come to the end! But this cannot be. The whole of creation derives from one Being whose wisdom is unlimited; one Being whose art is unlimited, whose power is unlimited. He creates of Himself with His own power; therefore the creation and the Creator are not two, just as man and his body are not two. Or rather, they are two but at the same time they are not. When we recognize a man we do not recognize him only from his body but from his spirit as well. If we recognize God we recognize Him not only in heaven but also on earth. Those who recognize Him see Him in all.

A Hindustani song expresses it thus:

Ah! how desirous I was to see the divine Beloved!  
It is not the fault of the Beloved that you do not see;

He is before you!  
It is the fault of you who recognize Him not.  
Everything, whatever you seem is nothing else but  
The Presence of God!

But if, you might say, all the worldly is the presence of God, then what is in heaven? I do not say that the body is John even though the body too is John; I say that behind the body is John, even though the body too is John. Thus God is in heaven, but His manifestation is also God.

Think of how the followers of all the different religions have fought one another! Some were convinced that there are a thousand or numberless gods, whereas others were convinced that there is but one. To the mind of the Sufi both are right, although both are each other's opposite in knowledge, One religion wished to teach that all these infinite varieties are just one God, and to impress the idea that is God. Those who have learned that there is one God cannot conceive the idea of many gods, so they have fought throughout all their lives, without every recognizing who really is their God. They teach that someday they will actually be taken before Him for judgement, when in fact they are before Him all the time, all day long, all night long! Once one understands this a great change of outlook will develop; one's thoughts about God will change so much that one's entire moral standpoint will change.

The following story will illustrate the manner of this change.

A great king of Persia, names Jamsheyd had a certain wrestler named Rustam. He was the greatest of all wrestlers in the kingdom, and he became so proud of his strength and power and bravery that the king thought he would humble him in some way. But he could not find anyone who could be trained so as to be capable of matching Rustam: he was the only one of his kind in the whole land. Then it happened that Rustam went to Arabia and during his absence a son was born to him, who was given the name of Kushtam. The child's mother died soon after, and this was the opportunity the king sought. He took the child into his palace, and no one knew he was Rustam's son. In the course of time the youth became a great fighter, so strong and powerful that no one in the land could match him. And then, after many years, Rustam returned. Jamsheyd did not tell the youth that Rustam was his father; he only said that a powerful wrestler had come from Arabia, and that he must fight him.

Now it was the custom for every wrestler to wear a dagger with which to kill a vanquished opponent if he refused to surrender. Everybody went to see the wrestling match in the arena. The king felt sure that Kushtam, the son, would conquer his father, and indeed, with great energy and strength, the young man brought Rustam down. But Rustam, being so proud of his great power throughout his life, did not wish to surrender, so he must be killed. Kushtam unsheathed his dagger, whereupon Rustam said, "It does not matter, some day when my son grows up he will vanquish you." The youth asked, "Who is your son?" Rustam then said, "But who are you?" and then the secrets came out that this youth was his own son. There was no end to Kushtam's sorrow. He made obeisance at his father's feet, saying, "Father, I would rather be the one to be killed than be your conqueror." His father replied, "Do not let it grieve you, for now I am happy to know that at least I have been vanquished by anyone but my own son, who is my own self."

This was the cause of great tragedy to the son, and the same tragedy and the same attitude come into the life of everyman from the time that he begins to discover his heavenly Father on the earth. He cannot subscribe to the common "love thine enemy" unless he first recognizes in him his Father in heaven. He may recognize his own father in a friend, but when he recognizes him also in the enemy, then he can love him too. This is the lesson. We fell from God as Cain did till we discover that He is actually here. Just think what a change there would be in the attitude of a man if once he realized his heavenly Father, the only one to whom reverence is due, in his fellow men!

The life of a Sufi in the East is the life of a true disciple of Christ. People may recognize the teachings of Christ in scripture, in a church, or in a chapel, yet to the Sufi none of this is Christ. The only true disciple of Christ is the one who sees God as Father, as Mother, in all his Fellow men. Thus in India, Arabia, and Persia they call a fakir, a sage, a dervish, Bawa or Baba, that is "father", and a lady "mother, seeing both aspects of God in all things. Certainly, there are degrees; these are called Fana-fi Shaikh, Fana-fi-Rasul, and Fana-fi-Allah; but they recognize their teacher in everyone. This is the first step.

One day I was walking in a city and met a dervish with a wonderful personality. He was dressed in a patched robe, but his speech, his voice, his thought, his movement, his atmosphere, were all most winning. At that time I was

very young in the pursuit of philosophy. Youth is a time when pride has full play. So as we were walking along, and he called me "Murshid", I was very glad. He had addressed me as Murshid every time he spoke to me! Presently we met another person, who seemed to be without any education, without any knowledge of philosophy or religion or anything out of the way, but he called him "Murshid" too. My pride was hurt, especially when next he came across a policeman whom he also called "Murshid." So then I asked my teacher what could be the meaning of all this, and he said, "Your dervish showed you the first step towards recognizing God: to recognize all beings as your teacher. A foolish person can teach you, a wise person, a learned person, a student, a pious or wicked person, even a little child; everyone can teach you something. Therefore have this attitude towards everybody, then it may be said that you recognize God."

There is a Hindu saying, "when the chela is ready, the guru appears", which means that when you are ready to discern it, you will find your teacher beside you.

We can even learn love from doves and faithfulness from dogs.

Communicating with God. When an ordinary or an illiterate person meets a poet, he sees the man-part and not the poet-part. But if he is told that this person is a poet he may see the poet-part when he meets him. He now sees that he is a poet in his actions and in his words; in everything about him he sees the poet, whereas otherwise he would not have been able to see this. Thus a great poet may go among a crowd and the people will only see the man in him; they do not see the poet, and they do not know how profound his thoughts are. So once a person begins to recognize God in man he does not see the man any more but God. The man is the surface, while God is deep within him. Such recognition brings a person into touch with everyone's innermost being, and then he knows more about people than they know themselves. He will know their sorrow, their joy, and their secrets. Such a person is called a seer.

The seer sees God with his own eyes and also recognizes his divine Beloved in every form, in every name. He reaches Him and touches the God-part in every being, however limited this individual appears to be on the surface. From now on a softness develops in his nature, a magnetism, a winning quality, a beauty rarely to be found. Those who have attained to this stage are able to meet people with awakened minds, and when a person meets them he wants to stay with them forever. A very well known seer, the great Shams-e Tabrez, went to see Jelal-ud-Din Rumi when the latter was teaching at the University of Qoniya. He was a dervish, and he approached Rumi appearing like a savage. The first thing he did was to seize Rumi's manuscripts and throw them into a nearby tank. Rumi looked at him, wondering at his action in throwing away all that knowledge, and he asked him the reason for it. The seeming vagrant said, "Because you have been reading all your life and you should now do something more. You should understand what you are and where you are. Everything in front of you is spelt out in letters, if only you could read them; then you could read life, which is greater than any scripture, better than any tradition that you can be told. It would disclose the secret of all being." Rumi, studying him and his expression and hearing all he said, was so won by him that he wrote down in his diary, "The God whom I have been worshipping all my life has today appeared before me in the form of a man."

It is said, "By the vision of God, their self will become God." This happens when we come to see God in everybody. We develop goodness in our actions; our words become God's words because we are impressed with all that reflects only goodness and is mirrored around us. Then we become a museum or a picture of goodness. We reflect it from morning till evening, we reflect forgiveness, we reflect tolerance, and we reflect all these lovely qualities.

As it is said, "If my Beloved is in every kind of man, how considerate I ought to be towards all!" The lover is always very careful when he is with his beloved; he becomes thoughtful and tender.

Realization. It is after feeling the presence of God and after being in communication with Him that we come to realize Him. When we can touch God in everyone then God tells us about Himself, because He sees that we have no hate, no prejudice. We have seen our Beloved, and our Beloved tells us all. Still, realization is difficult, for it involves discerning the difference between you and me. What is this difference? It is a great question, a great problem. Our "I" and "you" are just like a pair of compasses with which we draw circles on paper. The one point of the compass is the "I", the other point is the "you", and where they join there is no "I-you." The "I" and "you" only remain as long as we see ourselves; but when we rise above them or beyond them, the thought brings us nearer and nearer to God in that consciousness in which we all unite.

Self-realization is not self-expression; it is not work; it is not an art; it is not realization of a mental or artistic self. It is realizing God, it is union with God. It is not a matter of creating something to live forever as Shakespeare or Beethoven did. It is an attainment.

Self-realization is where the word is silent. The object of the Sufi is to enter into the silence, to learn to leave the form and the external world with all its attributes, to cease striving for anything but the goal. God is not in time; therefore He is in the silence. Sound is part of the world of time. The sage cannot say more than this, for the subject is so vast; when we come to this conception we find that it is altogether too subtle, too vast, to express.

Perfection. Divine perfection is perfection in all powers and mysteries. All these are manifested without specially striving for them. Perfection and annihilation is that stage where there is no longer "I" and no longer "you", where there is what there is.

## **MAN'S AIM IN LIFE**

If we have studied the chapter on the Silent Life in "In an Easter Rose Garden" it may seem contradictory to speak of the other aspect of life. We might ask: Why did creation take place? Why is man of earth? Is it to seek the silent life, or what is the reason of all this happening? Are we to throw out everything that we call life, our position, our rank, our strength and everything we have so far thought worthy of pursuit? Shall we continue to seek to attain these things, or should we discard them all in favor of the pursuit of the silent life?

The answer to these questions is found in the word of the Lord's prayer: Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. We can extend this to: Thy perfect will be done on earth as well as in heaven, or: That which Thou desirest in heaven we must do on earth, or: I will do as Thou desirest me to do. Yet at the same time the mystics thinks, "My soul is not separate from Thy spirit; therefore my will is not separate from Thine; therefore my will be done on the earthly plane as Thine is done on the heavenly plane, namely on that of my mind. Thus that which I have been thinking to do will happen on the plane of the earth."

Omar Khayyam said, "Heaven is the vision of fulfilled desire; hell is the shadow of a soul on fire." The fulfillment of desire, however small or great it be, is the first step towards perfection. Unfulfillment of desire, however high or low, is a going back.

We may ask: But what is the desires we have are not worth while? Our desires may indeed be imperfect ones; they may not be right; but what of it? We cannot desire things, which lead, to our destruction. Is there no good desire in our hearts? Is not the heart the vehicle of good through which one desires? So we see that our desire is God's desire, and that creation's whole purpose is the fulfillment of that desire. As the Vedanta say, this life is the dream of Brahma. The creative faculty or power desired what Brahma desired; it produced what He desired. This is why the Sufi regards as the first lesson to learn through concentration and mediation: that my desire shall be accomplished.

Religion reaches the same in the Lord's prayer: Give us our daily bread. In another place the Gospel says: "Knock and it shall be opened unto you", and again: "If his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" If you tell yourself that you do not desire anything, you go back. your progress lies in desiring whatever you wish. Fulfillment of your desire is the first proof that your concentration is successful. This is called Valayat. A person may be able to see into things and yet not be the master; to be a master implies being master of all situations in life. Although a seer is one who can see, yet unless he has mastery also he can only see and nothing else. Mastery is greater than seer-ship, because the master both sees and accomplishes.

This whole creation is the result of desire. The purpose of creation, therefore, must be the fulfillment of this desire. Thus your first step towards accomplishment or attainment, whether it be spiritual or worldly, will also be to proceed with purpose towards the goal of you desire.

You may think, "But if I keep on with the pursuit of my material desires, perhaps I may never reach the spiritual goal and will never get beyond my desires." The answer to this is that if you let the desire go unfulfilled and you lack the patience needed to accomplish the desire, your progress will be arrested. This failure will keep you back from spiritual progress. When once you have accomplished one desire, you will have that something which is needed for the accomplishment of something greater. Every desire you accomplish is one step further towards that final goal which every soul ultimately has to reach.

Thus the way to go is this, even for attaining spiritual perfection. Those who renounce their desires for God, for spiritual perfection, bury their own desires in their heart. It is more than renouncing; it is killing them and burying them; but they are there all the same. They are entombed in the heart, and there they will produce all sorts of germs and worms, and they will decay. There will only be pain and nothing else and so spiritual accomplishment cannot be attained in this way.

The steps you take towards the goal by accomplishing your desires, your patience in doing this, your perseverance with it, these are what teach you. One may compare it with playing with dolls. The child who plays with a doll is learning to be a mother; learning how to be kind to children, putting them to bed, waking them up and dressing them. When once a little girl has learned this she will later be a good mother; this means she will be accomplish her desire.

The man, who has become rich or powerful, material though this may be, has attained something all the same; something has been accomplished; the mind gets strength and confidence. Then he can take the next step, which is the spiritual step.

A person has prepared himself for renunciation when he has risen above the object he demands. He is only entitled to say that he does not want the sweet when he has so much of it that he cannot eat any more. If he is still longing, well, he may say "No", but it will be only a formality; perhaps it would not be good etiquette to say "Yes", but he longs for it just the same!

So it is that you have to rise above everything that you renounce. You have not really renounced until you have done that. You go on seeking as long as you have a desire for a thing.

### **THE TRAGEDY OF LIFE**

WHEN we look around us we cannot but notice how everyone has something to complain about: lack of wealth, lack of comfort, lack of kindness from those around him, from his relatives. Everywhere there are heartbreaks, disappointments of one kind or another. In the Qur'an this is expressed by the saying: "God alone is rich; everyone else is poor." People may live in palaces or cottages, they may enjoy wealth and fame, money or good positions; no matter what they possess, they are still poor for all that.

The more we study life, the more we see how poverty is everywhere, how everyone is poverty-stricken no matter how much he may possess. How is this? What is the meaning of it? Only one thing can explain this situation, and that is limitation.

This one word explains the reason for the gradations from king to pauper, from the very great to the most insignificant. There is the limitation of poor physical health and of mental power, the limitation of wealth, and so forth. Nothing but limitation explains the real cause of all these grievous things.

A seer of thinker may well find it amusing to watch how the whole world is busily active from morning till night, in body as well as in mind. Everyone is trying to get relief from this poverty, trying to overcome all the things he has to complain about, trying to gain the means of conquering all those conditions of poverty. So he who watches all this sees the people always striving, striving for this, striving for that; yet in spite of all their striving they only find still more poverty. The objects they desire are limited, but their desire is unlimited; in any case limited objects can never satisfy limitless desire.

There is a Hindustani poem which says, "When you have ten lakh or twenty, or fifty, or a hundred, you will still want a thousand; if you obtained them you would still want more." In fact you would want the whole world, and even if you had that your desire would not come to an end. The reason for this is that whatever man desires is always limited, whereas his desire itself knows no limits. When one desire is satisfied there is another and then another, and so on and on. Man's desire remains much greater and vaster and wider than every object that can be desired, and since the one who desires does not know his own value, nor the value of the objects sought by him, he remains in a state of poverty. This poverty degrades his life; the degradation of all human life proceeds from this one thing.

A Persian poet has said, "Though I see myself in the greatest and highest and most perfect Being, yet I find myself in poverty, limitations, and distress. The reason for this is just my own ignorance of myself, of my true self. It is the delusion of the limitation of life."

Whereas so many people are constantly endeavoring to get relief from this limitation which is called poverty, the Sufi strives to overcome the source of the poverty hidden within the life of everyone. The source of this poverty is limitation, and he breaks this limitation by raising his light. In the Bible we are advised to raise that light which so far we have hidden under a bushel. When we raise the light we remove the poverty.

We may ask: But how do we raise the light? What do we see with this light when it has been raised? The answer is that the intelligence is light. Raise the intelligence, and when the intelligence experiences life through the medium or vehicle of the body and mind then, no doubt, it remains limited. If we reflect that this body and this mind occupy two different planes, then we will understand that there is more limitation on the one than on the other. For example, if we want to go to a particular street or place with our body it will take a certain time, but if we go there in our mind we can get there in a moment's time. That is the difference between the two planes in regard to the accomplishment of things. It may take much time and effort to accomplish something in the physical world, but it takes less time and effort to accomplish it when we work mentally. When the intelligence works through the mind less effort and less time are needed, whereas when it works through the physical body more time and effort are needed. This is because the physical world has more limitations and the mental world has fewer. So when the intelligence can be raised above and beyond the mental world, we gain interest on all planes of existence. There is a greater playground for the intelligence there.

Two of the principal sources of pleasure in the physical world are good food and bodily comfort, yet one single beautiful thought or one charming mental image may provide more pleasure and joy than all the beauty there is in the whole physical world. So we can see that when we raise the intelligence from the physical plane, and then even higher, we will come to a state of realization where we see that life is not really limited at all; that it too is unlimited. It is when our experience is confined to the lower phases of existence that we find that our life is limited. Herein lies the whole tragedy of life.

So if we want to see happy people, full of joy and peace, people who are generous minded, people with a desire to serve, a desire for generosity and charity, we will find them if we look among those who do not have worldly wealth or fame or a great name. We will find them among them the people who do not care for the world and its spirit; here we will find those who are kings in themselves. In the East they are called dervishes or fakirs or sannyasins. All these have lifted their intelligence above the sphere of limitation.

## **MASTERY**

THE difference between a scientist and a mystic is that the former analyses the things he is interested in, studying them by different methods in order to ascertain as much information about them as he can, the ways in which they can be of any benefit, their uses, and their nature, whereas the mystic, though in a way doing the same, first aims at lighting that light within himself by which he can see the world of darkness and illusion, instead of using some technical instrument or special scientific process. As it is said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven", so his first task is to light the candle within.

The story of Aladdin illustrates this truth. Aladdin could only win the princess if he first obtained the lamp, which she desired. He goes out into the world but cannot find the lamp there, so he goes into the forest where he meets someone who is able to show him the way to reach it. But the man cannot himself give it to him, which means that emotion by itself does not suffice to bring it. Aladdin is told to go to a certain mountain and repeat certain words, which will cause the side of the mountain to open. He does this, and the mountain opens, but when he is within the cave he begins to suffocate because there is no air. Nevertheless, persevering, he penetrates farther into the mountain and in time he comes upon the lantern.

It is with this light that the mystic gains the knowledge within himself. As soon as he has gained possession of this candle every-thing discloses its secret, and he gains a wisdom greater than that possessed by any scientist. One may think that a mystic cannot find out all that the scientist knows. True, but though the details discovered by the scientist may appear different, yet the mystic perceives the same truths, which the scientist is seeking. He does not use the same words or terms; he does not know about all the processes that the scientist gets to know by his laborious methods

Some scientists have happened to be Sufis; Avicenna was one; Luqman was another; and their knowledge was greater because of their having the candle. Perhaps even without any technical training the mystic may have the

greater knowledge, He may not know exactly how to make a chemical substance as a scientist may claim to do, but he can see the secret behind every object and the purpose which underlies it.

The mystic can analyze the whole world very easily and understand it through the vehicle of one individual body. It is true that he cannot realize everything at once, but when he sets about knowing some particular thing he will do so much sooner than anyone else can, because he has the light within him.

His method is meditative. the object of meditation is to raise the soul above the body and the mind. It is like opening oneself; opening the vehicles, the sense, and the various unseen faculties of opening the vehicles of the mind, the abstract faculties, which are beyond the perspective faculties. These vehicles are open by way of meditation, and the soul now works through all parts, seen and unseen, instead of only blindly through one part of the being hitherto. Even the bodily sense become more sensitive. the sense of touch becomes more acute; the sense of sight becomes more keen, also the sense of hearing and the sense of taste and smell. In fact, activity as a whole, vigor of action, enthusiasm, all increase after meditation. When the bodily energy and its sensitiveness are greater this indicates the other faculties which are not seen have also been increased; the reason, the imagination and its power to creation, the memory and its power of retaining thought. The ego is also developed; then after all these have been developed a still higher part of one's being begins to develop, the abstract being which is linked up with the others. The mind becomes the mind of another person; the thought becomes the thought of someone else. After this the mystic begins to work through objects and merely through the people around him, and from this time on the objects work, as he desires them to work.

The mystics experiences and also his dreams are now more than mere phenomena; and so when a thought comes to him it grows into something greater than mere imagination, and it becomes a force acting through his mind to achieve an effect, be it constructive or destructive. Whatever arises in his mind becomes a reality, and the further he develops the more real does his kingdom become.

It is better to receive personal help than to practice yoga; there can be no system of training in which all the pupils receive the same, for each needs a different method which is adapted to his condition of life, his type of mind, his environment, his age, his education, the spiritual development to which he has attained, and his devotional tendency. Is devotion the best method, or is study or are practices best? This depends upon the pupils needs and capabilities. It is exactly the same as when a physician prescribes for a person: he must use different medicines according to the individual's type and personality. Patent medicines will not always do!

Man must realize that he has power in him, which is greater than all other powers, this power is his will. Anger is a power, for it is a part of the energy, which manifests as anger. Excitement, passion, and other emotions are manifestations of one energy, yet all such powers are in the hands of one single power, namely the will. They are ruled, controlled, and utilized by it. A person can not be angry unless his back is at the back of it. He has to have the will power to defend himself; otherwise the anger would be helpless. The anger is there, but the will power is greater. If the will power is not behind it the faculty will not work, even if not suppressed. As long as the will power does not help, the faculty is ineffective, though present.

This one power, the will power, is within. Should this power work with the consent of wisdom, everything would become allowable--anger, calmness, war, fighting, peace, love, hate. For instance there is a time when anger helps, and there is a time when peace helps, when calmness helps. We have to understand their rhythm, for, as in music, if we do not keep the right time it is because we do not understand the rhythm; but if we understand it, it will not matter what we do; things will turn out all right. All is right when wisdom, counsel, and will-power are in harmony, but if the will is under control of anger or other passions, so that they manifest regardless of wisdom and come into play at their own time, which again depends on the person's habits, then he will surely get angry every day. He gets cross because he has made it a habit, and his will has submitted. If this happens every day for eight days it will happen also on the ninth, or else perhaps he may fall ill. the power which should be obedient to the will controls it instead, and so the will works without wisdom, in spite of the fact that wisdom is the only reliable power which God has given man.

There is a passage in the Qur'an which says, " Rise to pray during the night or part of it and recite the Qur'an; surely We will light upon you a weighty word... And remember the Name of thy Lord..." What speculation this passage has aroused! The solution of its mystery is this, that desire for comfort controls the will so much, the will-power has become so subjected to desire for comfort, that comfort controls the will. The will has become a slave to experiences of joy and pleasure that we get from all kinds of comfort. For instance there is no greater comfort than

sleep, so when we have to get up before dawn to repeat the name of the Lord we do not feel inclined to do this. We have to fight the greatest comfort we can experience each day, but once we have started fighting we begin to crush the power on the surface, which is pleasure and comfort. It is the ego, fed on pleasures and comforts of all kinds, which is our enemy. Therefore once we crush our ego our will becomes the ruler over our pleasures, and when the will is master we are master. The variety of our past life is now submitted to the unity of our being.

There is one part of our being which we can call, " my self," and that one part must control the many beings--the nose, eyes, ears, etc.--which belongs to us. Once we have gained control we can proceed without interference by them; we can keep them out whenever we please. From that time light comes, and we get to know and understand all the things we never knew before. The light has now been disclosed to us by God.

There are three things, which we should master during our every day life, and three ways of achieving them. Consider the power of half-an-hour's concentration as compared with the weakness of giving in all day long! We can control ourselves in all the requirements of the body and of our senses, and the mind must give permission to every demand on their part, without being confused in the matter. There is the beginning of the act, there is the act itself, and there is the result of the act; and these three stages in the life of self-mastery or self-control bring increasing happiness and satisfaction. There is the satisfaction in the thought of fulfilling some particular desire; there is satisfaction during the time it is being fulfilled; there is the satisfaction after it has been fulfilled. When there is no confusion or depression or despair or remorse or repentance, then the happiness increases. There is no other proper way of directing one's life.

The various practices recommended by the mystics all have the same purpose, whether it be fasting, stretching out the hands, clapping the fingers, or whatever it may be. The mystic withholds all activity for a moment, for half a minute, perhaps for fifteen minutes. Nature wants motion, so when we stop the desire, and sit straight and erect, the mind at once gets a grasp on the whole body, for the whole body is now under discipline. It is discipline when the body obeys the mind; that is why all through life our mind should be in control of all things.

The next thing to consider is character. We must take care never to do anything which, when we see another person do it, we consider it a mistake or undesirable or foolish. If it is something we do not approve of we must resist the inclination to do such an undesirable thing ourselves, to do something we can not tolerate when another person does it. It is by this resistance of impulses that we control ourselves.

A more perfect way of behaving is the religious way. We should realize that the essence of every religion is to regard as our goal the God whom we are worshipping. He whom we seek is nowhere else but in the human heart. By reflecting on this thought we come to recognize that whatever kind of person we meet, be he foolish or wise, weak or strong, poor or rich, wicked or virtuous, we are in the presence of the Lord before whom we all bow; for if He is anywhere it is in the human heart, even in the heart of the wicked person. We must say to ourselves, " My ideal, my desire, is to please my Lord before whom I bow my head. So when I stand before anyone I stand before the Lord, my God." This is the religion; but if we were careful not to hurt a loved one or a friend but did not mind hurting a servant or a wicked or foolish person, that would not be real religion.

Love will recognize the ideal of love, the divine ideal, in every heart, and will refrain from using words which will make another unhappy: words expressing pride, thoughtless words, sarcastic words, any words that will disturb a person's peace of mind or his sensibilities. So an abrupt action is harmful too. What can one gain by it?

Thus when developing fineness of character one learns to consider another person's feelings. A man may consider himself very sensible, and at the same time wish that another person would not hurt or insult him. He thinks to himself, "This man talks too much; he annoys me; how badly he dresses, etc." Whereas we believe one person to be sensible and understanding another we think is not; but we should forget what we ourselves think, and bethink ourselves of what another thinks. It shows so much greater fineness of character when one does not give grounds for offense to others, but it is very difficult to attain this. There is no benefit in making our life so regular and orderly that it offends everybody else; it is in the understanding and consideration of other people's feeling that truth religion lies.

### **MASTERY (continued)**

GHAZALI has said in his Alchemy of Happiness that the spiritual path is like shooting an arrow into the dark. You cannot know where it will fall or what it will strike. You are going along blindly, not knowing what you really seek



or what you have achieved so far. There is only one commendable procedure; and so if your walk along the spiritual path makes you better able to manage your thoughts, and makes you stronger on your feet, you will be able to realize all that can be accomplished by patience and by hope. If you only paid attention to this all your life long and watched what you did, you would see your own progress, and what an encouragement it would be!

There are people who keep complaining that nothing is ever manifested to them on their spiritual path--no forms, no ghosts, no colors, no voices, no word. But even if such a person had experienced manifestations of this kind they would have been no help to him; however, he is discouraged because he has not received any. The teacher he would like to have might easily lead him astray from the path, simply because he is aiming at things that do not matter, and a real teacher will not encourage him to seek such things.

The words, "no, it does not matter" form a sort of principle to adopt in life. Of course there are things which obviously do matter. It matters a great deal if you do not follow your ideal, if you have made a slip of the tongue, or any other shortcoming. But it does not matter if somebody else is not following the same ideal as you; you cannot alter his plan of life, nor his opinions, and so they cannot matter to you. The Sufi's way is to seek unity and not get lost in variety. People can take up philosophy, theosophy, and all the rest if they wish, but these are not the concern of the Sufi. He will let those people restricted. His path is the direct path towards unity, and his is the path of balance. If a person compares two pictures and calls the one good and the other poor, let him be. It does not help if the fire in his ego-faculty is aroused. Some day he will see.

The spiritual path may be natural, and it may be unnatural. When a man attaches his thought and mind to the external world he comes to partake of earth rather than heaven, of matter rather than of spirit. By partaking of the qualities and habits and limitations of matter he forgets all the qualities drawn to the substance to which they belong, and such a man is therefore drawn more to earth than to heaven but would prefer to stay on earth in spite of all the struggles, difficulties and illnesses that belong to life on earth. Man is so attached to it! He does not know the joy and peace and pleasure and happiness and comfort of the other side, for he has had no experience of spirit whatsoever.

All the same there are people who feel a kind of a call from the spirit, and yet they are attached to the objective world in so many ways. It is as if they are so intimately woven into the web of this world that it is very difficult for them to get away from it. For every step that a man takes towards heaven he is drawn backward ten steps to the earth.

Whoever sets out on this path is therefore in constant warfare. He has to encounter opposition from his relatives, from his friends and acquaintances; he gets into trouble with those who misunderstand his aims; they misuse him; they misjudge him and blame him for doing things and thinking in a manner which they believe to be unjustified.

Think of Christ, whose thoughts were so contrary to the religious thoughts of his time. How difficult to pass from the thought of an ordinary person to the thought of Christ! What difficulties there are to face! But once you fight these difficulties, and further you advance, the more you are drawn to the spirit by the spirit. This goes on up to a certain limit, and all this time the difficulties are very great, but once you reach the limit everything becomes easy. If only the will power is in control it will overcome the inertia.

Dervishes sometimes do humorous things. There is a story about a certain dervish sitting in the shade of a tree, who was always very kind and helpful to those who came to see him. But one day a young man, a soldier, was passing by, and he said something to the dervish, which made him very cross. So they had a few words. Thereupon the soldier began to bully him and give him blows on his back and neck, without the dervish making any protest. The soldier then went on his way.

A wise man sitting near by was thinking to himself, "What a funny thing, for his dervish is always good and kind and hospitable, so why should this soldier be so angry as to punch him and hit him all over?" So he watched attentively and noticed the dervish saying, "Is it enough, or do you want some?" The man wondered why the dervish said this, but the explanation is that the ego always wants feeding, and the more you feed it the more energy it has. What are you feeding it with? You feed it with your inclinations, by getting praise from people or attentions, benefits, help, or love. Whether these come justly or through injustice, rightfully or not, this ego is never satisfied; it keeps wanting attention. As a result it begins to rule over the higher faculties of inspirational and spiritual power, of wisdom, reason, and justice--all the beautiful qualities. This Nafs or ego or Satan (for the ego is Satan) governs all these faculties, and a man cannot become saintly until he has crushed it; there is no other way

whatever than this. The saintly personality cannot come into being until this is achieved.

But how can you walk along this path in the course of your practical life, with all the responsibilities inherent in the life of the world? The servants take advantage of a saintly person; selfish people and those who are blind to justice take every advantage of a person who behaves kindly and considerately and helpfully towards others! Well, the answer is simple. This development is really for yourself, and once you have attained it the course of action is in your hands. For example, suppose you are taking the part of a king on the stage and your part calls on you to become angry with a servant, you do not really become angry. You just play the part of a king who is cross. Thus you can be cross without being actually angry.

This is what happens in the development of a saintly personality. When once the Nafs is crushed you will never find it necessary to be angry any more, though you can act the part of one who is angry and pretend to be angry. So if it is necessary to show anger this does not mean the fire of hell for you as it would be for others, for you are only using an instrument, and that instrument is not your master. In the same way you are justified in whatever course you find before you in life, as long as you really have freed yourself by the Nafs.

There is a story about a great Sufi master who lived in Arabia. During some war a certain battle was fought. Now in those days battles were hand-to-hand fights, and this man's enemy was overpowered by him and he was about to kill him. But at that moment the enemy spat in his face. The teacher immediately let go of the man and did not kill him. The enemy was greatly surprised at this and said, "You were about to kill me; why did you not do so?" He replied, "The reason is that you did something that was bound to rouse my anger, and if I had killed you while under the influence of anger I would have acted against my principles. Therefore, as soon as I caught myself in this fault I became unable to carry through with my intention."

This shows how a person can even fight and yet keep control over his anger and pain. As long as he is the master he can be blamed for nothing. But that is just the question: to be the master! Suppose a person is angry and you get cross with him too. It may bring a certain satisfaction to give an outlet to that anger at the moment, but if only you would discover the joy of being able to smile when the other person is cross, what a difference from the satisfaction one derives from the other act! The joy is so much greater because you keep control: it is just like not adding more fuel to a fire.

The best way to control sudden outbursts of emotion is by developing the habit of exercising the will power suddenly, promptly. If you return anger or jealousy or hatred or prejudice or any other bitterness, you only keep the flame of that emotion alight. It is just the same as when one keeps love alive in another's heart by adding a little affection and love all the time. If you withhold it will die, for there is nothing to stimulate it. When a person is always offended, or when he dislikes this or that, he is keeping the fire going, whereas once you pass it by and smile you raise yourself above it and it will die out, for then it has no more food to live on.

"Resist not evil", the scripture says. When there is resistance to evil in the other person do not become angry with him. When you foster the same emotions you add to his, and you increase the same fire in yourself. It is like infecting yourself with a contagious disease instead of curing it. Anger and bitterness will die out in time.

There was a small group of people in London who were working along spiritual lines. They felt a sort of rivalry against my little society, and they began to try to do us harm by telling stories against us and by setting others against us. My helpers came to tell me how we were being damaged in this way and asked if they should not do something to stop this. But I answered, "the best way to treat this is with indifference. Take no notice." And when they insisted that these doings would do us great harm I said, "Not at all. The only harm it could do would be if we allowed this harm to enter our circle. Let them do as they like and let us go on doing what we are doing!" As the years went by they never heard us say a word against them; on the contrary, we welcomed them, we helped them, we served them in whatever way we could. In time this resistance completely vanished. We have been going forward, and they still stand where they were. Just a little indifference was enough!

You cannot expect all people to be just. When they are children, how can we expect them to behave as grown-ups? You can not expect all kinds of fruit to ripen at once; it takes time, but in time they will become sweet. So wait patiently, and it will become plain to them in time. Why blame others when they are not up to your ideal? How can a disagreeable person be agreeable if his evolution prevents him from being otherwise and wisdom does not permit him to act differently? Help him in whatever way you can, without expecting him to be different. Why should you ruin your life over it? Your own life is very precious. When you do not worry over about others, or judge them,

you can mediate, think, be silent, and at the same time be serviceable to the world. There is plenty in our own selves to judge enough to keep us fully occupied all our life long!

Jesus Christ said, "My fathers house has many mansions." By these are meant places of being, paths of attainment, roads to travel on. Once you are on the real road you will keep on learning every moment of your life, not only during your sleep in dreams, but at any time. An owl cannot see in the daytime; it is during the night that he learns things. But this is only a partial inspiration; the mystic gains experience in every aspect of life, when eating, sitting, walking, in all actions. All these are channels of learning. The real road is to be followed at all times, and it is the one who has seen the Master who is really being taught. Once you have linked yourself with love, a flood of inspiration is revealed to you, whatever the subject, whatever the problem in life may be. Whatever it be that your eye casts its glance upon, it will disclose itself. Then you are on the real road, and what a joy this is!

Breadth of the heart is what is needed for all this. The weapon is the thought that nothing matters. It takes courage to say: nothing matters. It is the breadth of heart that makes the man great, whereas it is narrowness of heart that makes him small. The great heart does not think about how troublesome a person is, and why he should be bothered like this. It is only the narrow of heart that thinks, "This is a small thing, I can put up with it; not much harm will come from it."

The Nizam wrote this verse, "The width of the land and the water cannot be compared with the width of man's heart. If man's heart is wide enough there is nothing greater than that." The heart is wide by forgetting the self, and narrow by thinking of the self and by pitying one's self. To gain a wide and broad heart you must have something before you to look upon and to rest your intelligence upon, and that something is the God ideal. This is the prescription for killing the self, and to kill the self is basis of every religion. Then, keeping yourself before your consciousness on God, God who is unlimited will come to you; and thus your knowledge and your powers will become unlimited also.

## **DISCIPLESHIP**

WHEN the question of learning or of understanding a mystical or occult subject arises, the first thought that comes to the mind of a person in the East is that of discipleship. In the language of the Vedanta there is the Guru and the Chela; in Sufi terms we speak of Murshid and Mureed.

Just as in every civilization we meet with what the Sufis call Muruat- the regard that people have for their relations, the regard between father and son, mother and daughter, friend and friend, lover and beloved, husband and wife, master and pupil--so in the East there exists the special regard between the spiritual teacher and his disciple.

It is said that to have learned even one letter of one word from someone demands respect and consideration for him. So a person who walks on the spiritual path recognizes the goal towards which he is traveling, and realizes that the wealth he will obtain is great indeed; he is well aware of the fact that there is no return he can make which is proportion to what he has received from the teacher. Therefore the chela or mureed on the occult and mystical path is more grateful to his master than a person in any other walk of life can be to any other.

Why is this? It is because he recognizes that there is nothing more precious and worthwhile in life than spiritual wealth and the light of wisdom. Whoever it was that helped him receive the light and wisdom is surely the archway to heaven, the final goal into which he desires to enter. It is to this archway that he makes his first bow. One finds this expression in Hafiz and Sa'di and in many other Sufi poets of Persia, who call their teacher Mehrab, the arch, the arch of that gate which leads to the shrine of God. People sometimes say that the eastern temperament makes their language, actions, and words so exaggerated, and indeed it state things. But there are reasons for this attitude. First there is the respect in which the teacher of spiritual attainment is held, and there is the fact that the way to attain high spiritual attainment is by crushing the ego. It crushes the ego to bow one's head before anyone out of respect. The ego wants to say, "Here am I; you may think you are something, but I am something too!" But there is no room for wisdom as long as the ego is there, for the ego closes the door saying, "Yes, you have your thought and I have mine!" So whenever a chela has his attitude towards the teacher he can not learn anything. It is not until the ego is crushed that the simple faith and perfect humility and innocence come, which you see in he, face of your Master, your Savior. It is not only his teaching which attracts us to Jesus Christ, it is his face of innocence. Any artist who tries to paint a picture of him by intuition will portray that simple innocence in the face of the Lord. Not fatherhood but sonship has won the heart of the world, and this is the first thing for a disciple to acquire. And he

does this by crushing his ego.

Now there are there are different ways by which the ego can be crushed. Among the yogis, even today, there is a custom that when the chela comes to the guru his first lesson is to take the beggars bowl and go from house to house, bringing that which he gathers to the other chelas sitting there. The youngest chela brings the food that he has begged to the others, and he does not even beg for himself. In his heart he is already a monk who has taken up the bowl for others, for those who are meditating and learning the truth. Although the beggar's bowl is in his hand he perhaps may be a great than a king, for he is with out greed; he is crushing his ego; he is not thinking about what people will say when they see that he has taken up the beggar's bowl.

One of the kings of Baluchistan went to a Murshid with the desire to learn from him. He said, " Will you accept me as one of your pupils?" I would so much like to be counted among your humble servants instead of remaining any longer on my throne." The Murshid agreed to take him on probation, saying. " Yes, and your first task will be to take the garbage of the house and throw it in a certain place outside the town."

Now every one of the disciples knew that he was a king who had willingly resigned his throne; he was not exiled, and he did not have to run away from his kingdom; he had left it voluntarily. They felt sympathy for him, seeing him tried in this way, and they said to the Murshid in the course of time, "Pray do not expect this task of any him any more; he has been doing it for such a long time!" But always the Murshid's answer was, " He is not yet ready for initiation," To one pupil who argued the matter he said, "Well, you may test him any way you think good."

So one day, as he was carrying his basket, one of the young men came up beside him and by pushing him upset the contents of the basket on the ground. So the King looked at him and said, " Had I still been king as I was I would have done to you as a king would, but now, of course, I am not that any more, so I must not show my temper." With that he gathered all the refuse together, put it back in the basket and carried it all away.

This was reported to the Murshid, but he said, " Did I not tell you he is not ready?" However, after some time one of the pupils went to the teacher again and asked him again and asked him to be kind to the former king and give him another task. But he answered, " Try him again." So he had to go through the same experience. This time the king did not say a word; he only looked at the offender for a moment and again gathered the refuse together, put it back in the basket, and went on his way. However, when this report too was brought to the Murshid he again said, " Not ready, not ready!"

Then the same thing was done a third time. This time the king was not only silent but he gathered up the garbage without even looking at the person who had upset it. And now, when the Murshid heard about this, he answered, " Now he is ready. Now the time has come for his initiation."

Sometimes the method for crushing the ego seems crude to us, and yet this has been the essence of religion all through the ages. Jesus Christ said," Blessed are the poor in spirit... Blessed are the meek.... Blessed are the merciful." What I have just told you shows what is meant by being poor in spirit. A person rich in spirit, high-spirited, would say to anyone who even stared at him when not invited, " How dare you look at me in this way? You are not even allowed to look thus in my presence; how dare you do this to me?" Such a one is rich in spirit; the others are poor in spirit.

Thus different teachers have adopted different ways of crushing the ego. But it was never for their own gratification that teachers made their disciples show humility, to make up as it were for the fact that they themselves had to undergo the same process before they became teachers. No, such actions would not add to their own honor or greatness; the giving of such orders is nothing to them. If they are great they are great without such training being demanded of their pupils, without the deference implied. Whether a thousand people honor them or not, it does not signify. It gives them no satisfaction to have people to bow before them, prostrate themselves before the teacher. Why then do they expect it from their pupils? It is for the pupil's sake; it is to blunt the sharpness of that piercing and stinging ego which disturbs every individual, so that shall not hurt anyone any more. This becomes a great achievement.

In our everyday life we can see that it is this sharpness of the ego, of "I" of "Me", that hurts all the time, whether it be someone closely related or not; whether it be son our daughter, father, mother, brother, sister, or just a friend. If anything about them hurts it is just the ego. If one person hurts another it s only because of that person's ego. If we ever experienced suffering in this world it is through this ego; sometimes it is the ego of another person, but

sometimes it is our own ego too. One may compare it with a thorn, which is always pricking: it hurts whoever touches it. The more the egoistic a person is the more it hurts. So the teachers of mysticism know they must humiliate this ego, and the various methods they use are to do just this.

There was once a young man who was the son of a famous teacher. This teacher had a number of pupils from all over India. Not only was he a great teacher himself, but he had trained many other teachers; in fact in nearly every village and town there was by now a teacher who had been one of his disciples. Of course this son of his had received all kinds of attentions.

Now the son when still a boy one day had a dream and in this dream he saw himself visiting all the saints. He dreamed that there was a great gathering of saints and spiritual teachers and masters. He was accompanying his father, but whereas his father was admitted to the gathering he himself was not allowed in.

He felt this a severe humiliation, so when he woke up next morning he went to his father and said, "I have had a very unhappy vision, for although I went with you to this gathering you were allowed in and I was not!" His father replied, " This is a true message for you. To enter the spiritual path it is not enough for you to be my son; it is necessary for you to become someone's disciple. You have to learn what discipleship means."

But the son kept thinking to himself, "I am the son of a great teacher; from childhood I have learned so many things. I have inherited my father's knowledge. However great any teacher was, yet when he met my father he paid him such respect, such great respect. There cannot be anything better in these teachers than there is in me." So he thought he should stay with his father and said, " Can there be anyone better than you, father, that I should become someone else's disciple?" But his father answered, " No I am no use for that. You must have some other person who is suitable for this purpose.", " Who?" asked the young man. The teacher replied, " that pupil of mine who was a peasant and who is teaching among the peasants. Go to him and be initiated by him."

The son was very surprised, for he knew that this teacher was not well educated, He was illiterate; he was not of high birth; he had no special reputation; he was not famous in anyway. He was just living in a village in humble guise. For all that, his father sent him there.

So he traveled on foot, not very willingly, till he came to the village where this peasant lived. It so happened that this man was on his way on horseback from his own farm to another, and he saw the young man coming towards him. When the young man came near and bowed before him the teacher looked down on him and said, " Not enough."

Thereupon the young man bowed to his knees. The peasant teacher again said, "Not enough." Then he bowed down to his feet, and still the teacher said, "Not enough." So he bowed down to his feet, and still the teacher said, " Not enough." So he bowed down to the horse's knees, but again the teacher said, " Not enough." So the young man bowed once more, this time to the horses feet, touching the horses hoof, whereupon the peasant teacher said to him, " you can go back now; you have had your training." That was all! No exercises, no sacred word to learn, nothing to study, no training course. He had learned the lesson he had to learn; it was for this his father had sent him. It was for this lesson that he had come; it was a lesson, which his father could not give him. So now he was admitted to the circle of mystics.

### **DISCIPLESHIP (continued)**

In discipleship one has to consider the idea of sympathy. The great Lord of yoga, Mahadevi warned against initiating or welcoming an insincere, ungrateful, or doubting pupil onto this mystical occult. This was his advice to every mystic. Why was this? What concern is it of the mystic whether a pupil is grateful or not, sincere or not, as surely he has to be good to everyone? The idea is that unless a person is sincere he is not ready to benefit, and the teacher will not do him any good. He must have sincerity and faith and sympathy. How true is the saying, " he who speaks evil of another knows him not; he who speaks well of another knows him better!" This illustrates the fact that sympathy is the only thing that discloses the secret of all things. For example, if you are fond of a certain composers you will enjoy hearing one of his compositions far more than will a person who is prejudiced against this composer. Having closed his heart to this music he will never enjoy it. So, too, if you are fond of a certain poet you will remember everything that poet has to say. Even if his words do not say it his spirit does, and so you understand what the poet wanted to convey to you. He may have failed to express it, but you will still read it in his words, for your heart is united to the heart of the poet.

This being true, how then can an enemy know an enemy? He can never get to know him, for he will say that his enemy is full of evil. It is only a friend who can know not an enemy. It is love that builds a bridge during the interchange of feelings and thoughts; hatred cannot do this. In fact even the least doubt prevents it.

Thus a person, who is thinking, "Let me see, what can mysticism teach me? What can this cult show me that I do not already know?", would be wasting my time. Far better that he should spend his time on something in which he has faith, otherwise he will only be creating a wall before himself, and, whether he wishes to explore this teaching or not, how then can he find out anything about it? This path is not for those who are only curious about it. They would never succeed with it. Nor is it for those who are always changing their mind, wondering whether they will go on walking along this path, asking themselves if it is the right path or is it the wrong path. Such people might go four steps forward, and then come across something, which frightens them, and so they run back ten steps! Then, perhaps, they will go forward again, but next time something like this happens they go back twenty steps. Their journey would last thousands of years, and even then they would not be arriving.

No one without confidence in himself can ever have confidence in another. One cannot have faith in another if one has none in oneself. The faith taught by Jesus Christ as well as by those religious teachers who laid great emphasis on it is not necessarily faith in a particular church or creed or scripture or religion or clergy. It is faith in oneself. He who has faith in himself can have faith in others.

For a person to have a simple faith does not mean that he has no sense. Such a person may be the most sensible of all, while one who thinks that he is too clever to trust anybody, who will not be taken in by anyone and is proud of his cleverness, may really be the most foolish. He prides himself on his skepticism, which makes him doubt every person he meets, thinking that he is so clever. But when such cleverness prevents one from having any peace of mind and makes one always restless, going from one belief to another, one would much rather be without the cleverness.

Faith is the light that kindles the same substance in another person's heart. By trusting another person one also creates in his heart the same attribute which is within oneself: trust. What peace it brings to have faith and trust!

Consider two such people as these: one gives a jewel to a friend, asking him, "Please keep it for me", and then thinks no more about it. Another asks his friend the same thing, but as soon as he has left he keeps on putting his hand in his pocket, wondering what his friend will do with his jewel. Then when he gets home his mind is still in his friend's house, in fact he may be so uneasy that he even goes back to his friend on some excuse, though when he gets there he does not like to ask his friend to return the jewel. Better for him not to have entrusted his friend with his property, if it only means loss of peace of mind or the humiliation of his friend.

How can such a person learn occult or mystical knowledge and tread the path of spirituality, if he has this attitude of mind? Having no sense of trust or confidence in himself, how can he expect to succeed on the path? The first thing to learn then is to have confidence in oneself.

Another thing to remember about entering this path is that if a person is only attracted by the word "Mysticism", or by any psychical cult, he is only interested in the name and does not know what he really wishes to discover. So he asks himself, "What is this path like?", as if it were kind of a delicious dish or drink, to be tasted before wanting any more, just to see what it is like!

No, this path is a lifelong work. There is nothing more serious that one can enter upon. One cannot attain something when one does not know what one is aiming at and is altogether undecided. How can one walk in the spirit without knowing whither one is traveling? A person who does not know his destination may think he is walking on the mystical path, but he is not. If you should ask him about it perhaps he might say that he wants to travel this path in order to become good; but he could learn how to be good without using the mystical path at all. The mystical path does not teach any spiritual goodness; it is only our love of goodness that will make us good. People do not have to be mystics to be good; not all good people are mystics.

Another person may wonder whether he ought to realize what spirituality is before he can become spiritual. He may think that he has to disconnect himself from the matter; he may think that spirit is the exalted substance, and matter only the lower. Again, another person may tell you that he is taking up the spiritual path because he wants to be able to communicate with spirits and ghosts. Yet another may say that he wants to see things and hear voices that other people cannot hear, and to discern fairies or angels or spirits or other invisible beings which other people

cannot see. But if this is the motive for coming to the mystical or spiritual path then it is not for them. Discipleship is not needed for that.

So many people want to dabble in these matters, but when they come into contact with others of like mind there they are just waiting to be fooled by them. The world is full of all sorts of people, but few of them are ready for the path of discipleship. Real discipleship has just the same implication as lies in the word "Baptism." It is a real baptism in itself, not just a ceremonial, some-thing external. Spiritually it means to be our natural selves, neither exalted nor pious nor good, nothing but to be just our natural self. A person may say, "I have no natural self", and the more we look at ourselves the more we think this, yet it is the lack of realizing our natural self that accounts for our depressions, our disappointments, our weaknesses, and everything that is undesirable in us. We are only conscious of our false self and do not know our real self. The idea is to disclose the self who is our real self, our natural self; and we do this by uncovering the different planes of mortal being which hide the self. All the yoga practices, their meditations and concentrations, are aimed at uncovering this real self.

"Well then," people will ask, "how does one attain this?" The answer is: you would never understand even if you studied it all your life. To take an example, supposing you were to study a textbook of music which contains everything from theory to counterpoint, and suppose you read a thousand such books, would you be able to sing well or play the piano? No, you have to train your ear; you must know which note is which, you must recognize the chords. It is just the same with life itself. It is not a matter of reading; it is a matter of realizing. One must live the life.

You may ask: does meditation help? The answer is yes; it does; it helps a great deal. If you also study at the time it will add to your realization, so it is not that study is useless, it is only that it is of no use without practicing meditation. Meditation is like practicing music. By playing the piano your ear becomes trained in the intervals and the notes; then by further study and reading you become a master of music.

It is just the same with the music of life, which is called mysticism. Although it can be studied it is of no use unless there is practice also. What is more if a person asks, "Suppose I play and practice with a book, can I become a great singer?" he would have to be told that he needs a teacher to show him how to use his voice, how to make music. If you have a teacher you can accomplish in ten years what you could never learn alone, by your-self, in a hundred years. That is the purpose for which the guru is intended.

More than this, the presence of the guru is an example to the pupil. Nothing can help study or meditation as much as the mere presence, the contact, and the association with the teacher. By this means the pupil understands how the teacher would act under various circumstances. It is true that sympathy itself is a very great thing, for by it the pupil intuitively knows what the answer is to this or that problem. Apart from the teacher, truth cannot be spoken of in words, so if the real, essential truth cannot be spoken of in words nor in writing, how otherwise could you learn it? It must be learned through contact. And how can you learn it through contact? Well, you see this in your daily life. If your sensitiveness is great and delicate you can tell whether a person is pleased or displeased without his speaking a word. You can tell whether he favorably or unfavorably inclined to you, and when this is so there is an exchange of thought between yourself and the other; more than this, there is an exchange of spiritual vibrations. Just by study or practice you can not realize this truth, this feeling, this peace, this joy which is beyond words, which belongs to being yourself, your natural self. In the East this is called Tawajoh, which means presence, contact association with. It is in this way that you learn what cannot be learned in any other way. Thus the disciple of Jesus Christ learned by his presence what no study or practice would ever have taught them. And in Mohammed's time his disciples Ali and Abu Nadr gained very great benefit from his presence.

But then there comes a time when the external presence is not needed any more. After having traveled along this inner path the inner presence of the master, the teacher, will inspire. Then you learn from your teacher that which words cannot teach and study will not bring and even practices cannot further. This is what the path of discipleship is.

There are four different paths to follow; abstinence or Hatha yoga, devotion or Bhakti yoga, learning from life's experiences or Raja Yoga, and the fourth one, Mantra Yoga, which means attaining spirituality through wisdom. The Sufi does not give preference to any particular path, take whatever suits your temperament best. However, in my own experience I have found it better to take one path as a special one for oneself, but to use also the other three. Thus you lack nothing. If the Bhakti Yoga suits you specially you should also get to understand something about Hatha yoga, and about the others too if you can. By understanding these others also you gain great strength

and perfection.

The Sufis have never given out any special doctrines; they only consider moral conceptions, so they never ask their mureeds to accept any doctrines. The Sufi does this because he considers that his sole work is to blow upon a little spark or flame in order to make it develop into a larger flame; and then this flame will show you the path. The Sufi does not interfere and say, " This is the doctrine you must accept, because I believe this or that", for instance about the life after death, the continuity of life. The Sufi master does not concern himself with the laws of nature and assert that this or that doctrine is the truth, or that this or that speculation is the truth. All he says is, " Find it out for yourself." He says, " My work is only to tell you in what way the faculty will be awakened; you will then see for yourself. Then, whatever you see for yourself, you will believe."

But you might say, " Well, then why do we have lessons? If there are no tenets, what are lessons for?" The answer is that is like learning the alphabet, which is one stage. When a person can read a book, that is another stage. He needs books to practice reading: it does not matter what book you take up to read, you can practice reading with it, you do not have to take it as being an inspired scripture. Similarly the exercises which are given in the form of lessons or instructions are just lines of thought to follow until you get accustomed to these different lines of thought when inquiring into metaphysical and spiritual subjects. But you do not have to accept them as rigid tenets or doctrines or principles, and then make out that Sufism is limited to them!

Therefore I do not restrict my pupils or my friends to the exercises. They are only exercise. After these, life itself is the scripture to read; it is only real scripture. You must get to understand it, and what you do not understand at the first reading you must read again and try to understand it then.

Raja yoga is the best one for life in the Western world. This is because life in the West is so full of responsibilities and there is so little time to devote to solitude and practices. You have to practice wisdom and deep thought in all your affairs from morning till night; in this way you make your life into a teaching for yourself. Therefore whatever your work or business or profession, let that be your mode of progress, so that you advance through your every duty. At the same time, if you will only devote ten or twenty minutes to a practice it will prepare you for something better, and it will also help you in your work. Thus Raja Yoga, the yoga of life's experiences, is certainly the best for western life, but if a person prefers a life of retirement, let him take it.

Why does one need yoga? Because, in the first place, western education does not interfere with it. The church has still less influence. Necessary though discipline, reverence, and respect are, they are sometimes allowed to lapse, and then life becomes empty, drab, lacking something. Dharma is the one thing needed for the spiritual path, as both Shiva and Buddha pointed out. One should acquire the tendency to respect and to revere, and this comes from worship. This one thing that is needed is developed through devotion; that is why it is better, if possible, to add a little of the color of beauty to the Raja Yoga, and thus beautify your life. But whichever of these paths you choose, a teacher is needed. It is his blessing, his guidance that helps; it is the contact with him that is important.

A real teacher is only an instrument of God. It is his presence, what he wishes for you that helps; not the words he speaks. When I asked my teacher what is the sign of a real guru he says, "It is not his form, it is not his appearance, it is not what he says; it is his atmosphere, it is what his presence conveys to you, it is what his atmosphere tells you."

There is an English saying: actions speak louder than words, or: what you are speaks louder than what you say.

## **THE LIFE OF THE SAGE IN THE EAST**

WHEN I reflected on the English word "sage" it seems to me that it must come from two different roots, of which one is to be found in Sanskrit, namely "swaga", and the other in Persian, " Safa" or "saga." The first root means "heaven", which suggests that the one who tries to become a sage is trying to attain heaven or to become it himself. The other root suggests that a sage is a person who wishes to construct something, one who is constructive. But, of course, there is no such word as "sage" in any eastern language, though they possess a similar word, "sant", which has the same meaning as "saint." Then there is the word "sadhana ", which means "mastery"; and a Sadhu is one who masters life.

Now there are two different temperaments. There is the one which is always inclined to be contented with things, to accept everything as it comes, willing to live a retired life, resigned to everything that may happen. Indeed we



see this temperament more or less in everyone. The other temperament is the one, which wishes to master things, which has a desire to master every situation, to master another person, to master an undertaking, to act with the will power and courage.

No doubt there is good and evil in both temperaments. The person who is always retired and resigned and contented with everything is not necessarily all good, without any evil in him, nor is the one who controls others and masters circumstances always an ideal person. It is just that there are these two temperaments, and everyone has more or less of the one or of the other.

The Sadhu and the Sant represent these two temperaments. The Sadhu controls and masters things; the Sant is resigned and contented in all situations and under all circumstances in life. He chooses a life of retirement and resignation. If you were to ask me which of the two is superior I would say that there is neither superior I would say that there is neither superior nor inferior. If you work according to your temperament, that is the natural work for you, whereas if you work against your temperament it is like knocking yourself against a rock, and there is no hope of progress. But if you do what you are fitted for, and act accordingly to your temperament, then there will always be progress. The temperament is not a virtue to be displayed; neither is it something to be overcome so that one acts against one's own nature. The sage recognizes these two temperaments and uses them accordingly, giving them more rein and rendering them more evident to the eye of the seer. He studies how they operate in people's lives, and no doubt it is very interesting to study the lives of the sages in the East from this point of view; but to a stranger in these countries it is mystifying how their different behaviors can belong to sagehood or saintliness, because in the West people have the idea the sage must be kind, retiring and renouncing, or perhaps even a wonder-worker. So when such qualities are not in evidence it might seem that there is something wrong with the sages! To gain deep understanding of what the saintly life means, and to form a reasonable opinion about the sages in the East, much patience and tolerance are required. People are apt to be disappointed when they judge from appearances.

Hindu sages. We will first take the sages among the Hindus. This race is naturally sage-like, and a Hindu sage may be a Brahmin, a Kshatria, a Vaisha, or even a Sudra. There are sages among all castes in India. The idea has been worked out in that country for thousands of years; it is in the people's blood, and this tendency can be seen even in a child. In my own childhood I derived great pleasure from being in the presence of a sage. At an age when others likes to play ball or play with kites and pigeons I yearned for solitude. It is as if such a desire has been carried on for thousands of years; not only have the sages made their impression on the race, but the race has also been impressed by sagehood itself. The people have the greatest respect for a sage; the greatest admiration, whether they are in business or in a profession, or students, or whatever walks of life they follow. Their greatest joy is to be at the feet of a sage; it is as if one were at the feet of the Deity. So the greatest thing in the world, the highest ideal of life, is some day to be able to become a sage. Not only does the Brahmin feel thus, but also the laborer, the Sudra, has the desire to be released from his toil and obtain a glimpse of that beauty which is hidden in the sage.

There are two kinds of Hindu sages: the Vairagi and the Sant. The one is ascetic, the other is saintly. The life of the Vairagi is very surprising, very extraordinary, and it is a great puzzle to those who meet him. One might be quite afraid of a man who was lying down with ashes rubbed all over his face and body, or perhaps sitting in a graveyards outside the city, and going into the city only to obtain food for himself and his friends who are Vairagis like himself. At other times he goes off into the wilderness and lives there. He spends most of his time in meditation and in striving after mastery of the self.

The path, which the Hindus follow, is one of the four Yogas, and it is through Hatha Yoga, the path of abstinence, that the Vairagi endeavors to develop his spiritual life. In following this path, practices may be carried out which seem hideous, or at least very strange, to those who do not understand the underlying philosophy or ideal. Whatever he does, the object is to reach the spirit by killing everything that hides the spirit from his sight. One might say that he considers himself to be his own enemy, so he crushes everything that is not his spirit, everything that interferes with his spiritual progress. He seeks to kill all that is mortal within himself, realizing that in this way he can attain to a higher and more powerful life.

No words can ever describe the experience he gains. No one else but he himself can possibly understand his experience; it is like a child who has never eaten sugar what the word "sweet" means. Only they can understand the idea of sweet who have experienced sweetness. So a Vairagi is very powerful; to perform a miracle all he has to do is flick his hand. His whole life seems to stand before him as his obedient servant; all who see a Vairagi know that he is the master of life.

Once one is master of self one is master of life. The self is that which our life limited, so when we master it we master life, and we become its master in proportion to the degree in which we have attained self-mastery. Such a person is master even of plants and trees, or any living being; he has mastered everything. We cannot easily appreciate this, for it is quite un-intelligible until one has oneself developed that mastery in one's own life. Then it is possible to see how life seems to become obedient in all manner of relationships.

Do we not see, even in our own limited experience, how things go wrong when we have become weak in will or mind in one affair or another? It is not possible to master the conditions of life until we have learned to control ourselves. Once we have mastery over our self everything will go right. It is just the same as when a rider has no strength in his fingers, so that he cannot hold the horse's reins. His fingers must obey his mind before the horse will obey. This is true of all circumstances in life, and of all the various conditions around us, our relations, and our friends. We may complain that no one listens, that our servant does not do what we wish him to do, that our assistants do not carry out our orders. We may blame them when all the time it is ourselves who are to blame because we have not mastered ourselves first. After we have done this they will obey.

The Vairagi learns his lesson mainly through abstinence. Why is this? Because things go wrong through our own weakness; we do not do what we wish to do; we consider ourselves so small that we cannot achieve our own wishes.

There are many wonder-workers among the sages of the Vairagi category. But we do not think that they will mount a platform and perform! Anyone who walks on to a stage to show off miracles is false, not real. The real Vairagi aims at his own mastery and is not concerned with doing tricks for the world to see, so no one sees them. The Vairagi's whole life is a wonder, and yet the world is unaware of it. Not only is he a wonder in himself, but the whole world is a wonder to him, so great is his vision, his power, his inspiration. But his life is a very hard one; it is a great renunciation.

The other kind of sage is the Sant. He also grows through four stages, of which the first is Brahmacharya-shrama or the stage of study. He uses the intellect and he learns about life through both study and practice. This is an intellectual attainment of knowledge. From this he passes on to Gruhastha-shrama, the attainment of knowledge through practical experience of the responsibilities of life--responsibility for wife, husband, children, home; the experience of living with neighbors, with enemies; doing one's duty by them in every way. All this is necessary before he can become a sage.

Next there is Wanaprashta-shrama, in which the aspirant goes beyond serving just his family. His consciousness comes to realize that all he has done for his family so far has been done for himself, for his wife and children. Now he must live for others, for the people of the town, of the country, of the race; he must even do what he can for the whole world. This is the service of humanity, the path of duty.

Finally he arrives at Sannyasa-shrama, which is a life of retirement and solitude. This is the life of retreat. The man who has lived a life of honesty, virtue, goodness, and service is recognized as having done so by his wife and children, and they appreciate that now he should be allowed to follow the life of his own choice. They realize it is time for him to go into retreat. He must go into Sannyasa-shrama; but he does not do this unless his family consents.

Before describing this life I must explain why it is necessary. Why should not one always be in the world? Why the need for retirement at the latter part of life? This retirement is only too necessary. In the first place the man has given up all his life, all his time, all his energy, to the study of worldly things; secondly he has done all this in the interest of his family or perhaps for many people around him. It is right that he should some day have a rest. We ourselves feel justified in resting when Saturday comes, so why should he not have his Sunday after working all his life--a life that has been nothing but continual conflict every moment, proving him to be wise and kind and gentle, true, honest, and virtuous through it all? His patience and virtue have been tested through all the temptations to which he was exposed, through all of life's difficulties, dangers, humiliations, and responsibilities that had to be faced. This man is surely justified, on reaching the fourth stage of his life, in having a little peace, with no more worries or responsibilities of business or profession or even of his family. The world should leave him alone to think and meditate and let his muscles, bones, body, and mind be at rest. All this is natural. So you cannot imagine anyone in the East, and especially in India, not longing from the time he was born for the day when he can become a sage. Whatever may have been his occupation, profession, business, trade or family, he will have been longing for that moment when he could become a Vairagi at last, when he could cast off the load of responsibility that he

had carried on his back all those years. He has longed for the time when he can give himself over to thinking about the truth, having now peace and rest and opportunity to communicate with the eternal Being. He has all the time been hopping for his desire to be granted when he may have a rest, with enough time to think of God and live that life wherein one becomes capable of being one with God.

### **THE LIFE OF A SAGE IN THE EAST (continued)**

HOWEVER good and beautiful life in the world is, how true it is leaves so small a margin in which to give oneself the thought of God and truth! The daily duties take up every moment of one's time, and even of there is anything left over there is no end to the worries; and then there is disease and pain and suffering and all manner of other troubles.

A good man must have more patience, as he has to give in to people more and more; but although he will have his troubles, a wicked man will have twice as many, for he has not only the trouble which comes to a good person but also the troubles brought about by his own wickedness. The load is double.

Seclusion, silence, thoughtfulness, meditation, gentleness, all these make the rhythm of one's life appropriate for receiving inspiration, revelation, and communion, at-one-ment with God.

Perhaps you have noticed how things vary on different days. On some days you are very busy, enthusiastic about your work, and on such days you will not feel spiritually or religiously inclined because everything you do demands energy; while on other days you feel quite different, more religious, more desirous of seeking after truth. The troubles and worries of the world do not bother you so much, and the divine things and higher aspirations come more naturally. How is this? It is just rhythm, your mind, body, and whole being go through a certain rhythm, called Sabtal in Sufi terms. This is a rhythm whereby your mind, body, and soul come to feel an exaltation, an inclination towards higher things. It is just like the rising of a wave. A heart frozen through cold, through selfishness, has become liquid through some emotion, affection, love, or distress, sorrow, or despair. It becomes like an ocean when the waves form. The waves make a rhythm, a rhythm which soothes the mind, and which gives you joy and peace and a feeling of being inclined towards a higher truth. This is the life of the Sannyasi, the life adapted to higher aspirations and thought, to communication with the higher life.

At other times the work of Sannyasi is quiet. He is silent, yet sometimes he does speak to help those who come to him wishing to be guided through their worldly struggles. Then he becomes their guru. Most gurus belong to the rank of the Sannyasi, those who have adopted a life of retirement and who, while living this life, give teaching to pupils.

Buddhist sages. Then there are the Buddhist sages. Their life is different again. The Buddhist sage can begin his kind of life from the very first. He can become a sage at any age. He can become a chela, and his living comes to him wherever he goes. The house of any Buddhist is open to a sage; no one closes his door to him, so he never worries about his food, for he will get it wherever he goes.

The same respect is paid to the Buddhist sage to the Hindu sage, for he has renounced the world just like the Vairagi or the Sant. His life is devoted to teaching people good morals and to making their lives happy. Buddhists hold great celebrations all through the country to commemorate the sages. They never consider them as dead; they are so sure they have gone on to a new and better life. And this is most certainly true.

Sufi sages. Lastly we come to the Sufi sages. Here also we find two kinds, the Rind and the Salik. Those who are called fakirs all belong to the Rind. Their life consists in learning to disregard all worldly things. A person fears most being without such things, and this makes him a hypocrite all his life, for he fears missing the things of the world, so this is the first thing to learn to disregard. This is why wine is mentioned so often in the poetry of Rumi, Sa'di Jami, Hafiz, and Omar Khayyam. The country where they lived and died was Muslim, and wine was despised and abhorred, so they chose this word as well as other words abhorrent to the religion, and used them in their poetry to express the philosophy of human nature, while incurring the displeasure of the people in general. They hid the action of God and man within these words: wine, jar, glass, rose, etc.

Among these Rind are to be found the so-called dancing dervishes. The idea is that dancing implies motion, and motion means life; dancing expresses the joy of life. And what is joy? Joy is the sign of a good soul, of a good heart. You always notice that when a convivial person, a good soul, a good-hearted man, comes into your life he

brings delight to all. Whenever he speaks it is in good humor, and he brings pleasantness and joy. Being joyous himself he makes others cheerful. It is not hypocrisy; he is alive; he is joyous.

Take another person who comes weeping; he will make you want to weep to. Wherever he goes he brings gloom; he is taking misery along with him, and so he makes everyone else miserable. Now what does this mean? It just means that in the depth of his heart there is some decay. He is not enjoying life fully. The sign of life is having goodness, beauty, strength in your disposition, which means that you have some joy and are conscious of beauty, goodness, and joy. Having joy in your nature and disposition, you bring it to everybody you meet. Well, that is the state of the dervish. He says to himself, "If I may not dance, what shall I do?" Possessing the joy of the presence of his Beloved, he feels the Sublimity of nature; he is conscious of all the motion going on throughout nature. It intoxicates him like wine.

Besides, there is a certain ritual among some dervishes, and they trace its origin to the time of Jelal-ud-Din Rumi, the great Persian poet. It is related on one occasion Rumi, absorbed in the thought of all life as being one beauty, in the thought of the motion and rhythm of life, began to revolve; and while he circled round and round in front of his pupils, the skirt of his garment as it twirled produced such a beautiful effect that they stored it in their memory for ever after. So the dance celebrates this memory.

The teaching of Jesus Christ will be found among the dervishes; indeed, not only his teaching but his life too. If you wished to see a living example of Christ's life you could see it among the dervishes, for among them you will find some who have taken a vow of poverty and chastity, as in earliest times. There is no compulsion of any kind about it; they do not have to follow the same kind of life that Christ lived. Wherever you traveled in India or Persia, you will see this whenever you meet a true dervish.

The other form of the Sufi path is that of the Salik. The Salik is a person who believes that he can be a sage and at the same time follow his worldly occupation. His work is making his life amidst the responsibilities of everyday affairs, and at the same time he does this for higher purpose; his mind is fixed on higher aspirations even while in the world. Every act in all the affairs of life is directed towards higher purpose; His mind is fixed on higher aspirations even while in the world. Every act in all the affairs of life is directed towards higher aspirations. So you find that the Salik is a worldly man, with the responsibility of a home or profession or business or trade, and yet when he has attained to that height he can be made a Murshid; he can be a teacher. It is not necessary to renounce the world and become a monk; he can be a Murshid even though he is still working in the world.

It is not that a Murshid gives his knowledge to someone else. It is not possible to give one's knowledge that way, so the Murshid does not profess to be able to do this or that. His work is to help another person to find out for himself, to discover for himself what is true and what is not. There are no doctrines to impart, there are no principles to lay down, and there are no tenets according to which his pupils must order their lives. He is just a guide along the path. He is the one who kindles the light that is already in the pupil. He does not stand before the pupil as a priest; he is as a brother, a colleague, and a friend. As he is just a human being he is limited, exactly as the pupil is; he is liable to make mistakes and to have failures as anyone. He enjoys no special authority, nor is he one who stands apart in holiness. He will say, "I am not more holy than any other person; if he is not holy, no more am I." No, the Murshid is the friend of the mureed; he is a friend on a path, which the mureed has not yet trodden. So he can advise him if the mureed desires to be guided, and he can be his friend if the mureed desires him to be a friend. He can solve the mureed's problems; he can show him what truth is and how to attain to it.

The sage in the East is regarded everywhere with respect, whether he be Murshid, a sadhu, a Sannyasi, or a sant. The name does not signify. One will hear that Hindu and Buddhist and Sufi sages are all different from one another. Well, that is true; they can be different just as in Western countries there are differences in the churches. For all that, there is really no difference between the Sadu, the Sannyasi, and the sant. Both Hindu and Muslim will bow before the sage, whether he be Buddhist, Vedantist, or Sufi. No one makes any distinction. Every sage is just a person on the path of truth, and so people respect him, though the feeling, which one receives from a sage, may be a little different in each case. But they all bring with them a light and an inspiration, which are quite remarkable, as I know from my own experience.

When one is in the presence of a Vairagi everything seems faded and pale, as if nothing in life had any value; it seems as if one had risen above all weakness and above all earthly goods. One receives a feeling of kindliness, as if one were above everything; it seems as if all else was just a hindrance. That is the feeling one gets.

In the presence of a Sannyasi the feeling is different again. One has a sense of inspiration, of revolution. All the problems of life seem to be settled at once in his mere presence. It is like a light illuminating one, so that one begins to feel things and look upon them differently. The feeling one gets in the presence of a Buddhist sage is moral experience. One gets a feeling of self-sacrifice, of gentleness, goodness, and sympathy for every living creature.

When one is in the presence of a dervish of the Sufi one gets a feeling of ecstasy, which Omar Khayyam calls wine. It is an atmosphere charged with magnetism; there is a sense of intoxication, a spiritual intoxication which could never be compared with any effects of wine of the worldly kind.

Lastly, when one is in the presence of a Salik one feels as if one's eyes had been opened so as to perceive all the beauty there is in the world, the beauty of the whole manifestation of life. It is as if the curtain had risen upon a stage as soon as one had arrived and one found the stage full of every imaginable beauty. Some wonderful beauty had hitherto been hidden, and now it is all opened out before one.

For those who expect wonder working from a sage, who expect him to prove that he is a sage, I say that it is the very presence of a real sage which brings such great joy and deep peace. One need never seek a greater wonder than this evidence in order to know that one is in the presence of a true sage.

## THE WORD

IN the East, it is believed by the Vedantis that the creation originated from what they call "word", "sound." The same idea has prevailed among the Semitic religions from the earliest times. This word is *Ism-e Azam*.

The mystery of this word is explained in the form of stories in the Arabian 1001 Nights, stories which have always appealed to the minds of readers both in the East and in the West, although most of those who read them do not discern the mystery hidden within them. To them they are just stories.

However, the name of the Word changes. Vedantists call it *Nada Brahma*, "word-creator"; then there is *Ism-e Azam* or "word of power", and other Biblical and Qur'anic expressions. The fact that the mysterious always attracts leads some people to make things out to be mysterious which are not, and thus they profess to know a secret which others cannot know. Here there is the greatest opportunity for deluding the unwary, but when one has to come to understand the mystery of this word one understands the mystery of all religion, for all religion lies in this one word *Ism-e Azam*.

Modern science is coming near to understanding this. On the one hand Professor Bose speaks about pulsations and shows that vibrations are apparent even in the vegetable kingdom, so that they can be recorded in graphic formulas; and on the other hand investigation have demonstrated the forms which the different vowels make on a glass plate, so that one sees various designs. The forms of plant and leaves can also be shown in this way. On a recent visit to Paris I met a great scientist, Professor Frossard, who for years has been investigating the effect of the vibrations of the voice upon different parts of the human body, and who has been able to demonstrate these various effects scientifically.

However, yogis had worked with sound for thousands of years before and such researches were thought of or undertaken. The school of Mantra Yoga is concerned with this science. The one belief that started this was that vibration is creative and that the whole universe was produced by sound, by the Word; as it says in the Bible, first was sound then was light. This contains the mystical thought that one may understand vibrations as spreading in two directions; when audible they become intelligible, and coming from the form of the Being they become visible. But even if the Word were neither audible nor visible it would have capacity of being both. If our power of sight and hearing is not enough to help us it is because the reality is beyond and above the range of our sight and hearing, and therefore it is not intelligible to us; we are not aware of it. But if our sight and hearing allowed us to hear and see it we would know that all life is vibration.

There is another consideration. Whatever is continuous disappears from our perception, whereas we become aware of anything that is momentarily tangible. This is shown when we start a voyage. At first the noise of the engines is almost unbearable, but as we go on we get accustomed to it, so that after four or five or perhaps ten days we find that we do not notice the noise any more, while at the same time we can hear the least whisper of a friend speaking to us. The continuous noise is now no longer audible unless we stop to pay attention to it.

It is just like this with the whole mechanism of the universe. It is audible all the time; it is visible both externally and inwardly. As it is said in the Psalms, speaking of the heavens, "There is neither speech nor language: but their voices are heard among them. Their sound is gone out into all lands: and their words into the ends of the world. But we are so concerned with our own activities, with the things we ourselves are interested in, that our consciousness can only retain these and pays no attention to all the other things, loud as they are.

There are two things to consider: the mastery of the mystery itself, and the insight into the mystery, its perception. To gain insight into things the mystic enters into the depths of the whole mechanism of the universe by educating his senses to be keen enough to see and hear the working through it all, through the whole cosmic system. Taking these two senses as his means of investigation he dives into the universal life. But there is another way to take, and that is by the power of the word that we utter, which by means of its vowels and consonants enables the mystic to master life. How is it that he can master life by this means? It is because this is the only source of creation. Everything that has been created and then constructed or destroyed has come into being through vibration and through sound, so the mystic considers that this is the chief means for accomplishing everything.

All the religions of the past have made use of this truth. It has been a cult in every religion, but they have only given the outcome to the world without making its mystery known. The great mystics who understood it did not impart this knowledge to the masses. It would not be wise to give a loaded revolver to a person who may lose his temper at any moment; it is necessary to be sure that he has such control that he will only use it in the best way. So it has been with the mystics. They do not give initiation until they are sure that they can trust a person, that he will make the best use of it. It is not that they are afraid of somebody stealing the mastery they possess; if it were only that, the mystic would be no different from any worldly man who is clinging to his possession. The mystic must be more generous with his knowledge than anyone else. He is aware that anyone can attain to this knowledge and he must always help others. Out of the goodness and kindness of his heart he will deny no one his help in every possible way.

As to the Word, we find that there are vowels and consonants. Each vowel represents one of the five elements: earth, water, air, fire, and ether; the consonants are the companions of the vowels, and together they form words. Every letter is related to the planets and the planetary influences. Besides, words have a practical effect, a scientific power working on the body, especially on its different centers as recognized by the mystics: the head, the breast, the solar plexus, etc. The consciousness must be awakened in each center. For instance a musician accustomed to the piano seems to have his consciousness in his hands; the violinist has his in his fingertips, so that it seems as if the whole of life comes through them. These shows how our consciousness, energy, and life can be directed to a certain place, so as to make the best use of that part of our being. Every center of man's being is a vehicle for perceiving the life within as well as the life without; thus it is possible at will to send this consciousness and energy to that particular center. One can then gain more insight into life, and one can gain a stronger hold and more control of life. Then, when the person repeats the Word, its vowels and consonants have some connection with a particular part of the body.

But when we consider the part played by the mind we come to see that every word spoken with the mind has a greater action and effect. Furthermore, there is the value attached to the meaning of the word. A person may continually call his son or daughter wise; if they keep on hearing him call them wise they really will become wise. If, however, he calls them stupid the very fact of hearing this makes them stupid in the end. The repetition of the word suggests it to them; that is why it is a great mistake to give nicknames, which either have no meaning or only a silly meaning. Even when given in fun, as a joke, they still exert their effect.

We see then that the meaning of a word has a great deal to do with its action. And when both the word itself and its meaning are used for contemplation they become very powerful.

You may ask, does language have any relation to the power of the word? Does it matter which language one uses? Must the word be a Latin word, or Hebrew, or Zend, Eastern or Western? The answer to this is that in the East each keeps to his own language. Brahmins offer their prayers in Sanskrit although this is a language long dead; all the same they use Sanskrit for their Mantras. A Parsi may live outside his original country, but he repeats his Mantras according to the tradition of ancient Persia, though his religion became extinct there a thousand years ago. So you see it does not matter to a mystic what language he is using. He sees the source of all languages in the human heart. Whatever the language, Arabic, Sanskrit, Persian, Hindi, it is still human. The more you study this subject the more you will see how the source of all languages is one. Even the English language contains Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic words. Many names would never be suspect of being Persian in origin, and yet they are. So

many names are Semitic, so many are Sanskrit. People never suspect how many of their own words belong to other languages. No language in the world today can claim to be so pure as to have no admixture from others. Any language is really a mixture of many languages. It is unfortunate that every later language is just a corrupted form of a former one. Hardly anyone would understand me if I spoke of Dar-e Salam, but if I say Jerusalem everyone can. We see how true this is when we study some words of the Bible. Alleluia, for instance, is really Il-alla-ha. The order of the letters is changed, and this makes it seem a different word; the spelling is altered because different countries spell their words differently. The vowels and also the vibrations change to a certain extent, and so the mystics prefer, when possible, to adhere to the original form of the word. It is not because it belonged to a certain language of the past, but because there is actually more benefit to be obtained by using the word in its original form.

There are also words, which no language can claim for its own. This is true of the word *Ism-e Azam*, which means the word of power. No one can claim this word as belonging to his language; it is a word, which belongs to no language. Why is this? It is because it is a word of nature. Art has reproduced it, but art has not produced it. All other words have been derived from it, for *Ism-e Azam* is the spirit of all words; it is the root of all other words.

While the different schools of Sufism understand all this and use different methods in teaching it, they do not restrict themselves to one particular practice. The Sufi regards practices as prescriptions which are not given indiscriminately to everyone, but are chosen separately, one for this pupil, another for that. These practices are only preparations for receiving the truth. There is no such thing as giving truth to one person, and then his giving it to another, for truth by its very nature cannot be uttered, cannot be given. One cannot give that which cannot be put into speech. So the teacher gives a method for finding the truth, for unfolding it, for unlocking that which seems to be in one's heart. No real teachers, no true mystic, has ever claimed to be able to give one anything like this. It is clearly impossible for anyone to impart his knowledge to another person; he can only show him how to unfold his own knowledge to himself. Everybody possesses a kingdom, but he has to find it. The seeker will find it easy to discover the truth when he has the help of someone who himself has trodden the path towards it.

In the story from *The 1001 Nights* about Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves we find the mystery of the Word portrayed by Ali Baba. It was at a time when Ali Baba was in great distress for lack of money; he badly wanted a change of circumstances. He was even wondering whether he should commit suicide, and then he thought he would try and obtain what he needed, try if he could find a place where his desire would be fulfilled. After traveling some time he arrived at a certain place where a dervish was sitting. He began a conversation with him, and the dervish said, "Yes, I will give you the key to what you want. Go to such and such a place, and there you will find a rock. Then, standing in front of this rock, repeat such and such a word." So Ali Baba went to the place indicated by the dervish and after having found the rock repeated the word before it. Then the rock split and revealed a path opening up before him.

This rock is the heart of man. The dervish is the Murshid, the spiritual guide, and the word he gave him to utter is this mystery: that by help of the Word the treasure can be found and a door opened by which one can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Self-confidence, faith, trust, perseverance, and patience are all necessary. As long as you tell yourself that it is not possible for a dervish to give you a word, or that this word cannot possibly do what he says, then even though you went especially to that rock just to call out the word, you would find that the rock would not open. So then you would think, "It is no use. I will go home again," or you would think, "This is a rock: how can it possibly be opened or split?" True, it will never be opened in this case, for then the word has no power. The word is the sword, and the sword needs an arm to wield it; the arm to wield it is faith. If there is no faith there is no arm either; the sword is there but there is no one to wield it. Someone must be there to hold the sword, and it is faith that will hold it.

The power of the Word has shown itself to me in all the experiences of my life. Every moment has been full of wonder; every successive moment a greater and greater wonder. It is true that people may produce various phenomena by other methods, but this is not the way of the sage. The way of the sage is to understand for himself. When a person wishes to change his purpose in life, like someone who turns over in his sleep, the sage might say to him: "Would you like to observe the phenomenon? Then come with me." The sage would never go about indiscriminately to people, "Look at this phenomenon, which I have performed!" No, even to his own pupils he will say, "I will show you how to see for yourself what the phenomenon of life can reveal to you. If I were to show you these phenomena it would still not be you that are producing them. Even if my showing the phenomena were to

give you faith, it would be a much stronger faith if you could observe the phenomena for yourself. If you were only trusting in my phenomenon you would only believe it to be true for a few moments." This thing that cannot be spoken of before anyone or everyone is only understood in the heart and kept there. That is why it is called mysticism.

[\[Volume XII Contents\]](#)



# THE SUFI TEACHINGS OF HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

## Volume XII

### The Vision of God and Man, Confessions, Four Plays

#### PART II: CONFESSIONS

#### CHAPTER 1

#### THE EARLY STAGES OF MY LIFE

"Whatsoever road I took, it joined street which leads to Thee." - THE DABISTAN.

I WAS born in Baroda, India, in the year 1882, when a great religious reform began, not only in India itself, but the entire world over, and which was the first source of our present-day awakening. I am sure it was the planetary influence which existed at that time that has kept me busied all my life in seeking the divine truth, which is as the garment of God's glory.

Music and mysticism were my heritage from both my paternal and maternal ancestors, among whom were numbered Maulabakhsh, whom people called the Beethoven of India and whose portrait is in the Victoria and Albert Museum as South Kensington, and Jumma Shah, the great seer of Panjab. I have ever felt much embarrassed when I was compared with these masters, and this humility brought the old saying to my mind, "Have pride in thine own merits rather than in those of thy ancestors."

"I also came out as a brook from a river; and as a conduit into a garden." - ECCLESIASTICUS.

My curiosity about the hidden secrets of nature was early aroused, and I made frequent inquiries concerning the mysteries of religion, such as, Where does God Live? How old is God? Why should we pray to Him? And why should we fear Him? Why should people die? And where do they go after death? If God has created all, who was the creator of God?

My parents, Rahemat Khan and Khatija Bibi, would patiently answer me in the simplest and most plausible manner possible, but I would prolong the argument until they were wearied. Then I would ponder upon the same questions.

"Mankind's great enemy is idleness. There is no friend like energy, and if you cultivate that you will never fail." - BHARTRIHARI.

I was sent to school when quite young, but I fear that I was more inclined to play than to study. I preferred punishment to paying attention to those subjects in which I had no interest. I enjoyed religion, poetry, morals, logic, and music more than all other learning, and I took music as a special subject at the Academy of Baroda and repeatedly won the first prize there.

I had so much curiosity about strangers, fortune-tellers, fakirs, dervishes, spiritualists, and mystics, that I would very often absent myself from my meals to seek them out. My taste for music, poetry, and philosophy increased daily, and I loved my grandfather's company more than a game with boys of my own age. In silent fascination I observed his every movement and listened to his musical interpretations, his methods of study, his discussions and his conversations. My attempts at writing poetry without any training in the art of meter and form induced my parents to place me under the tutorship of Kavi Ratnakar, the great Hindustani poet.

I also began to compose, and sang a song of prayer to Ganesh in Sanskrit before His Highness Sayajirao Gaikwar,

Maharaja of Baroda, who rewarded my song with a valuable necklace and scholarship. This encouraged me to advance further in music under the guidance of Maulabaksh, who inspired me with music from kindred soul to soul.

"He was born the Lord of what is, who by His majesty is the one King of the moving world that breathes and closes its eyes."

My kinfolk were Muslim, and I grew up devoted to the Holy Prophet and loyal to Islam, and never missed one prayer of the five which are the daily portion of the faithful.

One evening in the summer time I was kneeling on the house-roof, offering my Nimaz (prayers) to Allah the Great, when the thought smote me that although I had been praying so long with all trust, devotion, and humility, no revelation had been vouchsafed to me, and that it was therefore not wise to worship Him, that One whom I had neither seen nor fathomed. I went to my grandfather and told him I would not offer any more prayers to Allah until I had both beheld and gauged Him. "There is no sense in following a belief and doing one's ancestors did before one, without knowing the true reason," I said.

Instead of being vexed Maulabakhsh was pleased with my inquisitiveness, and after a little silence he answered me by quoting a sura of the Qur'an, "We will show them our signs in the world and in themselves, that the truth may be manifested to them." And then he soothed my impatience and explained, saying, "The signs of God are seen in the world, and the world is seen in thyself."

These words entered so deeply into my spirits, that from this time every moment of my life has been occupied with the thought of the divine immanence; and my eyes were thus opened, as the eyes of the young man by Elijah, to see the symbols of God in all aspects of nature, and also in that nature which is reflected within myself. This sudden illumination made everything appear as clear to me as in a crystal bowl of a translucent jewel. Thenceforth I devoted myself to the absorption and attainment of truth, the immortal and perfected Grace.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **MY STUDY OF RELIGIONS**

"Wisdom which is the worker of all things taught me, for in her is an understanding spirit." -SOLOMON.

I first studied comparative religions with an open mind; not in a critical spirit but as an admirer and a lover of truth in all its guises. I read the lives of the founders, prophets, and seers with as much reverence as their most devout adherents. This brought me the bliss of realization of one truth, which all religions contain, as different vessels may yet hold the same wine. It was the conception of truth in all its manifold forms and expressions, ever borne by different messengers, who most wondrously, by their very diversity of grab, civilization, nationality, and age, revealed the one Source of the inspiration. To me their sole difference was caused by the laws of space and time.

It was therefore natural for the messengers of truth to convey their message in the language of the land wherein they were born, and in the style suited to the life of their period. For each one was needed in his place and adapted to his era, and the difference between them existed only in those principles and rituals which were given to the people of that time and harmonized with their standard of intelligence and evolution: even as a physician has to change his prescriptions according to the patient's state of improvement before he can bring about the cure; or as in school, at each term and in every year, a new course of study is taught through different grades.

Man, not generally understanding this fact and its motive, and owing to the blind dogmatic faith which obsesses him, has always clung to the originator and ignored the new prophet. Such was the common lot of Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed, and of all the Masters and Shining Ones who have revealed in the sorrows they had to bear during their own lives in the struggle between the cross and the truth, which is expressed by the symbol of the cross. The hurt from which the prophets have ever suffered lay in the rebellion of the ignorant, who were unable to realize the truth hidden in their teachings, and thus mocked and scoffed at them. But all the true messengers justly asserted the truth in a way to suit the period wherein they brought their message.

"Whosoever in Love's city enters finds but room for One, and but in Oneness union." -JAMI

The masters of the Hindus, such as Shiva, Vishnu, Rama, and Krishna, claimed each in his turn to be a

reincarnation of one another, or in other words an incarnation of Brahma, the supreme God, because the people would not have listened to them without this proclamation. In this way the materialists who never move an inch without definite reason and logic were trained by the Buddha Gautama, who explained the great truth to them in the simple words of their own language.

Zoroaster imparted the law of action and nature-worship, the mystical import of burnt offerings and fire, the symbol of love, light, and purity, and adapted these to the intellectual standard of his followers. King Solomon revealed the truth from his throne when his simple subjects adored him as God, and Abraham preached when devotion was idolized, and was willing even to sacrifice his own son to the divine Will.

When the world was awakened to the loveliness of music, David sang forth the same truth in his most melodious voice, and when beauty reigned in her fair dominance, Joseph appeared in all his youth and charm. Moses came when men were athirst for miracles. And in the age of hereditary power, Christ, as the Son of God, stayed the world from ignorance and error, and sowed the seed of spiritual freedom; this in time grew and brought forth the epoch of democracy, wherein Mohammed carried the last message of the religious republic, Islam. and claimed to be Abda, the servant, and the Rasul of God.

This implies that each one of these, though still the bearer of the mission, the herald of God's decree, was also a new step in human evolution, at those times when the world was ripe enough and ready to receive the message, not from a superior claimant but from one among the Shining Hosts.

Mohammed's saying, "None but God exists", explained the essence of all previous messages most clearly. The lesson of Mohammed, once learned, left no need for continuance of prophetic teaching, because it proved that each being bears the divine source thereof within himself, and that the evolution of man has now prepared him for the Kingdom which is within.

Indeed, all the prophets from Adam to Mohammed, who was the fulfillment of God's tidings, have revealed to us the numerous aspects which the same truth can bear, or, in other words, truth has manifested itself in various names and different forms to attain its glorious end. But the manifold aspects of truth have not been recognized in man's ignorance, and thus all the racial and religious prejudices among creeds and castes, as well as the wars and differences between nations, have arisen from his narrowness and slowness of perception. Each one called the other heathen or pagan, Kafir or Mlench, upholding his Master as the only true initiate, as though the Master were his own personal property. Yet the Masters were born not for one family or one nation or race, but verily for all mankind. Truly only followers and zealots of different religions fall away from the truth, for they are blinded by patriotism and have raised pedantic prejudices against the teachings and spirits of those pure Masters, who had neither any concern for their religion nor their own name and personal appearance but lived only in the cause of truth.

This error is due entirely to those disciples who swear by the mortal names of the Masters and recognize their personalities alone, instead of accepting them all as one boundless embodiment of truth. The Masters have never desired their human bodies to be adored as saviors; this is merely an exaggeration and the mistaken conception of their followers. Their bodies were but as the vessels of truth and the truth they brought to us is the only savior, then, now, and forever. As the Bible declares, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Truth, the real savior and messiah, is untouched by death and disease; it is everlasting, omnipresent, and omnipotent. Truth, indeed, was Adam, Moses, and Christ, and the very truth was Mohammed.

Yet, although every religion comprises a large number of followers, each person has his own religion peculiar to himself. He is sometimes unaware of this fact and attaches himself most enthusiastically to the religion of his race and nation.

If he only knew the true religion, which God has intended for him, all his struggles would be at an end. Those who judge a religion by its principles are mistaken, for good or bad as well as right and wrong depend on one's own point of view, and are therefore sometimes liable to mental inversion. Those who fight for their religion on the authority of history are fanatics, for they must know that history is man-and not God-made, and that many truths are lost in the lapse of time, while many exaggerations attain favor or disfavor through the biased personal opinions of the historians. He who adheres to his beliefs and disbeliefs without reason is blinded with bigotry.

Still, were a Buddhist to come to me saying, "Our Lord Buddha was the only true teacher", I would answer,

"Verily!" And if a Hindu cried to me that Krishna is the ideal master, I would say, "You speak rightly." And if a Christian should declare that Christ is the highest of all, I would reply, "Undoubtedly." For it is the nature of man to consider as best that which he can idealize best. But if anyone came to me saying, "I cannot believe in all this talk for I can only recognize the same truth within each one of these", I would say, "You, my friend, are the one who really knows, for you have understood and unveiled the real secret of God's nature."

Rumi says, "The Sufis take the meat, leaving the bones for others to fight over."

## CHAPTER 3

### I START ON MY INDIAN TOUR

"The world shall live in me, not I in it." -AKHLAK-E JALALI.

GLORY be to God that this universal belief saved me from falling into the crooked paths of bigotry and prejudice, on which so many children of God pass the night of life like a flock of ignorant sheep. They walk in herds unto the very gates of death, unaware of their Why and Whither, while even the voice of immortality cannot recall them, and they are lost unto the ages!

When Maulabakhsh, my grandfather, died I was in deep despair. I grieved for a very long time over the loss of my musical guide and inspiration, realizing the uncertainty of this life, and that my own existence was only worth enduring if I could be of some use to the world. I appreciated the great service Maulabakhsh had rendered to India by giving its music its music a feasible system of notation, and wondered how I could carry on his work.

At one period music in India was regarded not only as a medium for perfecting humanity, but also as a spiritual manifestation. My grandfather, with his intense feeling for both his art and his people, believed that music could only be raised from its present degeneration by using it as a teacher of morals and a prophet of the Lord's glory.

Once, in my utter despair at my futility in comparison with him, I broke down completely, crying, "Allah! If our people had lost only their wealth and power it would not have been so grievous to bear, since these temporal things are always changing hands in the mazes of Maya. But the inheritance of our race, the music of the Divine, is also leaving us through our own negligence, and that is a loss my heart cannot sustain!"

I invoked the name of Sharda, the goddess of music, and prayed her to protect her sacred art.

And thus it came about that I left my home with the view of creating a universal system of music. I started out on this mission when I was eighteen years old, and was welcomed at the courts of Rajas and Maharajas who greatly encouraged and rewarded me for my efforts. From all the leading cities of India I received addresses and medals in recognition and appreciation of my music, and thus increased the number of my friends, pupils, and sympathizers throughout India.

"He who though dressed in fine apparel exercises tranquility, is quiet, subdued, restrained, chaste, and has ceased to find fault with others, he indeed is a Brahman, an ascetic, a friar." - DHAMMAPADA.

The Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Maheboob Ali Khan, a great mystic ruler of India and a devotee of music and poetry showed me special favor. Several times my playing moved the Nizam to tears; and when I had done he asked curiously, what mystery lay in my music?

Then, answering him, I explained, "Your Highness, as sound is the highest source of manifestation, it is mysterious within itself, and whosoever has the knowledge of sound, he indeed knows the secret of the universe. My music is my thought, and my thought is my emotion; the deeper I dive into the ocean of feeling, the more beautiful are the pearls I bring forth in the form of melodies. Thus my music creates feeling within me even before others feel it. My music is my religion; therefore worldly success can never be a proper price for it, and my sole object in music is to achieve perfection."

This explanation, together with my playing, charmed the Nizam so much that he presented me with a purse full of golden coins, and placing his own precious emerald ring upon my finger named me "Tansen", after the great Indian singer of the past. This incident brought me gifts and titles from all parts of India. But honors for myself did not really satisfy me. How could I be content with my own exalted position when my fellow musicians were looked

upon with contempt by conservative India?

Naturally I realized that it was due partly to the musicians themselves, who are as a rule illiterate and who look to the princes and potentates for support, feeding their false pride with flattery and subservience, and thus losing the independence and inspiration of their art. Then again, the masses are untrained in the subject, while the educated classes are far too busy adopting Western ideas and sacrificing literature, philosophy, and music to polo, cricket, and tennis. I met many of the latter, who made it a boast that they knew nothing about the music of their own country, furnishing their homes with blaring gramophones and hiding their sitars away in disgrace.

"O Thou whose kingdom passes not away, pity him whose kingdom is passing away!" - dying words of CALIPH VATHEK.

To my amazement and horror, all the medals and decorations which I had gathered as emblems of my professional success, and which are a source of pride to me, gained as they were by so much endeavor, enthusiasm, and the labor of many years spent in constant wandering from place to place, were in a single instant snatched away from me forever. In a moment of abstraction they were left in a car, which could not be traced despite all my efforts. But in place of the disappointment, which at first oppressed me, a revelation from God touched the hidden chords of my mind and opened my eyes to the truth.

I said to myself, "It matters not how much time you have spent to gain that which never belonged to you but which you called your own; today you understand it is yours no longer. And it is the same with all you possess in life, your property, friends, and relations; even your own body and mind. All that you call "my", not being your true property, will leave you, and only that which you name "I", which is absolutely disconnected with all that is called "my", will remain. Why not go forth and strive for that which is worth gaining in life? Why not thus attain to true glory, instead of wasting your valuable opportunities in vain greed for wealth, fame, reputation, and those worldly honors which are here today and forgotten tomorrow?"

I knelt down and thanked God for the loss of my medals, crying, "Let all be lost from my imperfect vision but thy true Self, Ya Allah!"

I then set forth in pursuit of philosophy, visiting every mystic I could on my journeys to different Indian cities. I traveled through jungles, across mountains, and along riverbanks in search of mystics and hermits, playing and singing before them until they also sought my society.

It was in Nepal, during the pilgrimage of Pashpathinath, that I met a Muni among several sages. He was a Mahatma of the Himalayas and lived in a mountain cave, and untouched by the earthly contact, ambitions, and environments, he seemed to be the happiest man in the world. After I had entertained him with my music he, without seeming to notice, revealed to me the mysticism of sound, and unveiled before my sight the inner mystery of music. I thereafter met other mystics, with whom I discoursed on different subjects, and whose blessings I obtained through my art.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **MY INTEREST IN SUFISM**

"Well-makers lead the water; archers bend the bow; carpenters hew a log of wood; wise people fashion themselves." - DHAMMAPADA.

AT Ajmer I visited the tomb of Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti, the most celebrated Sufi saint of India. The atmosphere of his last resting-place was in itself a phenomenon; a sense of calm and peace pervaded it, and among all that throng of pilgrims I yet felt as if I were the only one present. At nightfall I went home and said Tahajud, the midnight prayer.

And lo! At the end of my prayers there came to me a voice, as though in answer to my invocations. It was the voice of a fakir calling the people to prayer before sunrise, and he sang, "Awake O man, from thy fast sleep! Thou knowest not that death watcheth thee every moment. Thou canst not imagine how great a load thou hast gathered to carry on thy shoulders, and how long the journey yet is for thee to accomplish. Up! up! The night is passed and the sun will soon arise!"

The unearthly quiet of the hour and the solemnity of the song moved me to tears. Sitting on my rug with my rosary in my hand, I reflected that all the proficiency and reputation which I had achieved were utterly profitless in regard to my Najat or salvation. I recognized that the world was neither a stage set up for our amusement nor a bazaar to satisfy our vanity and hunger, but a school wherein to learn a hard lesson. I then chose quite a different path to that which I had followed until then; in other words I turned over a new page in my life.

The morning broke and the birds began their hymn of praise to God. I heard men and women pass by below, some going to the mosque, others to the temples, and the general masses to the toil that yields their daily bread. Then I too fared forth and, lost in thought, not knowing my destination, made my way towards the jungle, with an inner yearning to be apart from the world and give an outlet to the thoughts and emotions with which my mind was occupied.

Thus I arrived at a cemetery where a group of dervishes sat on the green grass, chattering together. They were all poorly clad, some without shoes and others without coats; one had shirt with only one sleeve and another lacked them both. One wore a robe with a thousand patches and the next a hat without a crown. This strange group attracted my attention and I sat there for some time, noticing all that was going on yet feigning to be utterly indifferent.

Presently their Pir-o-Murshid or Master came towards them, even more scantily dressed than they, and with a group of dervishes circling round him as he approached. Two of the latter led the odd procession, and with each step they cried out loudly, "Hosh bar dum, nazur bar kadum, khilwat dar anjuman!" - Be conscious of your breath and watch every step you take, and thus experience solitude in the crowd!

When the Murshid arrived at the assembly of his disciples each one greeted the other, saying, "Ishq Allah, Mabud Allah!" -God is love and God is beloved! It was this very greeting which later unveiled for me the Bible words that God is love, and also the verse of the Arabian poet Abulallah, who says,

Church, a Temple, or a Ka'ba stone,  
Qur'an or Bible, or a martyr's bone,  
All these and more my heart can tolerate  
Since my religion is of love alone.

The solemnity of the sacred words they uttered found their echo in my soul, thereupon I watched their ceremonial with still greater attention. Naturally at first sight their dire poverty was puzzling, but then I had learned before I saw them how the holy Prophet had always prayed to Allah to sustain him in his life among the Mesquin or dervishes, who voluntarily choose this humble way of living. The queer patches on their garments reminded me of the words of Hafiz, "Do not be fooled thyself by short sleeves full of patches, for most powerful arms are hidden under them."

The dervishes first sat lost in contemplation, reciting charms one after the other, and then they began their music. I forgot all my science and technique while listening to their simple melodies, as they sang to the accompaniment of sitar and dholok the deathless words of the Sufi Masters such as Rumi, Jami, Hafiz, and Shams-e Tabrez.

The rhapsody, which their ecstasies conjured up, seemed to me so strong and vital that the very leaves of the trees seemed to hang spellbound and motionless. Although their emotions manifested themselves in varying forms, they were regarded with silent reverence by all that strange company. Each one of them revealed a peculiar mood of ecstasy; some expressed it in tears and others in sighs, some in dances and yet others in the calm of meditation. Although I did not enjoy the music as much as they, still it impressed me so deeply that I felt as if I were lost in a trance of harmony and happiness.

But the most amazing part of the proceedings came when the assembly was about to disperse. For one of the dervishes arose and, while announcing Bhundara or dinner, addressed them in the following terms, "O Kings of Kings! O Emperors of Emperors!" This amused me greatly at the time, while I regarded their outward appearance. My first thought made them merely kings of imagination, without throne or crown, treasury, courtiers, or dominions-those natural possessions and temporal powers of kingship.

But the more I brooded upon the matter, the more I questioned whether environment or imagination made a king. The answer came at last: the king is never conscious of his kingship and all its attributes of luxury and might,

unless his imagination is reflected in them and thus proves his true sovereignty. For instance, if a baby were crowned and seated upon a throne he would never comprehend his high position until his mind evolved sufficiently to realize his surroundings. This shows how real our surroundings seem to us, and yet how dead they are in the absence of imagination. And it also reveals how fleeting time and the changes of matter make all the kings of the earth but transitory kings, ruling over transitory kingdoms; this is because of their dependence upon their environment instead of their imagination. But the kingship of the dervish, independent of all external influences, based purely on his mental perception and strengthened by the forces of his will, is much truer and at once unlimited and everlasting. Yet in the materialistic view his kingdom would appear as nothing, while in the spiritual conception it is an immortal and exquisite realm of joy.

Verily, they are the possessors of the kingdom of God and all His seen and unseen treasure is in their own possession, since they have lost themselves in Allah and are purified from all illusive deceptions. "It is by them that you obtain rain; it is by them that you receive your subsistence," says the Qur'an. And Omar Khayyam said,

Think in this battered caravan-serai,  
Whose doorways are alternate night and day,  
How Sultan after Sultan with his pomp,  
Abode his hour or so, and went his way.  
They say the lion and the lizard keep  
The courts where Jamsheyd gloried and drank deep;  
And Bahram that great hunter, the wild ass  
Stamped o'er his head and he lies fast asleep.

Thus I compared our deluded life with the real, and our artificial with their natural being, as one might compare the false dawn with the true. I realized our folly in attaching undue weight to matters wholly unimportant and how apt we were to laugh at the dreamer building his lovely castles in the air. I saw who our fleeting affairs are blown about as chaff is blown in the wind, while the imagination is difficult to alter. It is possible for the land to turn into water and for water into land, but the impression of an imagination can never change.

I felt that we were losing the most precious moments and opportunities of life for transitory dross and tinsel, at the sacrifice of all that is enduring and eternal.

When I became familiar with the strange life of the dervishes I admired the best in them and was able to recognize the Madzubs, who are the extremists among them. These are so absorbed in the inner vision that they are absolutely unconscious of the external needs of life. Sometimes they are both fed and clothed by others; their neglect of the physical self and their responsibility towards the world make it seem at first sight that they are insane, but at times, by their miraculous powers over phenomena, they are distinguished as Madzub. They are understood to be the controllers of the elements, some with regard to certain portions of the land or water, and some even for the whole world.

Their thought, words, and actions are truly found to be those of God Almighty. The word is scarcely spoke before the action is accomplished. Each atom of the universe seems to be awaiting their command.

I once saw a Madzub in Calcutta, standing in the street and gesticulating as though he were directing all the traffic. The passers-by laughed at his insanity. But for all his weird looks he had most brilliant eyes, shooting forth strong magnetic vibrations, which attracted me so much that I wondered if he was a Madzub in the guise of a lunatic; this dissimulation is often practiced by them in order to escape contact with the world and all life's cares. If they did not adopt this method it would be harder for them to study the natural hallucinations of humanity. As Sa'di says, "Every man on earth has a craze peculiar to himself."

The truth of this was shown to me by the way the Madzub laughed at seeing the people in the street hustling and bustling along as if their small affairs were only important things in the universe. I sent the Madzub word, and asked him if he would care to come and honor me by his presence, but he sacrificed my request to the call of the children who suddenly came running and took him away to play with them. I understood that he preferred the society of children, the angels on earth, to association with grown-up sinners, who know nothing but the ego and its ulterior satisfactions. I waited patiently after this until I next saw him, and sent a message begging him to give my music a hearing. After that he came and when he entered the room I rose from my seat to do him honor and saluted him with both hands. His only answer was that he did not require this homage, as he received the same

under different attributes and aspects from the whole universe.

In order to be quite sure of his Madzubiati I asked him whether he was a thief. He smilingly replied, "Yes", which conveyed to me that all good and bad attributes, as well as all names and forms, were considered by him to be his own, and that he was thus raised beyond good and evil as well as above the praise and blame of the world.

Then he sat down and began to discourse and act in such a manner that all in the room should consider him insane. But I told him in a whisper that I knew him well, that he could not fool me, and requested him to favor us with his inspiring words and blessings. He then began to speak of the journey he made on the spiritual path, describing each plane as a fort he had to destroy with guns and cannons, until he arrived at the home of his Father and embraced his true spiritual Lord. And he went on to tell how at last the Father was also dead and he would inherit His kingdom in the end.

It was all related in such a quaint language, that none of those present save myself could understand him, and even I only did so with a great mental effort.

A Madzub attains perfection through innocence and from childhood, learns of the true inner bliss of which we are deprived by our most deluding knowledge of the outer world. Yet it is not the path for all to follow; but we can derive the truth of existence from it and lead a balanced life, as the Salik do among the Sufis.

## CHAPTER 5

### MY INITIATION IN SUFISM

"He breathes not the fragrance of divine mysteries whose head is warmed by his heart." - WALI.

MY interest in Sufism made me very friendly with the dervishes. I learned to love the sweetness of their nature and the innate perfume of their manner of using music as the food of the soul.

I began at first to imitate their habits and methods, and spent a few hours in silence every day. Once in a dream I saw a great gathering of prophets, saints, and sages, all clad in their Sufi garments, rejoicing in the Suma or music of the dervishes. I was absorbed into their blissful state of ecstasy, and when I was aroused I still felt the exultation my vision had brought to me. After this I heard continually, waking or sleeping, an unknown voice which cried to me, "Allah ho-Akbar!" -God is great!

I also had visions of a most haunting and spiritual face, radiant with light, during my concentration in the silence, which heightened my interest in mysticism still more, especially as I could not divine its meaning. I feared to ask for its significance lest others might laugh at my fancy and ridicule it. At last, when I could no longer control my impatience, I described my golden vision to a friend who was also a lover of the mystical, and begged him for an interpretation.

He answered that the dream was a symbol of my initiation into the Sufi Order of Chishtia Khandan, and the words I heard were the crying of Haq or truth, while the vision was the image of my spiritual guide and protector. He also advised me to undergo the initiation of Sufism, although I had always considered myself undeserving of initiation in that Brotherhood of Purity. But I had a little courage, hoping I might at least be used as a waste-paper basket is employed for torn scraps of wisdom, which would quite suffice me. I visited several Murshids with this purpose, but they made no response, although I had the privilege of studying their various views and methods of teaching.

Thus I learned to know four true kinds of masters and four false ones. Among the true I saw first the one who would never answer the appeal of a seeker until he was fully prepared. The second kind would not initiate anyone until a long and trying period of probation had been undergone by the disciple. The third, in order to keep away undesirable adherents, would make himself appear so utterly disagreeable that everyone would run away at the sight of him. And the fourth would so disguise himself to escape the praise and publicity of the world that none would believe for a moment that he was truly a Murshid.

Among the false teachers I first met the hypocrite, who increases the number of his adherents by telling most wonderful stories and showing them tricks of phenomena. The second apostate was pious, disguising his infirmities and failings under the cloak of morality and always busy with worship and prayer. The third was the money-taking master, who eagerly seized upon every opportunity of emptying the pockets of his pupils. The fourth was he who



was greedy for the adoration, worship and servility of his followers.

This experience of different Murshids prepared me for the ideal master, and after six months of continual searching I chanced to visit an old and revered acquaintance, Maulana Khairulmubin, to whom I confided my desire to embrace Sufism.

While reflecting on the matter he suddenly received a telepathic message that his friend, a great Murshid, was about to come to him. He at once arranged a seat of honor, placing cushions upon it, and walked towards the gate in order to bid him welcome.

After a period of suspense the Pir-o-Murshid entered, bringing with him a very great sense of light. As all those present greeted him, bowing down in their humility, it seemed to me all at once that I had seen him before, but where I could not recall. At last, after gazing at him earnestly, I remembered that his was the face, which so persistently haunted me during my silence. The proof of this was manifested as soon as his eyes fell on me. He turned to his host, saying, "O Maulana, tell me who this young man may be? He appeals intensely to my spirit."

Maulana Khairulmubin answered, "Your holiness, this young man is a genius in music, and he desires greatly to submit himself to your inspiring guidance."

Then the Master smiled and granted the request, initiating me into Sufism there and then.

"The day is short, the work abundant, the laborers inactive, the reward great, and the master of the house urges on."  
- Hebrew saying.

Mohammed Abu Hassim Madani belonged to a distinguished family of Medina, and was a direct descendant of the Holy Prophet. My joy in him was so great that it found its expression in poetry and music. I had at last found my pearl among men, my guide, my treasure, and beacon of hope. I composed a song and sang it to him, and this I feel certain has brought me all my success and will aid me in my future life.

And this was my song:

Thou art my salvation and freedom is mine,  
I am not; I melt as a pearl in sweet wine!  
My heart, soul, and self, yea, all these are thine;  
O Lord I have no more to offer!  
I drink of the nectar of truth the divine,  
As Moses thy word, as Yusuf they shine  
who walk in thy ways; and Christ is thy sign:  
Thou raisest to life everlasting!  
Thou art as Mohammed to them that repine,  
My spirit is purged as the gold from a mine!  
I only know that my heart beats with thine,  
And joys in boundless freedom!

My Murshid greatly appreciated this outburst of love on my part and exclaimed in deep emotion, "Be thou blessed with divine light and illuminate the beloved ones of Allah!"

From this time a spiritual attachment between myself and my Murshid was firmly established. As it grew more and more it opened up in me the ways of light through my attachment to that inner radiance, which can never be gained through discussion or argument, reading, writing, nor mystical exercises.

I visited him at the expense of all my affairs whenever I felt his call, receiving rays of his ecstasy with bent head, and listening to all he said without doubt or fear. Thus the firm faith and confidence I brought to bear upon my meditations prepared me to absorb the Light of the World Unseen.

I studied the Qur'an, Hadith, and the literature of the Persian mystics. I cultivated my inner senses, and underwent periods of clairvoyance, clairaudience, intuition, inspiration, impressions, dream, and visions. I also made experiments in communicating with the living and the dead. I delved into the occult and psychic sides of mysticism, as well as realizing the benefits of piety, morality, and Bhakti or devotion. The more I progressed in

their pursuit, the more unlearned I seemed, as there was always more and more to understand and acquire. Of all that I comprehended and experienced I valued most that divine wisdom which alone is the essence of all that is best and attainable, and which leads us on from the finite world unto infinitudes of bliss.

After receiving instruction in the five different grades of Sufism, the physical, intellectual, mental, moral, and spiritual, I went through a course of training in the four schools: the Chishtia, Naqshibandi, Qadiri, and Sohrwardi. I still recall this period, under the guidance of so great and merciful a Murshid, as the most beautiful time of my life. In him I saw every rare quality, while his unassuming nature and his fine modesty could hardly be equaled even among the highest mystics of the world. He combined within himself the intense spell of ecstasy and constant flow of inspiration with the very soul of spiritual independence. Although I had found most wonderful attributes among the mystics I had met, some in greater and some in lesser degrees, I had never until then beheld the balance of all that was good and desirable in one man.

His death was as saintly as his mortal life had been. Six months before his end he predicted its coming and wound up all his worldly affairs in order to be freed for his future journey. "Death is a link which unites friend with Friend unto the Beyond", is a saying of Mohammed.

He apologized not only to his relatives, friends, and mureeds, but even to his servants, lest there might be anything that he had done to their displeasure and hurt. Before the soul departed from his body he bade farewell to all his people with loving words. And then, sitting upright and unwavering, he continued Zikr; and lost in his contemplation of Allah, he, by his own accord, freed his soul from the imprisonment of this mortal frame forever.

I can never forget the words he spoke while he placed his hands upon my head in blessing, "Fare forth into the world, my child, and harmonize the East and the West with the harmony of thy music. Spread the wisdom of Sufism abroad, for to this end art thou gifted by Allah, the most merciful and compassionate."

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **MY TOUR ABROAD IN THE WEST**

"The lover remains solitary among people and mingles with them as little as water with oil." - RUMI.

FOLLOWING my decision and the call of God, I left India in 1910 to sojourn in the Western world, strong in the courage of the most blissful command I had received from my Murshid and in the glory of the noble object he had awakened in my soul.

Naturally it was a great change in my existence to leave India, the most spiritually awakened land, and start for the West, and especially for America, that modern home of material progress. It was very opposite of the dream I had just experienced. The great activity of the people and the rapidity of things in general, the rush of machinery above, below, and all around; the transitoriness of affairs; men running hither and thither for trains and cars with newspapers and parcels in their hands -all this kept me under a complete spell of silence and bewilderment.

It was as if I had gone to sleep at home and had found myself in a bazaar on awakening. But being a Sufi I very soon became accustomed to this change of life by attuning myself to my surroundings, and I found that they were indeed true lovers of Dunia, the material world about which Rumi has written in his Masnavi.

Every race and nation has its infancy, youth, and age, as also its birth and its death. And just like every individual it even undergoes the evolution one passes through during the different stages of life. For from a philosophical point of view all the sons of the world are like little children, and their most important affairs are of no importance than a child's top. As a new nation America naturally appears childish owing to its youth, although its material progress is proportional as great as the spiritual progress of India. But America is a land of promise; in time it will rise to be an ideal child among the children of God and a leader of reform.

It was very hard for me to keep a balance between my mission and my profession, which were so different from each other. On the one hand I had to be a teacher, and on the other an artist, and especially the interpreter of an art which was so little known abroad. This could never be understood by a people accustomed only to look at the external aspect of things. It was not as in India where Kabir, the great poet, preached while he sat weaving at his loom; where Guru Nanak taught within his prison. For some of the greatest teachers the East has produced were also masters of music, such as Narada, Tumbara, Bharata Muni, Tansen, Tukaram, Surdas, Amir Khusrau, Mirabai,

Avicenna, and Farabi.

Also, being a stranger, without any influence or good introductions, which a teacher never requires in the East, it was a long time before I became acquainted with the right people. In due time, by the mercy of God, my path was opened and I came into contact with those interested in music.

At first I performed and lectured on music at Columbia University, winning the warm commendation of several professors and students. This was the beginning of my professional career in the West, and I started on a tour comprising nearly all the well-known cities of the United States, where I spoke at universities, before intelligent and appreciative audiences, on philosophy and music. This duality heightened their interest in my work, and as I grew familiar with the American people I began to realize to my joy that, despite their commercial trend and materialistic ambitions, God has not deprived them of that treasure which is love.

Their hearts are even as ours although their artificial life makes it more difficult for them to achieve that peace which we can so easily attain in the calm of the East. They also have a strong desire for spiritual progress, for as far as man is concerned, it matters not whether he belongs to the East or to the West; in time he is inevitably attracted to that eternal Source of Love which can never be eluded.

When I arrived in San Francisco I found much to interest me there, and my desire for the revelation of truth had its outlet. I have never approved of the idea of mission work, especially at this period of human evolution when a new awakening is imminent all over the world. I escaped the appearance of being a religious zealot or one who wishes to convert people, for I bore that message of universal truth which would harmonize East and West by spreading the idea of unity and which is Sufism.

I spoke at the universities of Berkeley and Los Angeles in California, where my music and my discourses on philosophy, as expressed in the realm of art, attracted much attention. Although my professional tour did not permit me to do as much as I otherwise could have done, yet it was the only means of fulfilling my mission, which had no other support than that of God. This tour aided me greatly in establishing the Sufi Order in America, with the following objects at heart:

- (1) To establish a human brotherhood with no consideration of caste, creed, race or religion; for differences only create a lack of harmony and are the source of all miseries.
- (2) To spread the wisdom of Sufism, which has been until now a hidden treasure, though it is indeed the property of mankind and has never belonged to any particular race and religion.
- (3) To attain that perfection wherein mysticism is no longer a mystery but redeems the believer from falling a victim to hypocrisy.
- (4) To harmonize the East and West in music, the universal language, by an exchange of knowledge and a revival of unity.
- (5) To promote Sufi literature, which is most beautiful and instructive in all the aspects of knowledge.

Praise be to the name of God, that those who were attracted by the message of truth were for the most part in earnest and very devout. Indeed, their sympathy made me almost forget my yearning for the East, and I felt at one with them. Some very wealthy mureeds wished me to give up my profession, and proposed to help me materially in order that my needs should be satisfied without trouble, and that I could thus be enabled to devote all my time to the Sufi call.

I gratefully refused this proposal, for, being a Sufi, I did not care about appearances, believing always that the self was the one dependable staff of life; while music, being my very religion, was much more to me than a mere profession, or even than my mission, since I looked upon it as the only gateway to salvation.

My associates, among whom were my two brothers, Maheboob Khan and Musharaff Khan, and my cousin Mohammed Ali Khan, rendered their utmost service by devoting themselves to the establishment of the Sufi Order which, in due course, was set on a firm basis. As mysticism had hitherto been made a hidden and esoteric thing by some teachers, who taught it only to those who belonged to their own race, religion, nation, or class, it was my task to impress upon the world that it belonged to them all; and that as I had acquired it from man, I must impart it

again to man, without questioning his right, his caste, or his creed.

After my American journeying I came to Europe and visited England, where I immediately sought for my own countrymen in the hope of seeing familiar faces once again, as I had beheld so few since leaving India. But to my great disappointment I discovered them to be the very reverse of my expectations; some seemed to be avoiding their fellow-countrymen purposely, and the others were set on keeping to their own clique. This revealed a wrong influence of Western culture upon their lives.

At last, by continual effort, I gathered my spiritual fellows from among the Europeans around me, and these proved to be more at one with my soul than my own people. I found much more sympathy and response from the English than I had ever expected from then when in India. Their gentle and courteous nature revealed a sharp difference between the Old World and the New. But there was little curiosity concerning India and her people, and I found it very difficult at first to come into contact with minds open to philosophy.

It was on hearing the voice of the Suffragettes that I felt a new religion of sex arising, which would bring freedom to women in all phases of life. Women seemed to me to be prepared for science, art, religion, and philosophy, while her suffering in life also brought her nearer to the wider fields of intellect. I saw a lack of harmony between men and women, of that harmony upon which the true happiness of nations depends. The secret of this sad state, which is unknown to either sex, lies in the lack of thought cultivation and in the desire for worldly gain at the sacrifice of all else, while both sexes must meet on the same plane of evolution before the ideal phase can possibly be reached.

I appeared several times in public, and eventually before royalty, and thus prepared the ground for sowing the seed of Sufism in England. A Sufi Publishing Society was established, a most necessary organ for the propagation and maintenance of the Order, founded with the laudable object of publishing works on both ancient and modern mysticism, philosophy, religion, art, science, literature, and music.

My journey to Paris was more for music than for philosophy. Through the kind efforts of such friends as Debussy, the famous composer, I was able to carry out my mission through the medium of my art with great success. As my long stay in the West as well as my close friendship with several musical scholars had trained my ear to Western music, I especially appreciated that of France, which is so full of love and emotion. I spoke at the Musical Congress, the Musee Guimet, and at the University. The sensitive and idealistic tendency of the French helps to develop those qualities of the heart, which are attuned to devotion. Their Catholic training also influences them towards the devotional aspect of worship.

My visit to Russia struck another chord in my nature, for it recalled the East to me again. I found the people open both to modern progress and ancient thought. I met the leading musicians, poets, and literary men, who proved to be absorbed in their work, appreciative, kind, and hospitable, all of which promises much for their national advancement. Their voice cultivation and keen interest in all aspects of art especially pleased me. This concern shown by many prominent Russians made a lasting impression upon me. I also found there that Eastern type of discipleship which is natural to the nation where religion and self-sacrifice are still in existence, although the bigotry of the Orthodox Church stands in the way of the highest spiritual awakening.

Before I could bring my message of peace to the rest of Europe this distressing war convulsed the world.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **EAST AND WEST**

All that I, as a Sufi, a universal being, have learned from my experience in both east and West is that I can now appreciate the merits and also understand the defects of both impartially.

Although the East has progressed to an inconceivable extent in certain aspects of life, this has never been fully recognized. In other words it has not been sufficiently fruitful, because its progress has been individualistic and not general. Also self-satisfaction, linked with laziness and recklessness, retard it from material advancement to a great degree. It is sad to see that Eastern students usually adopt the most undesirable qualities of the West, such as extravagance, excessive gaiety, and exclusiveness, instead of its courage, power of organization, and its most wonderful knowledge of administration.

In many cases Westernized Orientals grow indifferent towards their own people, owing to the varied direction of thought which retards their unity. The present unbalanced condition of the East is such that the man with intellect is, as it were, unbalanced in body, while the sane in body are unstable in mind. The spiritual person is lost in the spirit, and the material person is absorbed in matter; thus the one is an angel while the other is an animal. No doubt the unbalanced state of the East has deprived it for the present of both the world and God.

The East can learn a lesson of order from the West. for the lack of this is at the root of its downfall. She can also learn balance and moderation in most things, and co-operation among all classes regardless of caste or creed. Although the East has taught the lesson of brotherhood to the world, yet her children seem to forget to practice it among themselves; the brother drags his brother down and selfishness is on the increase, especially in India.

The East should also imitate the regularity of Western methods of work and rest, as well as its commercial activity, together with its love of research.

The independent spirit of the West is most praiseworthy among women as well as men. Their love of travel, the neatness and convenience of their homes, and the companionship of man and wife- all these are very praiseworthy, and especially at the present time when two extremes, either a great adoration or the complete subordination of woman, exist in the Orient.

"Man is placed in the prison of the earth, to prove him bankrupt towards God." - RUMI.

On the other hand, the West should adopt the East's adaptability to circumstances and its simplicity of living. At a time when modern civilization is increasing the needs of artificial life to such an extent, and the richer a man gets the more avaricious he becomes, then the most worthy and needful lesson for the West is the Eastern code of morality, which European travelers often overlook under its mantle of simplicity.

Eastern morals extol tolerance, renunciation, confidence, faith, and trust, together with innocence, contentment, patience, modesty, sympathy, hospitality, and a love for humanity which can even rise to the utmost heights of self-sacrifice. These merits, although they are to be found all over the world, are especially idealized and reach their culmination in the East. If the above truths could be fully understood by those students who are busied with the interchange of ideas and thought-forms in either part of the world, the Great Harmony which is prophesied for us all upon the marrow would assuredly come today!

"Love is the net of Truth." - ABU SAID.

The rapid evolution in material life seems to have brought the West to such a pitch that its religion seems lost in its bigotry and narrow-mindedness. At the same time, its progress being one-sided, the number of unbelievers has increased. As well as a few believers there exist many who are interested in mysticism but are only actuated by ignoble curiosity while remaining absolutely regardless of faith or belief, of God or apostle. These are constantly delving and diving into mysticism and the secrets of phenomena, which they desire to use in place of more materialistic media in order to accomplish their worldly ends and aspirations.

I have also found some religious enthusiasts who extol Christianity as a purely Western faith, forgetting that Christ himself was from the East, and that the East has understood and adored him much more than is generally known, although the Christian Church may not be established everywhere and the East may worship in other houses of the Lord.

Fain for salvation I would come to Thee,

The guide to cross the forest-wilds of life;

Wilt thou not heed when Passion's robber-band

Would snatch from me Thy Treasure's Trinity? - JAIN HYMN.

There seems to be a growing yearning for esoteric studies in Europe represented by different so-called mystical and spiritual societies and institutions for mental healing, but I found most of these to be on a purely commercial basis. Still, I would not blame them, seeing that the commercial trend of the age would surely not allow even Christ to preach as he did formerly. Also, this new awakening has produced one good result, which must not be

overlooked. It has aroused the interest of the people in something higher than the world of flesh, and a door is opened in the West to allow the Eastern winds of divine wisdom to bear its spirit on towards an ideal end.

But although this wave of thought has created a longing for golden paths of mysticism, yet it has in a way degenerated, owing to its abuse in two directions: the desire to attain the requirements of daily life through mysticism, and the placing of the higher aspirations on a lower level.

Among those who are interested in mysticism there are some who have various objects of gain in view, and thereby, in the place of the true goal of mysticism, they direct all their energies to experimenting and phenomena. Some desire psychic powers, others wish to reach the planets, some hanker after glorious reincarnations in return for their virtuous acts. Some depend on spirits to guide them, and some do not rise above their undeveloped ego. Others dabble in mysticism out of inquisitiveness, some for a pastime, others as a profession, and yet others relish the notoriety their association with the unseen brings to them. I have met some who never knew what they were seeking, and yet were inordinately enthusiastic.

With the exception of a few chosen ones of God, who were inspired by the light and glory of truth, I found great difficulty in turning the interest of the people from the objective to the subjective world; in other words from illusion to stability, and from egoism to self-negation. It was like steering a ship against the tide. It is the same even in the East; otherwise every Oriental would be a saint. Still, the environment and training of the East surely help them in smoothing the path towards the ideal life.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **EASTERN TRAINING**

"Verify the believers are brethren." - QUR'AN.

IN the East religion is sown in the heart of the child from birth, no matter to what religion he may belong. The invocation of the name of God becomes a daily custom, which he consciously or unconsciously repeats in sorrow as well as in joy. "Bismillah"-In the name of Allah, or "Alhamdolillah" -Praise be to Allah, or "Allah ho-Akbar"-God is great, and "Ya Allah"-O God; such expressions as these are used at the beginning and the end, as well as in the midst of every ordinary conversation. This attunes the believer and even attracts the unbeliever to the thought of God, which in the end leads the seeker to self-realization and the peace of God.

In good homes morality is taught to every child in unity with religion; by checking all its egoistic leanings it teaches the child to become humble, modest and respectful.

There is a little story told of the grandson of the Holy Prophet. The child, on addressing a slave by name, was corrected by his grandfather who exclaimed, "Nay, those are not good manners; although he is a slave he is older than you, so you must call him "uncle"."

If this courtesy were practiced in modern civilized countries such as America, where a strong prejudice against color exists, how much better it would be for the nation! Courtesy to strangers is taught as a virtue in the East, while the selfishness of modern civilization prevents strangers from entering Western countries without fear. This is quite an inhuman tendency, and reminds one of dogs who bark and drive away a stranger from their own habitation.

Overlooking the faults of others with politeness, tolerance, forgiveness, and resignation is regarded as a moral virtue in the East. Man's heart is visualized as the shrine of God, and even a small injury in thought, word, and deed against it is considered as a great sin against God, the Indwelling One. Gratitude is shown by the loyalty of the Orient and by being true to the salt; the hospitality of a day is remembered throughout all the years of life, while the benefactors never forgets humility even in the midst of his good deeds. There is an Eastern saying, "Forget thy virtues and remember thy sins."

"Chained with gold chains about the feet of God." - TENNYSON.

Thus the heart, developed by religion and morality, becomes first capable of choosing and then of retaining the object of devotion without wavering for a moment. Yet in the absence of these qualities it remains incapable of either choice or retention.

There have been innumerable devotees in the East, Bhakta or Ashik, whose devotional powers are absolutely indescribable and ineffable. To the ignorant the story of their lives may appear exaggerated, but the joy of self-negation is greater than that of either spiritual or material joy.

Devotion sweetens the personality, and it the light on the path of the disciple. Those who study mysticism and philosophy while omitting self-sacrifice and resignation grow egoistic and self-centered. Such persons are apt to call themselves either God or apart of God, and thus make an excuse for committing any sins they like. Regardless of sin or virtue they misuse and malign others, being utterly fearless of the hereafter. Yet they forget that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life", as the Bible says.

The fire of devotion purifies the heart of the devotee and leads to spiritual freedom. Mysticism without devotion is like uncooked food and can never be assimilated. "I am the heart of my devotees," says Krishna in the Baghavat Gita. And Hafiz says, "O joyous day when I depart from this abode of desolation, seeking the repose of my soul and setting out in search of my Beloved."

Philosophy, which is the forth stage of development, has five aspects: physical, intellectual, mental, moral and spiritual. These cannot be learned by the mere perusal of books, and by listening to the discussions of philosophers. For philosophy is not a study which is taught in the universities alone; it contains quite an opposite path to knowledge, and it can only be truly studied under the guidance of a Murshid. In him the mureed has perfect trust and confidence, as complete discipline even to the sacrifice of free will is required. At first this appears to be a loss of individuality, while the ego rebels at being thus crushed and submerged beneath the stronger laws of will and reason. But the battle against self gives a mastery over self in the end, which in other words is a mastery over the whole universe.

But it is well to remember that such utter trust should never be reposed in a Murshid until the self has gained entire confidence in him, and every doubt has been subdued. When once this confidence is given, there should be nothing on earth, which could break or cast it down for the whole gamut of eternity. These are some who consider it most humiliating to be guided by another, but they are greatly mistaken, for in the light of truth there is but One. The intercourse between Murshid and mureed is preferable to any other fellowship in the world, when one considers that a friendship in God is the only true friendship, which endures forever. "Sprinkle with wine thy prayer-rug if thy Pir-o-Murshid says so. The guide is not unmindful of the customs and ways of the Path," says Hafiz.

A Murshid is a gateway unto the unseen Master and a portal unto God, the Unknown. But yet in the end neither God, Master nor Murshid appears in the most dazzling light of divine wisdom, which alone is "I Am."

"Everything shall perish except the face of Allah." - QUR'AN.

Mysticism is the last grade of knowledge, which can only be rightfully achieved by passing through all these preceding stages, and it is only then that it is a mystery no more. Once it is known one realizes by one's past delusions how far and remote has been the goal, and how long the journey unto its distant shores. One beholds for the last time the mountains of virtue one was forced to scale in order to seek its rose-crowned heights, and then they vanish away like a dream in the morning.

"Everywhere Thou art, nearest of all Thou art, and yet nowhere Thou art, O all-pervading self." - ZAHIR.

It is degrading the name of mysticism when people claim to be Christian or Jewish mystics, for mysticism is pure from distinction and differences. My Pir-o-Murshid once gave me a goblet of wine during a trance, and said, "Be thou intoxicated and come out of the name and shame! Be thou the disciple of love and give up the distinctions of life! Because to a Sufi, "I am this or that" mean nothing."

All mystical powers such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought reading and prognostication, psychometry, telepathy, ecstasy, and various other spiritual manifestations from the world beyond, are disclosed in one glorious state of vision.

The life of the mystics, both the inner and the outer, is shown as a wondrous phenomenon within itself. He becomes independent of all earthly sources of life and lives in the Being of God, realizing His presence by the denial of his individual self; and he thus merges into that highest bliss wherein he finds his salvation.





# THE SUFI TEACHINGS

OF

HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

Volume XII

The Vision of God and Man, Confessions, Four Plays

PART I: FOUR PLAYS

THE BOGEY-MAN

## CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

BOGEY-MAN(so called by those who did know him. A Sage)

THE QUEEN

SPECULATOR

MODERNIST

LOVER

LADY

EIGHT CHELAS

CANDIDATE

TWO POLICEMEN

GOVERNESS

GUARDIAN

THE PRINCE

TWO NOBLEMEN

TWO BRAHMINS

SEVEN COURTIERS

DANCERS

## ACT I

### Scene 1

*A Sarai.<sup>1</sup> The MODERNIST, seated on a stool, is reading a newspaper. The SPECULATOR enters and goes up to the MODERNIST.*

SPECULATOR. What's the rate of exchange today?

MODERNIST. *(looks at him and then down at his paper)*. I haven't come to it yet.

SPECULATOR. Then what have you read? That's the first thing one must read.

Yesterday money had gone down and I made a profit. The other day I bought some shares, which I sold, and I got four times the amount.

MODERNIST. I'm not at all interested in speculations; I'm looking for what the papers say about the new Cabinet that is to be formed. I'm wondering who are to be elected to sit in Parliament. If the Labor Party gets the upper hand, the state of affairs will change; conditions will improve.

SPECULATOR. It doesn't matter a bit to me, which party comes up and which goes down. 'God save our bread.' What I'm concerned about is if the money market rises or falls. What difference does it make if one party goes and another comes? It is always like this with the government.

(Enter LOVER)

LOVER. Oh, oh, she never did care for me. She never did love me. I now realize how she has treated me... I never thought she could be so heartless. Day after day I have followed her, and night after night I have dreamed of her. I thought of her at every moment of the day... It is of her that I have spoken, if ever I have spoken... Woman, woman! I wish I could die!

SPECULATOR (*hastens towards him*). What's the matter with you?

LOVER. O, it is she, it is she who is the cause of it all! Now I am good for nothing: why should I live any longer?

SPECULATOR. You fool, think of something else. If you get money, you have everything.

LOVER. I have failed... I have failed in life.

SPECULATOR. Have you lost your money? Are you bankrupt? How have you failed?

LOVER. No, my only love has disappointed me.

SPECULATOR. Make money, and the world will be yours. It is no use dying because a woman turns away from you.

LOVER. My love, my love!

SPECULATOR. Love money, the only object worthy of love.

LOVER. I've never thought of money in my life. I only lived for love.

SPECULATOR. How silly you are! If you haven't learnt how to make headway in the world, you have wasted your life. Time is money. If you have money, everybody is drawn to you: if you're poor, no one cares for you. (*Goes to the MODERNIST.*)

MODERNIST. What's the matter with that fellow? Is he lovesick? He, he!

SPECULATOR. He's got inflammation of the heart. Ha, ha, ha!

MODERNIST. Science has proved today that love is a convulsion of the brain.

(Enter LADY, *fashionably dressed.*)

LADY (*speaking to herself*). I hate; I hate the sight of woman. I don't mind men.

SPECULATOR. (*looks at her with surprise.*)

LADY. Turn away your evil eye, you ugly fellow!

SPECULATOR. What did you say?

LADY. Why did you look at me? How dare you look at me? (*To the MODERNIST*) Why are you hanging your head? Why don't you look at me? You insult me! Am I not dressed in up-to-date fashion?

MODERNIST. (*looks up and down.*)

LADY. Disgusting (*Sits down.*)

MODERNIST. (*glances at her out of the corner of his eye, then looks down, whispering.*) Silly woman!

(Enter SAGE, *simply clad. He looks at no one, but sits down for a rest. The others look at him astonished*)

SPECULATOR. Who's this?

MODERNIST. A freak.

SPECULATOR. What did you say?

MODERNIST. A freak. Someone who wanders about, with nothing to do.

Fools his time away.

LADY (*laughs, looking at him.*) Bogey-man!

SPECULATOR (*to MODERNIST.*) I think there's something in this man. You never know. Sometimes such men can tell you your fortune.

MODERNIST. Nonsense!

SPECULATOR. Well, I'll go and speak to him and see what he says. (*He goes to the right and greets him. The SAGE, absorbed in his thoughts, does not see him. He goes to the other side, winking at the MODERNIST, and greets him. The SAGE remains absorbed in his thoughts. Then the SPECULATOR goes in front of him and greets him. The SAGE responds by nodding.*)

SPECULATOR (*sits down.*) Excuse my asking you, but I think men like you can tell many things. What do you think: will money rise or fall?

SAGE. What will rise must fall, and what will fall must rise. Rise and fall are natural to life. No rise is permanent, or fall lasting. It is reality behind it all which is steady and dependent.

SPECULATOR. (*closes one eye and scratches his head.*) Well, can you tell me if I shall make some profit next week?

SAGE. There is only one profit, which is worth striving after. That profit is to gain what no one can take away from you.

SPECULATOR (*points with his finger to his forehead.*) Thank you. (*Goes away, laughing, to the LADY who is seated there.*) Where did you get that precious necklace? (*touching the necklace.*)

LADY (*strikes him on the shoulder.*) Go away! Don't touch my necklace with your awkward hands. I have many rings and necklaces. I am a lady. How dare you touch my necklace? Can't you talk from a distance? Keep to where you belong!

SPECULATOR (*rolls his eyes and retreats, rubbing the place where she has struck him.*)

MODERNIST. What did he say?

SPECULATOR. Who? That funny lady?

MODERNIST. No, no, that strange-looking man.

SPECULATOR (*laughs.*) He told me a lot, but I did not understand one word. He is not all there; he seems to be floating on air. When I talk to him about the South, he tells me about the North.

MODERNIST. Let me go and see what he says. (*Goes near the SAGE, greets him and sits.*) Excuse me asking you a few questions.

SAGE (*looks at him.*)

MODERNIST. I suppose you don't interest yourself in the present political situation? But I should like to know what you think. Do you think the Labor Party will win the election?

SAGE. Whichever party comes to power, it certainly fulfills the law from above. The various parties seem different

to our eyes, but there is His Will that is done, and His will that will be done. When we show preference for one party over the other, it is our

limitations. Men group themselves into parties: when we see behind all different parties there is one perfect whole, working out its destiny toward the fulfillment of the purpose of life.

MODERNIST. What do you think of the great wrong done the people by those at present in power?

SAGE. Those who wish to better conditions by fighting against all that is wrong often do a greater wrong. The more parties there are, the greater the disharmony. It is dividing one into many. It is by unity that the purpose of life is achieved.

MODERNIST. But what do you think of the people who have held wealth and high position for generations whilst depriving others of them?

SAGE. You are right. Every man must have his chance of attaining all that is good and worth while. But there are two ways of attaining. One way is to rob, and the other way is to earn. One earns by deserving it; one robs without deserving it. There must be a mutual goodwill on the part of those who possess something and of those who do not possess. Those who do not possess must deserve and earn it. Those who possess must make all sacrifices possible, in order that every man in the world may have his chance of prospering and rising in life. The undeserving one by robbing will never be able to enjoy and use his possession fully. For to possess and enjoy something one must earn it and deserve it.

MODERNIST. Do you think a sense of mutual goodwill can be aroused among the people in high position without strong measures?

SAGE. Every hurt and harm caused to another rebounds. Any slight destruction results in greater destruction. Man is born with a sense of justice in his innermost being. And if a just proposition is brought before him, sooner or later he must respond to it. Harmlessness is the principal thing in religion. Disharmony causes greater disharmony; it is harmony that results in peace.

MODERNIST. Thank you. I shall reflect upon it. (*Gets up and goes.*)

SPECULATOR. What did the fellow tell you?

MODERNIST. He does not speak my language. While we are thinking of fighting, he is thinking of peace.

SPECULATOR. Now, I'll have some fun. I'll take this lady to that fellow and see what he says. (*Goes to the LADY and puts his arm in hers.*) Come along, old girl, if you want your fortune told.

LADY. (*strikes his arm and pushes him away.*) Why do you touch me, rude man? Can't you keep at a respectful distance?...Will he tell me my fortune?

SPECULATOR. Yes, he will.

LADY. I'll come.

SPECULATOR (*brings her to the SAGE .*) This noble lady wants to talk to you.

LADY. Will you read my hand and tell me my fortune?

SAGE. No, Madam, I do not tell fortunes.

LADY. No? They all say you can tell fortunes. Won't you tell me? I am an unhappy woman.

SAGE. Why are you unhappy, Madam?

LADY. The troubles at home. The servants these days have become so neglectful, so independent and rude that you can't expect them to do one thing properly.

SAGE. Madam, that is the phenomenon of the time. It is the weather of the season. The best thing is to take everyone as he is, and to know that he cannot be any better. Appreciate all that he can do, and overlook all he does not do. It is with kindness that you must treat those who depend upon you. It is with kindness alone that can move rocks.

LADY (*wiping her eyes.*) Servants apart, even my friends have turned away from me. One day I think I can have trust and confidence in a friend. Next day the same person betrays my trust. I am so disappointed in people that now I cannot say whom I can call my friend.

SAGE. Madam, do not expect much from friends. Why must they be as you want them to be? They are not made by you. They are as they are. You must try to be for them what they expect you to be. It matters little is your friend proves to you to be a friend. What matters is, if *you* prove to be a friend.

LADY. No, I don't want even to look at friends who have once turned away from me. Even my husband is unsympathetic to me.

SAGE. What do you do about it?

LADY. I have told him so very often.

SAGE. There you are. Instead of kindling the fire to his heart by blowing, you pour water upon it.

LADY. Now my heart is closed.

SAGE. Is not your heart your self? Or is it a door that is jammed and cannot be opened?

LADY. When he comes home from his work, he is as cold as a lump of ice.

SAGE. Madam, ice melts in a moment by heat. If your heart is glowing with love, blazing with devotion, no ice can stay unmelted. Madam, do not even acknowledge all that seems undesirable to you. The best way to right the wrong is to look at it in the right light. It is we who cause our unhappiness, and it is we who, if we happen to know the key to life, can find happiness.

LADY. Thank you, it is all too high for me. I'm going.

SPECULATOR. (*comes behind her, as if he was taking her back. She pushes him away with her elbows; he walks behind her, with outspread arms and bent knees as if protecting her.*)

LOVER. My love, my love, I wish I could die. (*LADY and the two men rush towards him.*)

SPECULATOR. Let's bring him to the Bogey-man and tell him that there is a soothsayer sitting here: that we shall have his fortune told. (*He brings him to the SAGE.*) This man is lovesick, He said he had a disappointment and his heart is broken. We can't find where the pieces of his heart have dropped.

MODERNIST. Now, we shall leave him to tell you his love-story. (*To the others.*) Let's go out of the sarai.

(*SAGE and LOVER are left alone.*)

LOVER. Please give me something that I may die instantly.

SAGE. Why do you want to die?

LOVER. I failed in love. She has abandoned me. Now there is nothing for me to live for...I want to die.

SAGE. How have you failed in love? Love is the only thing in life. For love is all that is. Love lives and all dies. If all failed you in life, love will not fail you. Perhaps you have not understood the meaning of love. Love that depends on being answered by the beloved is lame; it does not stand on its own feet. Love that tries to possess the beloved is without arms; it can never hold. Love that does not regard the pleasure and displeasure of the beloved is blind. Love that is demanding and self-asserting is dead. If you have love, you have all. What more do you want? -  
-Learn my boy, to know what love is before you profess to be a lover.

LOVER. Then what am I to do? I am most unhappy. Life is unbearable.

SAGE. Your unhappiness comes from self-pity. Love is neither joy, nor pain; it is both. If it is pain, it is as sweet as joy. If it is joy, it is as deep as pain. Love is the ladder by which you reach the highest ideal. Loving is living. (*Remains in abstraction.*)

LOVER. No, no. I am most unhappy...I cannot endure it any longer...I will die, I must die. (*He puts poison in his mouth and falls dead near the feet of the SAGE.*)

SAGE. Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram.

## CURTAIN

### Scene 2

*Before the hut of the SAGE. The CHELAS are beginning to gather. FIRST CHELA is already sitting in silence, Enter SECOND and THIRD CHELAS.*

SECOND CHELA. He is always engaged in meditation, poor man.

THIRD CHELA. Perhaps he will hurry up his spiritual journey. There is a time for everything.

SECOND CHELA. Even God must get tired of hearing his continual prayer.

THIRD CHELA. He listens to the Guru very much. For him every letter of the Guru is law. I suppose he's very good.

SECOND CHELA. Yes, too good to live: I can't be so good! -- I wonder if the path we have taken is the right one.

THIRD CHELA. There is no doubt about the path being the right one, but it is difficult to have patience to keep to it.

SECOND CHELA. I can't go on much longer, for there are many other things to accomplish in life, not only this.

THIRD CHELA. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, as is said in the Scriptures. This is the principal thing to accomplish, and all other things are secondary. If you take it as anything else, then you can be sure that you will never accomplish it.

SECOND CHELA. Yes, I suppose it is the work of such patient people as this one (*Pointing to FIRST CHELA.*)

(*Enter FOURTH CHELA.*)

FOURTH CHELA. (*hastily.*) Has the class begun? Has the class begun? Has the Guru come?

SECOND CHELA. The Guru has not yet arrived; perhaps he has forgotten the time. There is no such thing as time.

FOURTH CHELA. The later the better. I'm only sorry I've left my notebook at home.

THIRD CHELA. Do you have to write down what is being taught here? Can't you take it all in?

FOURTH CHELA. Oh no, I can't do it. I must have it all on paper, for I need to chew the cud leisurely at home. (*He goes to the FIRST CHELA.*) Will you tell me please about something I cannot understand: I have puzzled every day over it.

FIRST CHELA. You must ask the Guru.

FOURTH CHELA. I dare not trouble the Guru with my questions. Won't you tell me what is? The Guru said: All in one. If it is one, how can it be all? Because all denotes plurality.

FIRST CHELA. All sums up in unity.

FOURTH CHELA. Oh, this I cannot understand.

FIRST CHELA. You will understand one day.

FOURTH CHELA. No, never. I can't. I can't be a hypocrite to my own self by imagining two to be one: two is two, one is one. I have read hundreds of books on the occult sciences. And I have written fifty books on philosophy myself. I have gone from one occult school to another, till I passed through perhaps twenty schools, but I have not yet got to the bottom of the thing I seek.

FIRST CHELA. You will not get to the bottom as long as you feel you can't get to the bottom.

FOURTH CHELA. Explain to me, please, how many inner bodies there are. One school says there are five, another school says there are seven. What I see is only one, the physical body (*pointing to his body.*)

FIRST CHELA. This you must realize by meditation.

FOURTH CHELA. I get tired of sitting quiet, even for three minutes. -- And tell me how many more times we have to come back here on earth. Shall we be born in other planets, and then what will happen in the end?

FIRST CHELA. You need not worry about the end, for the end is the same as the beginning.

FOURTH CHELA. What do you mean by beginning? Birth?

FIRST CHELA. Whatever you imagine.

FOURTH CHELA. That's what make my head go round and round. It is like beating about the bush. You never come straight to the point. Everybody here complains of this.

FIRST CHELA. Even if everybody did, I suppose you don't.

(FOURTH CHELA *gets up annoyed and moves away. Enter FIFTH CHELA.*)

FIFTH CHELA (*goes to FIRST CHELA.*) To me it is all vague and in a mist. Will you please explain something about the strange ways of the Guru?

FIRST CHELA. The ways of the Guru are many, each subtle and incomprehensible. His moral conceptions, his philosophical thoughts, his lofty ideals, his realization of God, his wide horizon of vision, and the flight of his consciousness in the higher spheres, all these cannot be put into words. He notices all things, whether he sees them or not feels all conditions, whether he knows them or not. He gives a bitter pill to one, and a delicious sweet to another. He looks at one and thinks of another; he teaches one in words and the other in silence; he speaks to one and inspires another by his piercing glance. It is all his love, whether it comes in the form of heavy rain or bright sunshine.

FIFTH CHELA (*to FOURTH CHELA.*) The method that our Guru gives us must be shaped according to the times. The times demand something quite different.

FOURTH CHELA. I think you are right. But how do you think it must be done?

FIFTH CHELA. Everything should be explained in words. Why is there any need for secrecy? What is there to be kept secret in truth? If we know truth we can declare it to everyone. What people are looking for is truth. And if we have it, we can answer all they ask of life.

FOURTH CHELA. I quite agree with you. It must be modified and made to suit the modern world, so that no scientist or literary person can find any ground for criticizing.

(*The other CHELAS come nearer to hear the talk. The GURU enters and sees them conversing. They all greet him.*)

SAGE. What discussion is going on?

SECOND CHELA. My friend asks why truth cannot be given in a frame that may be accepted at the present time.

SAGE. In the first place, truth is vaster than any frame we can make to put it in. Besides, no matter what frame we make for truth to be presented in, an unawakened soul will never see it, but will only see the frame.

FIFTH CHELA. But why must we keep it secret?

SAGE. God Himself conceals all beauty from the eyes of the unevolved. Beauty covers itself, or the unevolved close their eyes to it. In both cases beauty remains veiled-and truth is the supreme beauty.

FIFTH CHELA. Why must we not systematize spiritual knowledge?

SAGE. What can be systematized cannot be spiritual knowledge. This is beyond all classification. It is the earthly things that can be made cut and dried. The farther you go on the spiritual path, the finer becomes your perception. Truth is most simple and most subtle. It is grosser than mountains and finer than atoms.

FOURTH CHELA. Then how can we know occult laws?

SAGE. By mystical experience.

FOURTH CHELA. How can it be developed: It is twenty years since I began reading occult books. Every day I have written down what you have said, and yet I do not find I have got any nearer.

SAGE. It is not study alone that brings you to the realization of truth. It often wraps your soul in many more covers. What gives you an insight into the hidden laws of nature is meditation.

(*Enters SIXTH CHELA.*)

SIXTH CHELA. (*greets the Teacher.*) Excuse me for being late, Guru. I want to tell you, last evening I went to a séance, and heard a spirit talk through the trumpet. He told me so many things about what will happen my life. Do you think all he said is true?

SAGE. You are the one who must know that.

SIXTH CHELA. I have seen such a wonderful vision of you, Guru! You were all clad in blue, and then you turned red. Then your whole appearance became scarlet, and in the end it was a golden light; then your face disappeared altogether from my sight.

SAGE. You may have seen someone else, not me.

SIXTH CHELA. The other day I saw a lady who psychometrized things and told all their history. It was wonderful. When shall I develop clairvoyance? I have been your Chela for several years. Now I ought to be able to work wonders.

SAGE. I have not yet arrived at that stage myself.

(*Enter SEVENTH CHELA.*)

SEVENTH CHELA. Guru, when first I came to you things seemed to change, but now everything seems to go wrong with me. I have not been well for some time; money affairs have gone wrong, and people make me agitated. Prayers annoy me; I cannot put my mind to meditation. I think there is no hope for me, Guru; and as my friend has left you, I feel I cannot go on any longer. Now I must attend only to my own business, instead of going after such things.

SAGE. It is one's attitude that changes life, but it is by patient pursuit that one arrives at the desired goal.

(*Enters CANDIDATE.*)



CANDIDATE. (*greets.*) Will you take me as your Chela, Guru? I have heard of you from my friend, who said many good things about you. I have read much about these things and I have talked with many occultists. I think I am quite ready to take the spiritual path, don't you think so? I am sure you will not have much difficulty with me, because I am mature. Do you really think there is a soul or a hereafter?

SAGE. This I suppose you already know.

CANDIDATE. Yes, but I should like to know what you think about it (*Short pause.*) I will not belong to your group, excuse me for saying so. I don't wish to be bound by any vows, nor shall I make any promises: for I know if ever I did so I should not be able to keep them. I don't want this to be known by my people, and especially not by those with long robes. I shall be your Chela, for I like you, but I hate to be among other Chelas.

SAGE. You do not need to be a Chela, as you already know so many things.

CANDIDATE. No, I have come to be your Chela. Only I cannot have any discipline. Besides, I wonder if you agree with all I believe.

SAGE. You keep on believing as you believe, and go on the way you wish to tread. For this path is most difficult: it needs self-abnegation.

(CANDIDATE *takes his leave.* Enter EIGHTH CHELA.)

EIGHTH CHELA. When I am with you, Guru, your inspiring presence gives me enthusiasm and faith. But as soon as I leave you I lose it all. When you speak to me I believe it without any doubt, but when I am among my friends and hear them talking, then my mind becomes thoroughly confused-I get discouraged when people speak against these things, and doubt begins to creep into my mind.

SAGE. The brick has to go through fire in order to become hard. You must learn to depend upon your own feelings. It is then that belief becomes faith.

(*Enter TWO POLICEMEN.*)

FIRST POLICEMAN. Isn't this the Bogey-man of whom people told us?

SECOND POLICEMAN. I suspect this is the murderer of the young man at the sarai.

FIRST POLICEMAN. Ha, ha ha! And here he is preaching the Gospel. Come along, Bogey-man, you are wanted at the police-station.

SECOND CHELA (*to THIRD CHELA.*) Look, here is an example of what is said in the Scriptures: Ye shall know them by their fruits.

THIRD CHELA. It is also said in the Scriptures: Judge not, that ye be not judged. We know not whether this is cause or effect. Sometimes what appears as effect may be the cause, sometimes what seems to be the cause may be the effect.

FOURTH CHELA. I thought so; nowhere in the world is any good to be found. I now understand why there was all this talk of secrecy.

FIFTH CHELA. This is the outcome of all that vagueness. If he had any truth, he could have put it in plain words. Look, even now he does not admit simply that he has killed the man.

FIRST CHELA (*to himself.*) How time changes people...True it is that no one stands by you in your worst hour. Prosperity gathers friends, adversity scatters them.

(SAGE *stands up.*)

FIRST CHELA. Guru, I will come with you.

SAGE. No, you must not follow me in my disgrace. I must face it alone.

(FIRST CHELA *is most unhappy.*)

SAGE (*turning to all his Chelas.*) My blessed Chelas, allow me to thank you most heartily for your response. Providence has brought us together here, while I was on my way to the solitude from where I come. I have learnt more from you than you from me; and still you called me your Guru. Will you remember these as my last words: observe God in His manifestation, worship God in man, admire God in nature, and love God in loving all living beings. Efface yourself continually, and what will appear to you in the end will be God.

FIRST POLICEMAN. Cut short your sermon.

SAGE: Continue to strive in the path of truth and be not satisfied with less than truth. In the light of truth you must see God and man; in the spirit of truth you must realize self and all.

SECOND POLICEMAN. Now, that's enough.

SAGE. I will go where destiny will take me. Truth is victorious. God bless you!

(*Departs; all are impressed and many sad.*)

**CURTAIN**

## **ACT II**

### **Scene 1**

*Compound outside the prison-ground. The SAGE is seated in meditation. People come to greet him and depart.*

A PASSER-BY. He must be a great sage. I wonder what has brought him to this prison.

ANOTHER. Many such saints sin in order to deserve life in prison.

ANOTHER. Look how deeply he is absorbed in his silence!

ANOTHER. He is as silent as the stork waiting for the fish to come.

ANOTHER. He is God's beloved. Such people care for no one, for nothing in the world. He is like a God on earth.

ANOTHER. Hush! God is in the heavens. When did you see Him drop on earth? Don't speak so, it is sacrilege.

ANOTHER. I feel like sitting at his feet forever.

ANOTHER. Because you are so lazy.

ANOTHER. His atmosphere is so calm and peaceful.

ANOTHER. Look at his face, beaming with light. It's as if he were an angel.

ANOTHER. It seems angels have become cheap on the market lately; you can buy them at any price.

(*A man brings another who has lost control of his nerves and makes all sorts of faces and distorted gestures. When he wishes to go the sick man pulls him back, saying 'Stay here.'*)

MAN. (*to SAGE.*) Will you cure him?

(*The SAGE opens his eyes, touches the sick man's head and the man is well. All are amazed.*)

SOMEONE. Oh, he is a great healer!

(*A man and woman come in, holding a woman between them.*)

MAN. Will you please cure her obsession? (*To the woman.*) Who is obsessing you?

WOMAN. I am a giant. I lived in the tree where this woman used to sit and sew. I looked and looked at her, till I fell desperately in love with her. And now I have fallen I cannot rise. The woman possesses me and I obsess her.

(*The woman moves her head round and round.*)

MAN. Away, you giant. Leave off controlling my wife.

WOMAN. No, I will not leave her.

MAN. Do you know in whose presence you are? You will be driven out if you will not leave her; you will be burnt to pieces.

SAGE (*touches her.*)

WOMAN. Yes, yes I leave her; I go, I am gone!

(*The woman is cured and they go out. All the people there are wildly excited about the great SAGE.*)

ANOTHER WOMAN. Will you cure me of my illness: I get fits of temper. Then I tear m my garments, I insult my friends, I torture animals, and I quarrel with my children. I throw at strangers anything within my reach. When I'm angry, I frighten devils away.

SAGE (*puts his hand on her head.*)

WOMAN. I'm cured, I'm cured, I fell I'm cured!

EVERYBODY. Ah, what a great soul.

-This is the man I would follow with my eyes closed.

-To see a man like this is like seeing God

-What power; he is a miraculous man!

(*Enter TWO NOBLEMEN.*)

NOBLEMAN. We have brought here the order from our gracious Queen to release you from your imprisonment. She has sufficient proof now that you are innocent. We are asked to take you to the palace, where our Queen is waiting to welcome you.

SAGE. What have I, a wandering man, to do at the court? Prison or palace is the same to me.

NOBLEMAN. Great Sage, if you come it would bless our Queen and her palace.

SAGE. Yes, I will come.

**CURTAIN**

## **Scene 2**

*Palace veranda. The SAGE is received, standing before the Queen, who is sitting near a little table with wine and glasses.*

QUEEN. I am very sorry indeed, great Sage, that you were arrested in my kingdom. I apologize to you humbly for this unjust treatment which you have received from our people. As the diamond shines out even if it is amongst garbage, so you have shown your light. I consider it my privilege to see you here and to receive your blessing.

SAGE. All things that people do in life, good or bad, right or wrong, by them they build prison bars around

themselves. Therefore, at every moment of life their captivity becomes greater. Life itself is a prison, Queen, a prison which every soul experiences as it dwells in this mortal body of limitations. It is from this prison that I have sought freedom. Therefore no prison can bind my soul anymore.

*( The QUEEN offers wine to the SAGE. She stands next to him, near the balustrade of the balcony. The SAGE drinks.)*

QUEEN. I have heard people talk so much about you and your wonderful healing-power.

SAGE. I never depend on popularity. People generally are like sheep; where one goes, all follow. They raise a person one day and throw him down the next. *(She puts her hand in his hand; he presses it to his heart.)* I do not mean rare souls like you, fair Queen. It is the people I mean.

*(People who had admired him pass by, looking and searching for the Teacher and Healer.)*

PEOPLE. Oh, he happens to be a false saint?

OTHERS. Look, look, he is drinking and making love to our beautiful Queen.

WOMAN. *(who had come to get her head cured, holding both hands to her head.)* He cannot cure my head, he cannot cure my head.

MAN. *(comes in limping.)* I thought he was healing and he happens to be merrymaking. I have come from miles away, and it is all in vain.

ANOTHER. Listen to what they say; it is all humbug.

SAGE. I had hardly uttered the philosophy when an example manifested before us. Every man weighs another soul on his own scales, and measure him with his own yardstick, not knowing the weight and length of the soul, neither comprehending its height nor its depth. Everyone judges all by himself.

QUEEN. We must not remain here; we will go and have a quiet talk inside the palace.

## **CURTAIN**

### **Scene 3**

*Room inside the palace. QUEEN and SAGE, seated.*

QUEEN. *(with her hand on his chair.)* The moment I heard of your presence here I knew what was attracting me. Great Sage, I am hungering to understand life, thirsting for association with the Illuminated.

SAGE. Yes, Queen, your hunger and thirst are of the soul. It is when a soul is born again that hunger and thirst begin.

*(The QUEEN pours out wine and hands it to the SAGE. The SAGE drinks.)*

QUEEN. I should so much like to know about life and death, about rise and fall, about that which we see and that which we do not see, about love and hate, about God and man.

SAGE. Wonderful questions, Queen; your response draws you closer to my heart.

QUEEN. It is these questions that have attracted me to you, beloved Sage.

SAGE. Your soul, Queen, has waited for me, though it knew it not before we met. Life is one living stream, continually running without beginning or end. Death is man's illusion. The change that hides man's existence from him he calls death. Life is still, but its flow, which is ever-moving, rises and fall in waves; it is this that created an illusion of rise and fall. All this we seen is the manifestation of one Spirit in many and varied forms. - Love, beautiful Queen, is the first will, the precedent cause. This whole manifestation is a phenomenon of love. Hate is

the want of love; it has no existence of its own. - God is the ideal. Man makes and raises Him as high as he can for the expansion of his own soul.

QUEEN. How inspiring! It uplifts my spirit. How can I show you my gratitude, my devotion?

*(The SAGE holds her hand to his heart, and kisses her.)*

QUEEN. This is your home, since my heart has become an abode of your soul. You will bless me and my kingdom by staying here and will illuminate the chamber of my heart. - I offer you, beloved Sage, my heart and soul and all I possess, though it is too small an offering to be made.

*(She sends for a silk robe to replace the Wanderer's mantle, and gives him a pearl necklace instead of his old rosary. Gold embroidered shoes are brought to replace his sandals.)*

SAGE. This is all too rich for me.

QUEEN. Nothing is too rich for you, beloved.

*(Enter BRAHMINS with two garlands of flowers and a tray with grain to give the blessing.)*

BRAHMINS. God bless this auspicious wedding.

*(Entertainments are given to the SAGE. Wine is brought and served by the QUEEN. Many courtiers come.)*

## **CURTAIN**

### **Scene 4**

*Wilderness. The SAGE dreams.*

SAGE. Wilderness, my dearest friend, why did I leave you? When did I leave you? Though I had left you, still you were always in my heart-the memory of having meditated in the woods, of having trees of long tradition whose every leaf is a tongue of flame...Venerated trees, have I not taken refuge in your shadow from the hot sun, when tired of roaming about in your wilderness, bare-footed? ...Little pools of water, I drank nectar from you...Joyful I felt under the vast canopy of the blue sky...Gentle streams of water, running from hills and rocks, I bathed in you and was purified of all infirmities...High mountains with a background of white clouds. No place in the world could be compared with your beauty...Morning sun, you are most glorious in the wilderness. I have never seen your face so beaming anywhere else.

Yes, am I really here, or am I in the midst of the world? Yes, there was a reason for being in the world. There is a reason for everything. Life is not without meaning, and all that a person does, whether knowingly or unknowingly, he only fulfills through his life's purpose. The prison I was in was not a prison, for my conscience stood above it. The grandeur of the palace had no attraction for me. The only charm I felt there was my precious Queen.-Wilderness, you attract me, you call me. Though I long to be in the solitude, yet I never felt I was away from you.

## **CURTAIN**

### **Scene 5**

*Room inside the palace. QUEEN and SAGE sitting next to one another. Courtiers present. The PRINCE is brought by the GOVERNESS and the GUARDIAN. The QUEEN rises from her chair, kisses the PRINCE and brings him to the SAGE.*

GUARDIAN. Our little child, by the grace of God, is growing marvelously, do you not think so?

SAGE *(takes the child and kisses it.)* Yes, he is. *(Holds him close to him.)*

GOVERNESS. The Prince enjoys playing. He loves his little pony and does not allow anyone to touch it.

SAGE. Does he put his mind to his studies?

GUARDIAN. It is difficult to take the Prince from his play for his studies, but once he is studying he does it wonderfully well.

QUEEN. I don't know what would be the best way of bringing up our little child. I have been thinking about it very much lately

SAGE. It is a great responsibility, beloved. Even the shadow of an undesirable person falling upon our child would make an impression on him.

QUEEN. Does the child no bring with it at birth some inner tendencies and qualities?

SAGE. Yes, it does, yet they can be rubbed off by its experience on the earth. They can be covered by impressions it receives coming here. To bring up a child is like molding a new world. For it is in man that God awakens to life.

QUEEN. Beloved, why are you looking sad today? Is there anything you need? I will procure all that wealth can bring, power can possess and love can supply-all you wish to make your life happy.

SAGE. I am homesick, precious Queen.

QUEEN. Are you not at home then? I never thought that you had another home.

SAGE. Yes, I had-solitude. It grieves me immensely to tell you, beloved Queen, that I have received a call to the wilderness, which is my kingdom. I must go.

QUEEN (*holds his hands and weeps.*) You are not going, beloved, you will not go...

SAGE. Now the hour has struck, precious Queen, that I should depart to roam about in the wilderness.

QUEEN. I will follow you to the end of the world!

SAGE. No, beloved Queen, it is your duty to bring up this child to be the ruler of this kingdom. Destiny had arranged it so that he should be my son to reign over this country with wisdom and justice.

*(The QUEEN weeps; all present are sad. The SAGE embraces the QUEEN kisses his son, takes off his crown and put it on the head of the child. The mother cries and holds the child, weeping. Then he asks for his old mantle and takes off his kingly robe; he puts on his old rosary and his sandals.)*

SAGE.*(to himself.)* This is the picture of life: tarry here awhile and then depart.

*(He waves his hand and blesses all.)*

**CURTAIN**

## **THE LIVING DEAD**

### **CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY**

THE MAHARAJA

PURAN (his son)

THE MAHARANI (wife of the Maharaja)

NAEKA (a court dancer)

SAHELI (Naeka's maid)

VAIRAGI (an ascetic Sage)

TWO COURTIERS

TWO MUSICIANS

PAGE

TWO KAZAKS (executioners)

FOUR ROBBERS  
WOMAN FRUIT SELLER  
TWO LABORERS  
BOY selling *halva* (sweets)  
OLD MAN  
PEASANT WOMAN, selling buttermilk  
MERCHANT, with his wife  
MOTHER, with four children  
MAGICIAN

## ACT I

### Scene 1

*The MAHARAJA is seated on cushions. A servant waving a fan. FIRST COURTIER on his left hand; SECOND COURTIER on his right hand. Musicians singing and playing.*

MAHARAJA. (*after first song.*) Khan Saheb, which raga did you sing?

MUSICIAN. It is Dipak, Huzur, the song of fire.

MAHARAJA. But the fire has not yet broken out!

MUSICIAN. Pardon, Huzur, it is just kindled; it will come to a blaze.

(*Enter PAGE.*)

PAGE. Maharaja! Naeka, a dancer of most exquisite beauty whose skill has amazed all the great artists of the country, awaits your Majesty's orders.

MAHARAJA. (*turning to SECOND COURTIER.*) Do you know her? Is she really wonderful?

SECOND COURTIER. She is beauty itself. The color of her skin is like a champak flower. With deer's eyes she penetrates the hearts of her admirers. Her swift movements are as graceful as those of the cobra. With a nightingale's voice she sings, enchanting those who hear.

MAHARAJA. (*to the PAGE.*) Bring her.

(*Enter NAEKA; she greets the MAHARAJA.*)

MAHARAJA. Have you caught your beauty from the rose?

NAEKA. Pardon me, Maharaja, the rose has borrowed its beauty from me.

MAHARAJA. (*smiles.*) Show me your wonderful skill, Naeka, I have heard so much about it.

(*NAEKA performs the dance of the flower girl, with gestures of picking flowers and making them into a wreath; she then takes a real flower garland, dances with it and at the end put it around the neck of the MAHARAJA. He takes her hands and holds them to his breast, drawing her nearer. She hangs back, turning away her head.*)

(*Enter PAGE. NAEKA returns to her place.*)

PAGE. Your Majesty, Prince Puran is coming to pay his respects before going for a ride.

(*Enter PURAN, greets in the royal manner, bending low and touching the ground. NAEKA, struck by the beauty of the Prince, touches her heart while looking at him.*)

MAHARAJA (*to PURAN.*) Are you going on horseback, son? Have you finished with your studies?

PURAN (*embarrassed, with a half smile.*) I intended taking some hours from my studies to be alone with nature.

MAHARAJA (*ironically.*) Oh, yes.-Do not stay away too long.

(PURAN *leaves*; NAEKA *shows her emotion in her movements and expression, acting as if she felt inclined to follow him; she takes two or three steps, then recovers her senses, passing her hand over her head as if to throw off her thought.*)

MAHARAJA (*after PURAN has left, to FIRST COURTIER.*) Why is it that he does not put his mind to study? What does he do?

FIRST COURTIER. He likes to be with nature; and when at home he is frequently seen in his mother's company.

MAHARAJA. I scarcely see him!

FIRST COURTIER. He does not enjoy hunting, wrestling, boxing; he is happy wandering alone with nature.

MAHARAJA. We must keep an eye on him!

FIRST COURTIER. Prince Puran is not addicted to any vices-drinking, smoking, or any other such habits. The Prince is different from the young men of his age; he is not attracted by frivolities and stands for ideals and principles.

SECOND COURTIER. It is natural; to what a family does he belong!

FIRST COURTIER. He is simple, but most intelligent at the same time; he does not care for reading or writing, but he thinks.

MAHARAJA (*smiles.*) What does he think? Does he think of the moon?

(*Wine is brought on a golden tray; the MAHARAJA gives it to NAEKA; the COURTIERs give it to the MUSICIANS , and the MAHARAJA passes the wine over to the COURTIERs.*)

FIRST MUSICIAN. To the glory of the Maharaja!

(*All present repeat.*)

MAHARAJA (to NAEKA.) Now open your wings and fly, beautiful bird.

( NAEKA *dances. The MAHARAJA moves his head to the rhythm of the dance. NAEKA going round and round, falls into a swoon; raising hands, balancing as if she might fall. The MAHARAJA rise from his seat and goes to her, makes a sign to the COURTIERs to leave. COURTIERs and MUSICIANS depart; the MAHARAJA holds NAEKA to his breast. When she opens her eyes; she turns her head and waves her hand towards the door by which the Prince has left.*)

MAHARAJA. One jasmine kiss.

(*She responds and he kisses her.*)

**CURTAIN**

## **Scene 2**

Drawing room in the new home of NAEKA near the palace. NAEKA *putting kohl on her eyelids, touching her lips with red paint. SAHELI holding a mirror before her, standing.*

SAHELI. Bai, Providence has granted you comfort, jewels, the sweet little pavilion the Maharaja has given you; besides you have his love. There's nothing more on could wish , and yet I scarcely see you smile. Has an evil eye fallen on you ? Maybe you are worrying about something. If only I knew what troubles your mind. - I would give anything in the world to see you smile again!



NAEKA. Yes, I have everything that one could need, but I wish I could love him. I can't say I love him. His nearness is loathsome to me. Besides, I cannot accustom myself to his requirements. He asks me to abstain from any kind of frivolity with men.

SAHELI. Yes, because he loves you. You are a born artist, excuse me, Bai! (*Smiling with a humorous expression and with gestures.*) You belong to those charming women who are inclined to love one and to like another, to smile at one and to sign to another, to caress one and to pet another, to kiss one and to embrace another.

NAEKA. Am I really charming?

SAHELI. Certainly, Bai, you know you are. There is the woman who has charm for many, and there is the woman who has charm for one, and there is another woman, like myself, who has charm for none. Your vanity has been fed, Bai, by the attention of many admirers.

NAEKA. From my early youth I have grown up playing, making friends, singing and dancing. I attracted young men like a magnet, and so I have never been starved of attention.

SAHELI. This life must seem strange to you, Bai, but you will grow used to it.

NAEKA (*shaking her head.*) No, never.

SAHELI. You will change like the season when the time comes.

NAEKA. This life is like a prison to me. I am like a bird in a golden cage. (*Weeping.*) I would rather be a free dancer than a queen in captivity.

SAHELI (*wiping her eyes and kissing her.*) If I was admired by the Maharaja as you are, I should walk to him on my hands. (NAEKA *smiles.*) You are too young yet to know what it is to be loved by the Maharaja. Every dancer in the country envies you the privilege. Now the Maharaja has made you the court dancer, but (*whispering in NAEKA'S ear.*) one day you might become queen.

NAEKA. That is all I want, to be queen one day. Yet I wish it were Puran and not he.

SAHELI ( *holding her head with both hands in a great fright; then, touching her lips with her finger.*) Ah, seal your lips, it can be most disastrous!

NAEKA (*rises from her seat and looks out of the window.*) There he goes on horseback. Saheli, I pray, will you call him? Say I have something to talk over with him. Bring him here, won't you, Saheli, please?

(SAHELI *gets up and runs to call the Prince. When she is alone, NAEKA acts as if she wonders if he will come or if he will not come, and how she will approach him, and what she will say to him; embarrassed and afraid, excited and dumbfounded, she awaits his coming.*)

(*Enter PURAN*)

PURAN ( *to NAEKA.*) Did you call me?

NAEKA. Yes, I did call you, Puran. Come in, sit here. (*Giving him a seat next to her. He sits, shy, with downcast eyes.*) I admire your beautiful horse. It seems to be proud of its handsome rider.- Tell me, why is the Maharaja not pleased with you? I would do anything to make him more favorable to you.

PURAN. Father's pleasure is all I seek. When I cannot please him, I realize my unworthiness.

NAEKA. You unworthy! How can you say that? You are the worthiest son any father could have. If you were the king, people here would be happier than they have ever been. Our people will rejoice, seeing you one day sitting on the throne with the crown on your head.

PURAN. May father live and reign forever!

NAEKA (*whispering.*) I would be the one to stand by you if ever a struggle arose. (*With determination, raising her*

*finger.*) Know, Puran that you always have someone to give your confidence to. I can be hard as a rock when it comes to a test.

PURAN(*looks bewildered.*) What do you mean?

NAEKA Your mother must be most beautiful.

PURAN. My mother's beauty cannot be observed by every eye.

NAEKA. Is she old?

PURAN. Her soul is older still.

NAEKA. No, doubt, she loves you very much.

PURAN. She is for me God's compassion on earth.

NAEKA (*reluctantly.*) I am your father's favorite (*smiling*) but I am young enough to be your love-mate. (PURAN *still more perplexed.*) Puran, why are you silent, why do you not talk to me? (*She puts her arm in his, caressing his hand, draws closer to his face.*) Puran, have you ever know, or heard, or seen the outburst of the heart's volcano? (PURAN *rises; she rises also and holds his hands.*) Think what you will, say what you will, but let once my lips touch yours; what will be, will be. (*She throws her arms around him and kisses him; sees the MAHARAJA coming behind PURAN. She loosens her hold and pretends to be fainting. PURAN leaves hurriedly, not seeing his father.*)

MAHARAJA (*raises her up, one hand on his dagger, in a rage.*) What is this?

NAEKA (*throws her head on his breast and puts her hand on his shoulder.*) Your son, your son!

MAHARAJA. My son? He is not my son! He cannot be my son! How dare he come here? Did he not know that I care for you? He is a disgrace to my name. (*He lays NAEKA down on cushions; she lies motionless.*)

MAHARAJA (to SAHELI, *outside.*) Send for the kazaks. (*He takes his own scarf and tears it.*) Tear him, destroy him!

(*Enter two KAZAKS, NAEKA sits up with staring eyes, listening.*)

KAZAKS. Command.

MAHARAJA. Arrest Puran!...Flay him, cut his head off, bury him alive, throw him into the sea, do whatever you choose, that I may never see his face again!

(*NAEKA trembles, falls down in despair. KAZAKS depart.*)

MAHARAJA. Saheli!

(*Enter SAHELI.*)

MAHARAJA. Rosewater. (SAHELI *runs and brings it, sprinkles it on NAEKA'S head. The MAHARAJA, holding her with his left hand, fans her with his silk handkerchief.*)

**CURTAIN**

### **Scene 3**

*The jungle at sunset. A bitter cry of a woman behind the scenes.*

WOMAN'S CRY. My beloved son, my only son!

A DEEP VOICE. Mother, mother, do not despair.

HARSH VOICES. Come on, come on. Linger no more, here.

(PURAN is pushed on the scene by the two KAZAKZ, then stands calmly.)

FIRST KAZAK. You're head's to be chopped off here.

SECOND KAZAK. Your bones will dry here in the sun.

PURAN. I am perfectly resigned to my father's command, if only you will allow me one moment to pray.

FIRST KAZAK. No, it can't be done.

SECOND KAZAK (to FIRST KAZAK.) No, let him, let him.

FIRST KAZAK. Do it quickly. We must return before sunset (*pointing at the red sky*), with your head to be brought to the Maharaja.

(PURAN kneels down, with palms joined, his head slightly raised.)

FIRST KAZAK. Let's take a little drop. (*They drink from the bottle.*)

PURAN. God, with clear conscience and with pure heart, I lay before Thee record of my life's deeds. No one have I ever offended, to no one have I caused any harm. Clear away, Lord, my father's misconception of me; comfort the sad heart of my loving mother. And forgive the one who unintentionally brought this about. I pray Thee, Lord, bless them all. Amen.)

(*He bends his head low. To KAZAKS.*) Now I am ready.

FIRST KAZAK (to SECOND KAZAK.) You do it.

SECOND KAZAK. You strike (*Both unsheathe their daggers.*)

FIRST KAZAK. You do it.

SECOND KAZAK. No, you.

FIRST KAZAK (*goes to PURAN and makes a violent thrust with his weapon; when it nearly touches PURAN'S head, his hand becomes paralyzed.* -To SECOND KAZAK) No, you do it!

SECOND KAZAK. I will. (*He twists and turns, and moves passionately around, preparing himself to strike. He raises his hand with great strength. When the dagger is near PURAN'S head, the KAZAK'S hand trembles and he throws his weapon away. Calls FIRST KAZAK and makes gesture.*) Let him go.

FIRST KAZAK (*with expression of fright, whispers.*) No, what will the Maharaja do to us?

SECOND KAZAK. We shall see.

FIRST KAZAK ( *raises PURAN, holding his hand.*) Now, young man, we let you go; but go far, far away.

(PURAN bows and leaves.)

FIRST KAZAK (to SECOND KAZAK.) It's all right.

SECOND KAZAK. He was innocent.

FIRST KAZAK. But what shall we say to the Maharaja?

SECOND KAZAK. That he is dead and buried!

(*Both laugh, holding their stomachs, looking in the direction that PURAN went.*)

# CURTAIN

## ACT II

### Scene 1

*The city gate at dawn. The moon is still shining. A VAIRAGI in Samadhi, sitting on a tiger skin, with a snake round his neck, between the road and the city wall. Two ROBBERS sitting on a rock on the right, at the side of the road.*

FIRST ROBBER. Thank goodness, we had some luck last night; and a good escape. But what about the other two? Why haven't they returned?

*(The SECOND ROBBER stands up and looks in the distance.)*

SECOND ROBBER. They may come any moment *(Silence.)* There they are. *(Pointing.)* Do you see?

FIRST ROBBER. They seem to have stolen a lot; see the heavy burden they are carrying. *(Silence.)* But it is a man!

*(The two ROBBERS rise and go some steps forward.)*

SECOND ROBBER. Hallo, what have you brought?

*(Enter THIRD and FOURTH ROBBERS.)*

THIRD ROBBER. Brought our ill luck.

FOURTH ROBBER. We've never had so bad a trip since we began. When passing through the forest we saw in the distance the face of a beautiful woman. We were delighted at the prospect of good luck. As we went near, what did we find? This wretched man.

THIRD ROBBER. He had gone hungry, I suppose, for many days. He had nothing with him.

FOURTH ROBBER. We thought to save him from the wolves and picked him up in order to sell him at the slave market for twenty thousand dirams.

THIRD ROBBER *(To the first two ROBBERS.)* Yes, he *(pointing to the FOURTH ROBBER.)* had great dreams about this bargain, but it all turned out to be nothing.

FOURTH ROBBER. He was not so bad at first when we took him along with us.

THIRD ROBBER. We should have left him on the way when we saw he was too ill to follow us; but you insisted that we should carry him through the forest. Here, we've tired our arms and legs, and now he's worse than before, perhaps on the point of dying.

FIRST ROBBER *(frightened.)* Be careful. If the police see us with him, they'll arrest us for his death.

*(The four ROBBERS, shocked, leave the body and escape. An old WOMAN FRUIT SELLER, hurrying to the market with a straw tray of fruit on her head, knocks against the body of the PURAN, is frightened and bends down.)*

WOMAN FRUIT SELLER. What is it? Who is it? *(looks at him.)* Poor man, he's dead perhaps.

*(TWO LABORERS pass with spade and fork on their shoulders, on their way to the fields. They stop to see what is going on.)*

WOMAN FRUIT SELLER. Poor man, what's happened to him? Is he dead? *(Holds her finger to his nostrils.)* He's still breathing.

FIRST LABORER. What shall we do?

SECOND LABORER. Let's out him near the Vairagi; he'll take care of him.

( *The LABORERS life the branches on which the body was carried and bring it before the Vairagi.* )

WOMAN FRUIT SELLER. Baba, Baba, look at this man; help him, Baba, help him! (*She takes her tray of fruit and runs quickly to follow the men.*)

VAIRAGI (*opens his eyes, bends low and looks at PURAN, gently puts his hand in the middle of his breast and breathes on him. PURAN opens his eyes.*) Yes, awake, awake, awake.

(*PURAN moves head and body.*)

PURAN. Yes.

VAIRAGI. Now, you rise, rise ( *he lifts him* ) rise.

(*PURAN has risen and sits. VAIRAGI puts his hand in the brass pitcher next to him and wets PURAN'S forehead. PURAN brightens up.-Morning breaks while this is happening. People are coming from both directions: a Boy with halva, an Old Man, a Woman with buttermilk, a Merchant with his wife, a Mother with four children. They all stand still, looking curiously at the scene before them.*)

A CHILD. There's a tiger, it's looking at us!

(*The three other children come nearer.*)

ANOTHER CHILD. (*frightened.*) Oh, look at the snake! (*Draws closer to is mother.*)

OLD MAN (*with important voice to the children.*) The snake is the sign of wisdom.

WIFE ( *to MERCHANT.* ) What is the matter with young man?

HUSBAND. Life is a mystery.

OLD MAN (*important.*) Life is a problem. (*Nodding his head as if approving of what he said. Looks at the VAIRAGI for his opinion.*)

VAIRAGI (*making gesture.*) All this amazing Maya. There four days of moonlight and then comes the dark night. The vision of Maya is the dream of morality. (*PURAN listens attentively.*) When the screen is removed from your eyes, you will se that nothing here belongs to you; the honor that cannot be sustained long, the name that will in time be forgotten, the treasure that will one day be snatched from your hands, the comfort that will no more by yours, are of little value.

MERCHANT. But the thousand rupees I have buried will not be taken away by anyone!

VAIRAGI. You will say: this I hold, that I possess; but in reality nothing belongs to you, not even your own body.

MAN WITH SPADE. (*with an expression of doubt.*) Then we must have nothing?

VAIRAGI. The day when you have nothing, you will have everything.

MERCHANT. So we must leave the pursuit of the world:

VARAIGI. When you cease to follow the world, the world will follow you.

MERCHANT. Then what must we do?

VAIRAGI. Realize the One, rising above duality; burn your false ego to ashes, and powder your skin with the ashes.

MERCHANT. Do you mean to say we must give up all this?

VAIRAGI. Hold on till it gives you up.

SECOND LABORER (*ironically.*) Then you think the whole of life is meaningless?

VAIRAGI. It is meaningless until you have understood the meaning of it.

MERCHANT. Baba, is life on earth worthless?

VAIRAGI. The moment you recognize its worthlessness, life becomes worth living.

(MAGICIAN *enters, his eyebrows painted white, his forehead painted red.*)

OLD MAN. Now you have spoken about life, Baba, but what about death?

MAGICIAN (*emphatically.*) What are you asking him? What does he know of life and death? Can he make the dead alive? (*With gestures.*) I can cut myself and heal instantly; and I can kill myself and waken to life. I can drown myself and rise upon water. Now, you all who listen, leave him alone and follow me. I can get you anything: health, wealth, success, power, pleasure, all.

OLD MAN. Let's see this fellow, what he's going to do .

(*All, one after another, follow the MAGICIAN.*)

THE BOY WITH HALVA (*the last remaining of the crowd, pointing at the VAIRAGI.*) Nothing doing with him.

(*The VAIRAGI is left with PURAN.*)

PURAN. They are like a flock of sheep.

VAIRAGI. Such is the way of the world.

PURAN. Master, all you have said has deeply touched me. Pray grant me the privilege of serving you, that one day I may deserve to attain Vairagi.

VAIRAGI. Vairagi my son, is freedom from all bondage. Are you drawn by family ties?

PURAN. No, Guru, except the deep devotion I have for my mother.

VAIRAGI. Have you any ambition for wealth or rank.

PURAN. I have none, though I was born in a position to have it all.

VAIRAGI. The way of the mystic leads to the goal of annihilation. Will you keep to the path steadily in the face of all earthly temptations, young man?

PURAN. Yes, Guru, by your help I shall gain the strength that will carry me through.

VAIRAGI. I will take you on probation, son, for a limited period, during which you will pass through many tests.

PURAN (*bends down to the feet of the VAIRAGI.*) I surrender myself to your inspiring guidance.

(*The VAIRAGI lifts PURAN up, holds him for a moment, gives him his mantle to wear; the rosary he was holding he puts around PURAN'S neck, then touches his forehead with water from his pitcher and blesses him with both hands stretched over his head.*)

**CURTAIN**

**Scene 2**

NAEKA'S *drawing -room.*

NAEKA *standing before the mirror, putting on her earrings. SAHELI holding the tray of jewels.*

NAEKA. Since the loss of his son, the Maharaja is most depressed. Did you hear anything about the Maharani?

SAHELI. I have heard she hardly eats and never speaks, and only moans during her sleep. While awake she calls the name of her son: Puran, Puran! She has aged so much that one can hardly recognize her, and she has almost lost her sight by weeping. Did you hear about Puran's garden, Bai, which has been neglected for all these years since he went? Many trees died and plants withered away. Wolves were making their home in the place where the Prince lived. But now they say that a wanderer has come there. He sits under the shade of a tree; and since he sprinkled a few drops of water from his pitcher, the whole garden has flourished again. People go in hundreds and thousands to see him. (*Looking out of the window.*) There he is, going along, do you see, Bai?

NAEKA. Who?

SAHELI. The sage of whom they talk so much in the city.

NAEKA (*also looking out of the window.*) He is the sort of man who can read one's fortune. Saheli, I pray, call him here.

SAHELI (*anxiously.*) Oh, Bai, if the Maharaja knows I called a stranger here, he will give me to the vultures!

NAEKA (*smiling.*) Go, it will be all right.

(*SAHELI leaves. NAEKA goes to the mirror and arranges her hair, -Enter PURAN, wearing a flowing beard, in the mantle the VAIRAGI has given him, with the rosary round his neck. Both sit down.*)

NAEKA. When I saw you I thought you might see into my problem and help me out of it.

(*PURAN listens. The MAHARAJA enters, and seeing NAEKA speaking to a stranger is shocked and stands still, looking at what is going on.*)

NAEKA. The Maharaja, who has loved me so long, I believe is losing interest in me.

PURAN. What do you think is the reason?

NAEKA. In the beginning he was blindly in love with me, but suspecting his son in connection with me, he condemned him to death, and since then he seems as though his heart were becoming frozen.

(*The MAHARAJA holds his heart and hangs his head back with half-closed eyes, remembering the incident.*)

PURAN. And what did the Maharani do?

NAEKA (*reluctantly.*) She was most grieved at the loss of her son.

PURAN. What is she doing now?

NAEKA (*with hanging head, weeping.*) She has almost lost her mind thinking about him.

PURAN. I wish to see her. Will you please send for her?

NAEKA. I wish to see her. Will you please send for her?

NAEKA. Immediately?

PURAN. Yes, now.

(*NAEKA calls SAHELI, whispers something in her ear.*)

PURAN. Now tell me, was Puran really at fault?

NAEKA. That I can't say; my lips tremble, my heart fails.

PURAN (*looking in her eyes.*) Tell me.

NAEKA. I could not have told anyone in the world, but I cannot keep any secret from you. I know you look into my soul.

(*The MAHARAJA listens eagerly; NAEKA weeps.*)

NAEKA. It was my fault; I wanted to be queen, but young Puran's wife, and one day my heart burst out before him, and he refused. But the impression the Maharaja got was that he made love to me. In a fit of anger he condemned his son to death.

(*SAHELI brings the MAHARANI, dressed simply; she puts cushions for her to sit on the right of PURAN.*)

MAHARANI (*as if she were speaking in a dream.*) Why did you bring me here? Why am I brought here?

PURAN. What have you to say?

MAHARANI (*nervously straightens as if hearing a familiar voice.*) I long to see my son.

NAEKA. But he is dead.

MAHARANI (*agitated.*) No, he is living.

PURAN (*whispering.*) He is living dead.

MAHARANI. This voice, this is his voice. (*Stands up, draws nearer to PURAN, stretch out her hands.*) I want to look at you. (*She feels his hand, cries.*) My Puran, you are my Puran.

PURAN. Mother.

(*They embrace, NAEKA is horrified.*)

MAHARANI. I wish to see you.

(*PURAN puts his two hands over her eyes. She looks at him, and kisses him.*)

MAHARAJA (*steps forward-NAEKA faints.*) Do my eyes deceive me; are you really there? My son! Puran! I never thought I would ever see you again. (*Stretches his hand upwards.*) Thanks, Providence! (*To PURAN*) Will you ever forgive me? I can never forgive myself for the pain I have caused you.

PURAN. Father, I am always your son.

MAHARAJA. What more do I want? I have had my day. Now you reign over this country.

PURAN. No, father; I am going in search of another kingdom.

**CURTAIN**

**UNA**

**CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY**



Una  
The Statue  
Una's Mother  
Una's Father  
Helen  
King Tut  
First Queen  
Second Queen  
Sultana  
The Queen of Sheba  
Dante  
Beatrice  
Yusuf  
Zuleikha  
The Emperor Akbar  
A Greek Philosopher  
An American Indian  
A Workman (M. Jules Ferrier)  
A Snake Charmer  
Butler  
Guests

*The scene is laid in the United States*  
*Time: The Present*

## SCENE I

Una's *studio*

*Enter Una, who has been long absent*

Una. It is a breath of joy indeed to be once again in my studio, away from all the turmoil of life. It is a joy, which is beyond words. It is a happiness, which cannot be found anywhere else. – My studio has been neglected for such a long while. I have been occupied with no end of things, busy answering life's unceasing demands. But whenever I find time, my one and only thought is to come here and be myself again. Home has no joy for me, nor do I find happiness anywhere else. No one understands me, and all those whom I know are absorbed in their own lives. – Every step I take I am drawn back, and all that I try to hold breaks, for it is rotten; the rock I seek to rest upon crumbles, for it is made of sand. In the world's fair everything I purchase costs more than it is worth, and if I have anything to sell I get nothing for it. By the continual pinpricks that I feel through life, my heart is riddled. O life, you are indeed a puzzle; the only solace I have is in my art. *(Takes one of her tools in her hand.)*

My tools, you are the companions of my solitude! *(Looks up at the glass roof.)*

The sun, the glorious sun, is sending its rays to lift my heart to cheerfulness.

*(Begins to work at the unfinished statue.)*

My statue, how long it is since I have touched you!

*(A knock is heard at the door.)*

Here is someone calling already before I have even begun to work!

*(Opens the door. Helen enters.)*

Helen My dear Una, I have been looking everywhere for you! Where have you been all this long time? Were you hiding from your friends? If so, be sure we shall find you in the end. You can't run away and hide from us!

Una I did not mean to hide. After a long time I just had a moment to come to my studio. I have not even begun to work yet.

Helen (*looking at the half-finished statue*) Is this something that you are working at? Dear me, what a dull occupation! Can't you find anything else to do?

Una (*perplexed and speechless*)

Helen (*continues*) Una, dear, you spend hours at this useless work in this solitary studio. I can't understand how you can do it!

Una (*after a moment's pause*) My dear girl, when have I any time to work? All day I am busy at home. At night I lie awake for hours, thinking how to make both ends meet. You know that my parents are no longer able to be responsible for the household? They have both aged very much, and it is upon me alone that the care of the house depends. Yet whenever I have a moment I come here and try to find oblivion in doing this work, the only thing I really care for.

Helen You simple girl, is this the work you live for! I wouldn't give that much (*snapping her fingers*) for work that brings nothing better. It is simply a waste of time! Excuse me for telling you so.

Una Art seldom brings any material returns. Besides, to expect any would be to me like offering beauty in the marketplace.

Helen I can't understand how you can shut yourself up in this solitary place! If I had no one round me to talk to, life would become so monotonous that I should not know what to do with it.

Una Well, I am happy only when I am by myself. I don't want anyone to talk to. Silence is never long enough for me.

Helen Well, you certainly are a riddle! Now tell me the truth, Una, did you read the *Daily Gossip* this morning?

Una You know quite well that I don't read the papers. I have too much to do. And besides, I am not particularly interested in the sensational stories in the newspapers. They generally say one thing in the morning and quite the opposite in the evening.

Helen Do you know the rate of exchange today?

Una Whether money goes up or down does not make much difference in our lives when we live from hand to mouth day by day. Moreover, the idea of profiting by the loss of another has always been foreign to my nature.

Helen Do you know the name of the new mayor who has just been elected?

Una No, indeed I don't. My dear girl, I live in quite another world from yours.

Helen You certainly are behind the times. Last night I was at a ball given by Mrs. Wilkins. Everybody in the town who is anybody was present. There was music and dancing all night and great fun. There is a Founders' Ball coming off next week, and Auntie is on the committee. She has asked me to help her. Everyone has been asked to come disguised as someone they think they were in their past lives. Won't that be amusing?

Una (*smiles*)...

Helen You will come, Una dear, won't you? Though I know that you always avoid social functions. But all the local papers are talking about this. Do come, please.

Una Society life is for people like you, Helen, not for me.

Helen Una, I really wish you were not living such a retired life. What is the good of life if you don't live it?

Una I am not at all interested in society. I prefer the life of a humble artist.

Helen It seems that no one can change your ideas, Una. I must be going now. I'm sorry to have kept you so long from your work. Now be sure and come to the ball. *Au revoir.*

*(They kiss. Exit Helen.)*

Una. I don't know why people can't leave me alone! They live their own lives; why can't they let me live mine? *(Sighs)* Well, I suppose that is the way of the world.

*(A knock at the door.)*

Una. *(opens the door)* Father, is that you! Yes, I'm here. I had a spare moment, so I thought I would come and try to finish some work I was doing here. *(Leads her father in, holding his arm, and seats him in an armchair.)* Well, Father, what have you come to tell me?

Father. My dear child, you are wanted at home, as your mother is not well. When you are out everything goes wrong. Besides, I have never liked the idea of your being an artist. In our family, as you know very well, we have never had any artists; and there has never been any wish for any of the family to become artist. Our people look upon it quite differently from you. As for myself, I never could have imagined you an artist.

Una. Dear Father, those are the old ideas. Now science and art are the great qualifications of the age. And you know, dear Father, I do not do this as a profession; it is my love for art, which makes me take it up.

Father. Una, my child, though we have been for some time in straitened circumstances, yet we have always considered our dignity. Your mother is depressed, and very often feels sad to see you so unlike the other girls in our family, who go into society.

Una. Father, my society consists of the little works of art which are round me in this studio. I feel at home here, and every moment while I am working here I am happy.

Father. My dear child, there are many things in the world besides art which are to be sought in order that one may be really happy. If you never see anyone, no one will ever know you. There are many other things in life, if you will seek for them. Art is all very well to amuse oneself with, but it is not everything that one needs in life.

Una *(remains silent. After a moment)* All I need, Father, is to make you and Mother happy in every way I can. That is the only thing that interests me in life; and if I have any personal interest, it is in my art.

Father. My child, I must go home and look after your mother. She is not at all well. Come as soon as you can.

Una. Yes, Father dear, I will.

*(They kiss, and the Father goes out.)*

Una. Never a moment have I to concentrate on my work! How true it is that the world of every soul is different; for the life of one is not the life of another. I wish I could be here and continue my work, but life in the world has so many duties that one cannot ignore them and at the same time live happily.

--Well, I must hurry, or I shall keep poor Father waiting. My work, when shall I be free to come to you again, especially now that I have to make preparations for this ball? *(Puts away her tools and leaves for her home.)*

## **Curtain**

## **SCENE 2**

Mother's bedroom. Mother ill in bed. Una enters, embraces her mother.

Una. Dear Mother, I was sorry to hear that you don't feel well. No sooner had Father left the studio than I hurried to see how you were. As much as I love my art, I do not wish to be away from home, Mother dear, when you are not well.

Mother. Dear Girl, with us old people there is always something wrong; one moment we feel well, the next moment we don't. What worries me is to see you going only in one direction. The art to which you are so devoted is to us a foreign word. For you know, however poor we may be in our family, there is no such thing known among us as an artist.

Una. Dear Mother, it is not that I love art in order to become an artist. I don't want to become anything; it is beauty that I love.

Mother. My simple child, beauty is to be seen in nature; you need not go to art in order to see beauty. Besides, as they say: "The country is made by God, the town is made by man."

Una. Dear Mother, I have always felt that what is not completed in nature is finished in art by the Master of all things. The hand of the artist is guided by the eyes unseen.

Mother. But what do you gain by devoting all your time to something in which you don't wish to make your career? You must think of the future, my dear girl!

Una. Mother dear, we all make our future with whatever we do. But it is the future that will tell what we made. Life to me is the making of something; it only depends what we make. We each make something; it is we who make our highest ideal.

Mother. What do you mean by ideal, my dear child? There is no such thing, my darling girl. Ideal is not to be found in this world. You are yet too young, my darling, to know this. When we were young, we thought also of ideals, but alas, in the end we found that it was only a word.

Una. You are right, Mother, there is never an ideal to be found under the sun, if we do not make it. It is we who, out of our own selves, give all that the ideal wants for it to become an ideal. What we make remains; what we are is destroyed. Rumi says, in his *Masnavi*, "Beloved is all in all, the lover only veils Him; Beloved is all that lives, the lover a dead thing." One creates a heart out of a rock; another turns a heart into a rock.

Mother. Say simple things, my dear girl. This is all confusing to me; what your mother wants is your welfare, your happiness. This is all we wish for you, I and your father both.

(*Enter Father.*)

Father. Are you here, Una? Get ready to go to the ball. Have you forgotten you were invited to go to Mrs. Wilkins' house?

Una. I had quite forgotten, Father. Thank you for reminding me. I'll just go and get ready. (*She embraces her mother and departs.*)

**Curtain.**

### **SCENE 3**

*Ballroom in Aunt's house.*

Aunt, assisted by Helen, receives the guests, who are announced by the names of the characters they have assumed. Shah of Persia, King Tut, Queen of Sheba, Emperor Akbar, Greek Philosopher, Dante and Beatrice, Yusuf and Zuleikha arrive and are announced and received by Aunt and Helen.

(*Enter First Queen of Egypt.*)

Butler. The Queen of Egypt, consort of King Tut.

(*Enter Second Queen of Egypt.*)

Butler. The Queen of Egypt, consort of King Tut.

First Queen (*to Second Queen.*) You were not the consort of King Tut. I was his consort.

Second Queen. Not at all, it is I who was his consort.

First Queen. Nonsense! You don't know what you are saying.

Helen. Let's ask him which was his Queen. He has just risen from his grave. (*She is seen asking King Tut.*)

King Tut (*looks slowly and carefully at both Queens. Scornfully*) I don't think that either of them has ever been my Queen. (*Turns away.*)

(*Enter American Indian. Helen greets him.*)

Helen. Were you an American Indian in your past life?

American Indian. No. I don't know what I was in the past, but for the last twenty years I have had an American Indian guide.

Helen. Do you mean a living guide?

American Indian. No, a spirit.

Helen. How did you find a spirit guide?

American Indian. I began by hearing taps at the door for a year before this guide appeared to me, and since then he is always with me.

Helen. How wonderful! And what does he look like?

American Indian (*with importance*) Just like me!

(*He walks about and is welcomed by all.*)

American Indian (*to First Guest*) Are you a medium?

First Guest. No.

American Indian (*to Second Guest*) Are you psychic?

Second Guest. Not yet.

American Indian (*to Aunt*) Are you a clairvoyant?

Aunt. I don't even know what you mean by clairvoyant.

American Indian. If you want to know you must go to a seance and hear the trumpet medium. (*Continues conversation.*)

Butler. Monsieur Jules Ferrier!

(*Enter Ferrier, a workman, looking nervous. Aunt greets him, and introduces him to Helen.*)

Helen. How extraordinary! Among all the kings and queens you come as a plain workman! Were you that in your past life?

Workman. I don't know anything about my past life, and I only know what I was in this one before I joined the Four Hundred.

Helen. And what was that?

Workman. I was a workman.

Helen. But have you always been a workman?

Workman. No, before that I was a barber in England.

Helen. And before that?

Workman. Oh well, before that I was a chimney-sweep.

Helen. You amusing man! But how did you get into society?

Workman. Oh, I made a lot of money in the war, and now I am invited and received everywhere. But, to tell you the truth, I don't like the life. I feel out of place. I feel lonely, too, and I should like to marry. Do you know of any nice girl to introduce me to?

Helen. Have you been married before?

Workman (*nodding his head and looking mysterious*) The past is past; the present is present; it is the future that we look forward to!

Helen. I asked if you had been married before.

Workman (*impatiently*) Suppose I had been married twenty times before, what about it just now?

(*At this moment Una is announced. While Helen greets her, the Workman looks at her with interest.*)

Helen. What a pleasant surprise to see you at last? Are you really here? I can't believe my eyes? But why aren't you dressed? What are you supposed to be?

Una. Myself.

Helen. Yourself! What do you mean by that?

Una. Self means always self; it cannot mean any other.

Helen. You have the queerest ideas, my dear! (*Aside*) What fun it would be to introduce that odd man and this simple girl to each other. I will, presently.

(*Snake Dance*)

Helen (*to Workman*) There is a young lady over there whom you would like. I am going to introduce you to her.

Workman (*eagerly*) Right you are! I am sure I should like *her*! For among all these kings and queens we're the only two who are dressed simply.

(*Helen introduces them to each other. The Workman holds out his hand, but Una draws back slightly; then puts out her hand, but without looking at him.*)

Workman. I'm glad to meet you, Miss.

(*Una remains silent, her eyes cast down.*)

Helen. Now you two must excuse me, I have other things to do. (*She leaves them. They sit down.*)

Workman. I wonder, Miss, how it happens that among all those who are here, only you and I are so simply dressed. I suppose you don't know your past incarnations any more than I do mine? I am so glad to have found you among all these smart people.

(*Una, still silent, looking down.*)

Workman. Can you dance, Miss? Everyone can but me, it seems. I should not mind trying if you would be my

partner, for I am sure we should make a good pair.

Una (*as if waking from a dream*) Dance? I never dance. (*Aside*) I feel my soul dance when my body is still.

Workman (*to himself*) She seems to be in the clouds. I'll try my luck.

(*Enter Helen.*)

Helen (*to Una*) Please come and sing, or dance.

Una. Don't ask me to take part in it. I am enjoying looking on.

Helen. But do take part!

Una. The spectators alone know reality.

Helen. Come and do something.

Una. What shall I do?

Helen. If you can't sing, recite something.

Una. Very well. (*She recites*)

"I have loved in life and I have been loved.

I have drunk the bowl of poison from the hands of Love as nectar, and have been raised above life's joy and sorrow.

My heart aflame in love set afire every heart that came in touch with it.

My heart hath been rent and joined again.

My heart hath been broken and made whole again.

My heart hath been wounded and healed again,

A thousand deaths my heart hath died, and, thanks be to Love, it liveth yet.

"I went through Hell and saw there Love's raging fire, and I entered Heaven illuminated with the light of Love.

I wept in love and made all weep with me,

I mourned in love and pierced the hearts of men,

And when my fiery glance fell on the rocks, the rocks burst forth as volcanoes.

The whole world sank in the flood caused by my one tear,

With my deep sigh the earth trembled, and when I cried aloud the name of my beloved, I shook the throne of God in Heaven.

"I bowed my head low in humility, and on my knees I begged of Love,

'Disclose to me, I pray thee, O Love, thy secret.'

She took me gently by my arms and lifted me above the earth, and spoke softly in my ear,

'My dear one, thou thyself art Love, art lover and thyself art the Beloved whom thou hast adored.'"

Workman. How nice, Miss! I enjoyed your poetry so much. I could not understand what it was all about. What

interested me was one word. You know what that was, don't you?

Una. No, which?

Workman. "Love," that is all there is to think about. All these people here are all interested in the same thing – love.

Una. I do not know it yet. To me it seems a blasphemy to hear it on the lips of ordinary people. I don't know a being on earth who is an example of this word.

Workman. You are talking of big things. I don't mean that at all. What I know about love is to be cheerful and gay. See how happy the other people are. Why should not you and I be the same?

Una. Gaiety is not my way of being happy. What are these pleasures to me?

Workman. You are too serious for me. What's the use of being so melancholy?

Una. If I do not join in the gaiety, it does not mean that I am melancholy. I seek happiness in myself.

Workman. But I want you to seek it in me. For you know how I feel when I look at you. You are trying to hold me off by talking so brilliantly, but you look so beautifully when you are sad that I feel like kneeling at your feet. But you know that the thing I want most in the world is to see you laughing.

Una. You can see many people here laughing. You must enjoy it with them. (*To herself*) Poor man, why does he not look for his gaiety somewhere else?

(*Turns away and leaves him. Walks across stage. Stands still.*)

Una. O human nature! It is a continual study to see the different directions that the mind takes. Yet how few there are whom you can really call human beings. Alone at home, alone in the society of others – I suppose to be alone is my lot. And it never wearies me. Life in the world is most interesting to me, but solitude away from the world is the longing of my soul.

(*Minuet*)

## Curtain

### SCENE 4

Una's *studio*

Una (*addressing the Statue*) Beloved Image, the ideal of my soul, thou hast been conceived in my soul and I have nursed thee with my tears, until thou hast manifested to my vision. When thou art before me, my Beloved, I rise upon wings and my burden becomes light, but when my little self rises before mine eyes I drop to earth and all its weight falls upon me. Did I make sacrifices for thee? No. Thou art the outcome of my love. How long, how long shall I wait to hear a word from thee? Whether here or elsewhere I have worked for thee and thought of thee alone. Dear, dear Image, thou art the ideal of my heart. O speak to me! My heart patiently awaits thy word, deaf to all that comes from without. O thou who art enshrined in my heart, speak to me! I have yearned to hear thy voice if it were but once.

Statue. Yes, I speak, but I speak only when thou art silent.

Una. Thy whisper to the ears of my heart moves my soul to ecstasy. The waves of joy, which rise out of my heart, form a net in which thy living word may swing.

Statue. Thou hast found thy happiness in working in this place which is my world. Thou didst first imagine my existence, as I lived in thy imagination; now thy imagination has become a reality and my existence has become truth. So thou madest me to be the masterpiece of thine art. Now I am the result of thine art, and in finishing me thou fulfillst the purpose of thy life. Dost thou love me? Then first learn what love means. Love means sacrifice, one continual sacrifice from the beginning to the end. I come to life only when thou becomest dead.



Una. I would willingly die a thousand deaths, if by dying I could gain thy beloved presence. If it were a cup of poison thy beloved hand offered, I would prefer that poison to the bowl of nectar. I value the dust under thy feet, my precious one, most of all treasures the earth holds. If my head could touch the earth of thy dwelling place, I would proudly refuse Khustrau's crown. I would sacrifice all the pleasures the earth can offer me, if I could only retain the pain I have in my feeling heart.

Statue. (*holds out a bowl*) I offer thee this cup of poison. Take it if thou wilt.

(*Una takes the cup. Falls down as though dead*)

Statue. (*raises her in his arms, embraces her and kisses her, and brings her to life again*) Awake! Awake! (*She opens her eyes.*) Thou hast gone through death, but hast not died. The sacrifice thou madest did not after all rob thee of thy life. It has only raised thee above death. Now thou art living with my life. It is thy love, which hath given thee the life after death, a life to live forever.

Una. Thy light hath illuminated the dark chambers of my mind. Thy love is rooted in the depth of my heart. Thine own eyes are the light of my soul. Thy power worketh behind my action. Thy peace alone is my life's repose. Thy will is behind my every impulse. Thy voice is audible in the words I speak. Thine own image is my countenance. My body is but a cover over the soul. My life is thy very breath, my Beloved, and my self is thine own being.

**Curtain**

## **AMIN, THE FAITHFUL TRUSTEE**

### **CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY**

AMIN - A boy of nine years in Act I, Scene 1; twelve years in Act I, Scene 2; a man of twenty-five in Act II

HALIMA - His foster-mother

TALIB - His uncle

MUTAL - His grandfather

K ARIMA - His aunt, Talib's wife

ALI - His cousin, a little older

TEJA - A wealthy and distinguished woman, older than Amin, and whose business manager he becomes; afterwards his wife.

JOHLA - Teja's maid

HUMADAN - Teja's uncle, an old man.

Three Boys, playfellows of Amin

Shawl seller

Customer

Woman fruit-seller

Boy

Rich man

Three Slave-girls

Dancing Girl

Two Accompanists

Medium

Young Man

Woman in Mourning

Palmist

Young Woman

Wayfarer

Two Priests

Police Officer

Soldier

Maid

Woman Artist

Two men with gifts  
Twelve Travelers  
Two Inhabitants  
Four Companions of Amin  
The Chief of Yemen  
Chief's Colleague  
Constable  
The Sheriff of Mecca  
Four Governors  
Envoy of Hedjaz

## ACT I

### Scene 1

*Cottage in an Arabian village. Amin is in charge of the farm; he is petting a lamb.*

AMIN. My little one, you feel drowsy today, don't you? I'll give you a bath in the pool and then take you in the sun, so that you'll feel cheerful.

*(Enter several BOYS.)*

FIRST BOY. What are you doing, Amin? Always busy with the home and farm, isn't he? We've come to play a game today; now what shall we play?

SECOND BOY. Yes, let's play *kus kus*.

*(BOYS play, AMIN leading. One boy pushes another, who falls down and hits him back. AMIN reconciles them. They continue the game. After it is finished, they rest, sitting on blocks of wood.)*

THIRD BOY. Do you know, Amin, what great fun we had on our way here! There was a camel laden with dates. We made a hole in the sack and took out a lot of dates. See, we all have our pockets full. Would you like some? *(AMIN smiles.)*

FIRST BOY. I'm sure you would; take some!

AMIN. No, I won't take any.

SECOND BOY. Why? Don't you like them?

AMIN. Yes, I like dates, but I don't like this way of taking them. It isn't fair.

SECOND BOY. Fair! Ha! ha! ha! *(All the boys laugh.)* What is fair and unfair in these few dates? You're a funny fellow, Amin.

THIRD BOY. Do you know, Amin, we've planned to go to town today to have a jolly good time.

AMIN. I'm sorry, I can't come with you today. Halima has been out since morning and she left me in charge of the farm. So you see I can't come.

FIRST BOY. Why must you be tied to home because Halima said so? My mother this morning wouldn't let me go, but do you think I would be detained by her? I simply told her I must go. She grumbled a bit and then quieted down by herself. Why can't you do the same? Halima is not your mother.

AMIN. Halima is my foster-mother and I must listen to her as I would to my own mother. Besides, I am entrusted with the home; therefore I won't leave my charge.

SECOND BOY. Well, then *we* are going, that's all; please yourself!

*(BOYS go off.- AMIN busies himself with domestic duties. Enter HALIMA.)*

HALIMA. My sweetheart, what have you been doing? I am so sorry I was detained in town, Amin; there was such a crowd today at the market; I tried to hurry, but I couldn't get back sooner. Look, what I've brought. (*Taking out of her basket tomatoes, pineapple, and sugar-canes.*) You didn't go with your playmates today?

AMIN. They came to fetch me, but I couldn't go as you had asked me to look after the farm.

HALIMA (*kisses his forehead.*) My darling, it is so sweet of you to think of your Halima. (*She sighs deeply, raising her head, then looking down.*) Bless his mother.

AMIN (*speaks in a broken voice.*) Halima, where has my mother gone? Shall I see her again? (*HALIMA is silent for a moment.*) Do you they ever come here again, who have passed away, or do they never return: What is death, Halima? It always puzzles me. Why do people die? Because they're ill, or because they're called away? Are they always lost to the world? Can anyone see them? I should so much like to see mother!

HALIMA (*in tears.*) Your father was called away first, my darling, even before you were born. If was afterwards that your mother followed in to heaven, peace be on her! How delighted would you father be to see you now, if he were alive; and how much you mother would have rejoiced to watch you grow, sweetheart! It tears my heart to think of it.

AMIN (*sadly, looking down.*) But what can one do to find those one has lost, Halima? Is there any way of meeting them?

HALIMA. They say those we love are never far away, even if they have gone to the other side of life! Those who really love must someday meet again, even if it is after death. Life is a mystery, my darling child; one cannot say much about these matters. You are too young yet to think of such things. You will know when the time comes.

AMIN. When will that time come, Halima? I should so much like to know all these things.

HALIMA. If won't be long, my child. When one thinks how quickly the days pass, years slip by before we look at them. One day you will be grown up and will think out things as every thoughtful man does. It is only a matter of time.-Now go and take a look round the farm; see if everything is in order.

(*AMIN goes, HALIMA sits down.*)

HALIMA. What a privilege it is for me to bring up this orphan! What trust his mother- peace be on her-gave me! but it is a responsibility, a great responsibility to bring up this child who is unlike anyone.

(*Enter TALIB.*)

TALIB. Here I am, Halima. Did you send for me?

HALIMA. Yes, Talib. Come in, sit comfortably.

TALIB. It is long indeed since I saw you last. How are you getting on? Nicely, Halima?

HALIMA. No woman on the earth could be as privileged as I am, having charge of this darling child. I have never seen or known a boy like Amin, your nephew, bless him! He is so affectionate and tender, so thoughtful and considerate that never a cross word have I heard from him. At moments I have been impatient with him, but he never talked back at me. He is most affectionate to the children of his age, gentle with all who come here; he has regard for his elders. Young as he is, he thinks like a much older person. Indeed, he is an old soul. His feelings are deep, and yet he is so innocent that very often I notice in him something of his babyhood. I cannot always understand him. Most of the time he is nearer to me than my own heart, yet at times he seems to be so far away in the clouds that I cannot reach him. He is always a mystery to me. Yet he has an acute sense of humor; he is quick to see the comic side of things. He is often energetic and lively. To have him in my home is the greatest joy to me. He helps me to forget life's woes; making my life's burden easy for me to bear.

TALIB. Where is Amin? Please call him.

(HALIMA calls AMIN and leads him to his uncle.)

HALIMA. Do you know who this is, my darling? This is Talib, your uncle. Your mother's last wish was that you should be given into his care. (*To TALIB.*) This is the treasure that was entrusted to me. Now I give him into your arms, as it was his mother's wish that he should be brought up under your parental care. (*Crying.*) I don't know what will become of me when he is gone!

(TALIB holds AMIN'S hands and looks at him.)

TALIB. Well, son, are you willing to come with me? Your aunt is eagerly waiting for you at home, and your grandfather has longed to see you ever since you were born. And then, there is your cousin who will be so happy to have you as his playmate.

( HALIMA embraces the child and cries. TALIB takes his hands.)

HALIMA. I give this trust to you. (*Turning to AMIN.*) God be your protection, my darling child.

## CURTAIN

### Scene 2

TALIB'S house, KARIMA, his wife, sewing, MUTAL, his father, smoking a water-pipe.

*Three years have passed.*

MUTAL. Amin is so quiet that it does not seem that another boy has come to live the house. His influence seems to make even Ali quieter.

KARIMA. Though he is so quiet, it seems he has brought sunshine into our home. In spite of his quietness there is something lively in him which makes Ali more bright than he has ever been. no wonder his mother had many wonderful dreams before he was born, giving good tidings. Now that I see him, I begin to see the meaning of her visions, significant in his unfoldment.

MUTAL. His father, peace be on him, was simple and yet so intelligent that he was a glow of which Amin is the blaze.-Do the boys get on well together?

KARIMA. father, since Amin has come, Ali has become quite different. Ali follows every turn that Amin takes. Ali seems to be so much more thoughtful and happy since the coming of Amin. They seem to blend with one another as sugar and milk.

MUTAL. Amin, with all his gentleness, is steady and firm, and so Ali, however energetic, responds to his influence.

KARIMA. Father, it is interesting to watch them grow fond of one another, more so every day.

(ALI enters with a lot of leaves.)

ALI ( to KARIMA.) I have found these leaves after all; I had to go far into the forest to fetch them, but I wouldn't have come home without them!

KARIMA. Child, you must not go far into the woods, Very often one meets wild animals there.

ALI. I am not afraid of wild animals. I would fight if I met any.

(MUTAL laughs. ALI busies himself with the leave. Enter AMIN.)

KARIMA. Where have you been, Amin?

AMIN. I was learning. I have learnt many words today. I am very anxious to learn to speak better. (*to ALI.*) What are you doing, Ali?

ALI. I am preparing wreaths for the gods of Ka'ba, for there are very few left before the annual celebration of our gods.

AMIN. I don't like to call these idols of stone gods, Ali. I don't know why I have never liked all they make of stone gods. I can't enjoy the feasts. It all seems to me foolish.

ALI. You mustn't say so, Amin. If father hears it, he won't like it. Grandfather told me many times that we must look with reverence on the gods of Ka'ba.

AMIN. I don't know, Ali, why I feel like this, but I can never feel sympathetic towards these hideous gods, and I feel a kind of revolt against all the fuss that is made of them. I sometimes feel like breaking them up into pieces. I can't understand why people go crazy about them by hundreds and thousands.

ALI. I can't understand them either, Amin, but it is our religion; we must not say anything against it.

AMIN. I tell you, Ali, I can't follow such a religion; it only amuses me, it is all so funny.

(ALI *laughs*.)

MUTAL. What's the joke, boys?

ALI. Amin is wondering about the religious festivals; they amuse him.

AMIN. Yes, I don't feel interested in all they make of the stone gods; it all seems to me childish. People might as well choose to do something else. I should think there is much to be done.

MUTAL. It is a custom, child, our people have observed for ages.

AMIN. Has this custom always been among people, grandfather?

MUTAL. No doubt, in the beginning the stone of Ka'ba was set there by our ancestor Abraham when he was returning from Egypt after his initiation in the ancient mysteries. He set this stone here as a token of his initiation, making it a center of pilgrimage for the children of Beni Israel. The line of our family, son, is traced back to Ishmael. Neither Abraham nor his son Ishmael worshipped the idols of many gods. It was afterwards, I suppose, in order to draw more people to the Ka'ba, that these idols were placed there. However, this has long become the religion of our people; they expect to see at the Ka'ba the gods of their families. If it were not for these festivals, there would be no interest left in our religion.

AMIN. What is meant by religion, grandfather? Isn't it faith rather than form?

MUTAL. It is a most difficult question to answer, my son, Besides, you are yet too young to think about these subjects. There is so little one can say in these matters, and the less said, the better it is.

(*Enter TALIB.*)

TALIB (to ALI.) Please, Ali, go and tell the man to make the camel ready for me to start on my journey.

(ALI *goes*.)

TALIB (*to AMIN, resting his hands on his shoulder.*) I am going on a long journey to Syria, on business, Amin.

AMIN. I will come with you.

TALIB. I would not think for a moment of taking you with me, my son, for it is a long journey, miles of land in the desert to be crossed, all sorts of hardships one goes through, and one meets with many dangers on the way.

AMIN. (*embracing his uncle.*) Uncle dear, please take me with you on your journey. I do wish to travel. I do not mind what difficulties I may have to experience on the way.

TALIB (*looks at AMIN'S eager face for a moment.*) I will take you, my child; go and get ready.

(*KARIMA takes AMIN to prepare him and brings him back. AMIN and TALIB bid goodbye to all present and depart.*)

## CURTAIN

### Scene 3

*A bazaar at Jerusalem. A SHAWL-SELLER bargaining with his CUSTOMER. A thief putting his hand into the pocket of the man who is busy purchasing. CUSTOMER examines the quality of the stuff in his hands.*

SHAWL-SELLER. It's four dirams a yard. (*CUSTOMER throws the stuff at him and goes away. The SELLER follows, pulling his robe.*) Two dirams, two dirams a yard.

CUSTOMER. No, no. No, no.

SHAWL-SELLER. All right, one diram; take it.

CUSTOMER (*takes the stuff and puts his hand in his pocket.*) Someone has taken my money. Police, police!

(*An old WOMAN FRUIT-SELLER walking with a basket full of fruit under her arm.*)

BOY (*to the WOMAN.*) How much for a kouri?

WOMAN. One Vazan

BOY. Too dear, too dear! Are these sweet cherries?

WOMAN. Sweet as sugar.

(*BOY puts his hand into the basket, takes a cherry and puts it in his mouth. WOMAN looks at him with disgust. BOY puts his hand again into the basket. The WOMAN pushes his hand off. The BOY upsets the basket and all the fruit falls on the ground. Other street-boys come and seize it.*)

(*A dancing girl comes, scantily dressed, with accompanists. The crowd follows her and gathers around. A musician pushes the crowd back with his instrument, making space for the dance. A spectator, unwilling to be pushed back, shows fight. The musician makes as if to strike him; the man lifts a stone to throw at him. Many bystanders clapping their hands to the rhythm of the dance, the accompanist singing, people merry-making. At the end of the dance many throw kisses to the girl.*)

(*A MEDIUM standing in concentration with closed eyes by the side of a mosque.*)

WOMAN (*to MEDIUM.*) I beg you, I pray you, will you communicate with my daughter and tell her that from the moment she died, food and drink have become as poison to me. I weep all day and I am sleepless at night. I would like to know how she is over there; is she happy.

MEDIUM (*moves his head round and round, raising the pupils of his eyes upwards.*) I see, I see your daughter. O, she is happy, more happy than she has ever been.

WOMAN. Do you see? I am so glad. Please ask her, is there anything she is in need of?

MEDIUM. She has everything she wants there. But she is attached to all the beautiful clothes and jewelry she had here, and she wants all that over there.

WOMAN. O, I would be willing to give anything, anything, if I only knew how to send it there!

MEDIUM. I will take things for you if you want me to, when I go there at night; you only have to bring them to me. (*The WOMAN goes.*)

(Enter YOUNG MAN.)

YOUNG MAN (*to MEDIUM.*) I had a dream my father, who died recently, is not happy in heaven.

MEDIUM. Wait, I will write a letter to the keeper of the heavens.

YOUNG MAN. Please.

MEDIUM (*writes a letter; then reads.*) ' Brother Israel, the father of this young man, Faruk ibn Kalil, died on the 5<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan, and is now in your world. Give him two trees of plums and one tree of pears, a tank of honey and a fountain of milk, with ample supply of bread and meat.' (*To YOUNG MAN.*) Now what will you pay?

YOUNG MAN. Five dinars.

MEDIUM. No, that is not enough for all I have asked in my letter.

( *The YOUNG MAN gives the dinars. The MEDIUM seals the letter with his thumb, licking it and pressing it on the paper, and winks while sealing it. - The WOMAN returns with a box of jewelry and a sack of beautiful clothes. Hands them over to the MEDIUM.*)

WOMAN. I have brought not only my daughter's jewels and clothes but all I had, that may take them from me to my daughter. I want her to be happy. I am so thankful to you for all you are going to do for me.)

(A PALMIST *sitting with his astrological chart spread over his lap.*)

PALMIST *to a YOUNG MAN.*) Come here. (*The YOUNG MAN comes near.*) Sit down. Show me your hand. (*Pointing with his finger to his palm.*) Very distinct and long line of fortune; but you will not get it yet. And here (*Point to thumb.*) A beautiful wife; but there will always be a quarrel in the home. (*Looks at center.*) Some relative will leave great wealth for you. But you will have a hard time in getting it.

YOUNG MAN. But tell me, shall I have good luck in the business I am going to start today?

PALMIST. Pay five dinars, please. (*The YOUNG MAN does so.*) There are some planetary influences standing in opposition to your work, but I will make things right for you.

( A YOUNG WOMAN, *moving about through the crowd, covering her face from a gay WAYFARER, looking at him out of the corner of her eye.*)

WAYFARER (*pulling the sari from her face.*) One, just make it one.

(*She looks annoyed. He kisses her and walks away.*)

BEGGAR (*scantily dressed, with patched sleeves and a tin pot in his hands.*) Please one penny; be ye well!

A MAN. Go further!

( A WOMAN *selling three slave-girls. A MAN, richly dressed, with his companion, examines the slaves.*)

MAN. How much?

WOMAN (*shows ten on her fingers. He shows five.*) Ten, ten. (*He gives ten dinars, takes the slave-girl along with him.*)

(*Enters two drunken PRIESTS.*)

FIRST PRIEST. HoHh How many prayers did you say this morning?

SECOND PRIEST. I said only one prayer because he didn't bring me more than one bottle of liquor. I say only one prayer each bottle.

FIRST PRIEST. That is why you are always drunk.

SECOND PRIEST. You're crazy.

FIRST PRIEST. You're mad.

*(They fight. POLICE OFFICER arrests them both.)*

FIRST PRIEST *(gives the POLICE OFFICER a purse.)* Let me go, let me go!

POLICE OFFICER *(changes his attitude, bows to the PRIEST who gave him the money. )* High priest! *(Goes away with the other one.)*

*(AMIN with TALIB passing through the bazaar, halting at every step, observes keenly the degenerate condition of the place.)*

AMIN. Uncle, does no one tell these people to act differently? Have they always been like this? This life does not interest me; there is something in it, which does not seem to me to be right. Have they never been told to do better?

TALIB. Child, in this worlds one cannot expect things to be better than they are. People have been taught the way of righteousness by the great souls who have come, time after time, to guide the children of the earth. But when some years pass and the real way is forgotten, then a period of disintegration comes and people degenerate. It is sad to think that human beings should fall beneath the level of the beasts, and yet there is nothing to be surprised at, for man can rise higher than an angel and fall lower than the devil. As it is said, 'When a glimpse of Our Image is caught in man, when Heaven and earth are sought in man, then what is there in the world that is not in man? If one only explores him, there is a lot in man.'

AMIN. But what is this that one dislikes in the, is it evil? Then how does it differ from good?

TALIB. Good and evil are relative terms, my son. Evil is nothing but the lack of good. Nevertheless, good is real and evil is its shadow. When one believes this and tries to bring out in another the good there is in him, one finds that no soul, however, wicked, is void of goodness. To understand all is to forgive all.

*(AMIN is deeply impressed by all he sees at the bazaar and by all his uncle says.)*

**CURTAIN**

## **ACT II**

### **Scene 1**

*Drawing room of TEJA'S house. TEJA seated; JOHLA, her maid, in attendance. Thirteen years have passed; AMIN is now twenty-five.*

JOHLA. Bibi, I beg your pardon, tell me why for some time I have noticed that you don't seem to be altogether here. You seem to be somewhere else. You don't mind my asking this; but as I feel sad with you, I should know what is the matter. Excuse me for asking you.

TEJA. Yes, you are right, Johla. My mind has been in such a condition, I am sorry to say, that I could not very well manage to conceal my feelings. I am not surprised that you have observed the change. There is nothing in my life to make me sad. As you know, I have been blessed by Providence, I am thankful to say; yet I have had a feeling of loneliness, particularly of late. I have tried to get over this feeling, but I cannot always manage it. Knowing how false human nature is, I preferred to live alone, and the independence I experienced in life has taken the place of a companion. Only since I have seen this young nephew of Talib's who has just returned from Syria, I am in a sort of maze. I don't know who I am. He strikes me as a most promising young man and he inspires one with trust, for his appearance says he is honest. He seems to be so tenderhearted and has such a refined way that one cannot but love him.

JOHLA. Now I remember, Bibi; it is since the time he came you've been like this. If any man made me so



miserable, I would give him a good shaking! I would not allow anyone in the world to make my life wretched!

TEJA. Don't talk nonsense! You must learn to keep your mouth shut. Listen. I have engaged him to attend to my business affairs. But oh! It is not business that I care for. It is him.

(TEJA moves restlessly.)

JOHLA. Bibi, do you know, the neighbor's cook was drunk last night, and he fought with his wife until she put him out of the house. Ha! ha! ha! He was lying there in the street, swearing at her all night long. He! he! he!

TEJA. I don't feel like hearing your funny stories. Silly!

JOHLA. Bibi, if you have a fortune, every man will bow his head before you. Do not be sad over nothing!

TEJA. No fortune can be compared to a truly worthy man!

JOHLA. May I bring you the cat for you to play with? Last night it played and played with me until it tore my apron. Where is my darling pet? (*Looking around the room.*) Puss, puss, puss!

TEJA. Please, Johla, leave me alone! Go and play with your kitten! (*Holds her head in her hands.*)

JOHLA (*retires muttering.*) I wouldn't let any man cause me a headache! Puss, puss, where has he gone?

(*Exits JOHLA.*)

TEJA. (*goes to the window; looks out.*) I wonder what day it is today. (*Walks restlessly about the room.*) Is this the last of the month? Why, it's the new moon! Will Heaven grant me my star, I wonder! (*Comes back from the window.*) I don't know if he has the slightest thought of the feeling I have for him. He seems so shy and reserved that all the time he sat before me his eyes were cast down and there was an innocent expression on his face showing that he was not at all conscious of a woman's presence.

(*Knock heard at the door. JOHLA comes in running.*)

JOHLA. Bibi. Bibi! The young man about whom you were just talking to me has come. Shall I tell him, Bibi is busy just now, to come some other time?

TEJA. No! Bring him in after a moment. I shall soon be ready.

(*Exit JOHLA, TEJA throws a veil over her face. Enter AMIN; he bows.*)

TEJA. I was just wondering if you had arrived. Somehow or other I felt that you must be coming today. I hope all went well with you on your journey?

AMIN. Yes, Bibi. It seemed as though every person and every condition was favorable to me: all went well with our business. I have carried out the affair according to your instructions and at the same time to the mutual advantage of all. Therefore the other party is pleased also.

TEJA. I am sure everything you undertake must succeed.

AMIN. Bibi, I should think everyone would succeed in business if they knew the key to its secret. That key is fairness in dealing.

TEJA. I have no doubt about it. And you are the most honest person I have ever had to carry out my business.

AMIN. Bibi, I will try to come up to your expectations. Please do not think too well of me yet, for you don't know me and my work. I only hope I shall not disappoint you.

TEJA. No, I cannot think for a moment that you could be other than I know you to be. No soul in the world have I ever seen who has won my confidence to the extent that you have. I cannot doubt, even if I wanted to. Besides, you will not disappoint me, even if you did not carry out the business profitably, for I do not attach more importance to

the qualifications than to the person. In you I see the person who is more precious than the wealth of this earth.

AMIN. Bibi, I have no words to express my gratitude to you for so kind an appreciation of me. I am not yet at all worthy of it.

TEJA. Please take a seat, Amin, and be comfortable; you must be tired after your long journey.-I must not keep my face veiling before you, for you seem no longer a stranger.

(AMIN *takes a seat.*)

TEJA. I am thankful, Amin, that you were brought to me. (*Puts her hand on the arm of his chair.*)

AMIN. Pardon, Bibi, would you allow me to make clear to you the details of the affair, which I have managed for you?

TEJA. No, Amin, you do not need to. I am quite satisfied, as you know. I should like to hear something of your personal life.

AMIN. My personal life: There is not much to say about it. I was the only son of my father who passed away before I was born, and my mother followed him after giving me birth. I was left with Halima, my foster-mother, who then put me in charge of my uncle. I never allowed myself to feel an orphan, for I always had a natural tendency to lean on the Maker of this world, in whom I say my mother and father both.-The first journey I made was to Syria. I accompanied my uncle there on business. That was a great privilege for me because it allowed me to become acquainted with the various aspects of life in the world. Though I am most thankful to have seen it all, yet it has left on my mind and impression of sadness, which I cannot easily forget.

TEJA. What did you see that made you sad, Amin?

AMIN. It was the falseness of human nature, playing its different parts under many and varied conditions. By this I do not mean to say I am exempt from it, but it only showed me my own infirmities.

TEJA (*touches AMIN'S arm.*) No, I do not see in you any infirmities. You seem to be far, far away from them. If all men were like you, the world would be quite different.- But when you said: 'It left on me an impression of sadness,' what I thought was, a tender spot in your heart is being kept alive by the continual memory of someone you perhaps loved there.

AMIN. No, I never mean to say you have determined to keep your heart free from the love of a woman?

AMIN. No, Bibi, I only meant I have not so far allowed myself to think on the subject.

TEJA. Why did you not think on the subject: Do you consider it a sin?

AMIN. In the first place, I began life as an orphan, and then I felt the weight of every act of kindness done to me. It kept me continually wondering how I could fulfill my obligations to those relatives and friends, to those near and dear to me, who have been so kind. This thought has continually occupied my mind and has never allowed me to think on any other subject. Besides, the poverty of the people in this country takes away every possibility of doing anything for oneself. Frankly speaking, my state is as the saying goes, 'Qazi, why are you so thin?' The Qazi said, 'Because of the anxiety about my citizens.' Yet I am not without hope, it is only a matter of time.

TEJA. Amin, you are a dear; the more you speak to me, the more I am won by you. For every word you say goes through my heart. I think it is because you are so sincere. My engaging you to attend to my business was the first step; now I feel as if you engaged to my soul.

(TEJA *gives him her hand; he kisses it and holds it to his heart, his eyes cast down in modesty. Knock heard. Enter JOHLA She looks surprised. TEJA and AMIN separate.*)

JOHLA. I beg your pardon for having come in without knocking. Why am I so forgetful!

-Bibi, there is a young soldier who wishes to see Amin.

AMIN. May I take leave of you and see what he wants?

TEJA. Call him here; I will go to my room for a moment.

(TEJA and JOHLA go out. - Enter SOLDIER.)

SOLDIER. I have come to tell you from the Ministry of War that there is a sudden call to arms. The young men of the country are expected to defend their land against the invasion of a mighty enemy, who with his troops is already approaching the gates of our town. It is the wish of many in charge of affairs that you should take command of the army for the defense of our country.

AMIN. Please thank them all. I feel most privileged to take charge of our troops and nothing would please me more than to render this service to my country, even if it were at the cost of my life.

(The SOLDIER salutes and departs. - Enter TEJA, who appears nervous.)

TEJA. What did the soldier come to tell you?

AMIN. Bibi, our country is being invaded by a mighty enemy who is quite near our door. So all the country is called to arms. The authorities wish me to lead the first troops going for the defense of our country. I consider it the greatest privilege to fight for my land.

TEJA. My darling sweetheart! You are too precious to be sent into battle. Your life is too valuable to be sacrificed in this way! Oh, I don't know what will become of me when you are gone!

AMIN. I beg your pardon, Bibi, I must hurry now. I am sure your thoughts will be with me; so all will be well.

TEJA( crying.) Know that I shall not feel I am living while you are away. It is you who will bring me to life when you return safe from there.

AMIN. Be sure that no harm will come to me, and soon we shall meet.

(AMIN kisses her hands; she lays her head upon his shoulder. They embrace.)

TEJA (still weeping.) God be with you!

## **CURTAIN**

### **Scene 2**

TEJA'S home. TEJA ill, lying in an armchair. JOHLA waving the fan.)

TEJA. Give me some cold water, my throat is dried up. It seems as if flames are rising out of my body, oh! ah!

(JOHLA runs and fetches rose-water; she sprinkles it over TEJA.)

JOHLA. Bibi, Bibi, (She gets no answer.) Are you here, Bibi?

TEJA. No, Johla, I was not here, I was at the front, where the battle is taking place, going over the agonies, sharing the experience of my beloved.

JOHLA. Here is the water, Bibi, you wanted; I have fetched it.

TEJA. Thank you, Johla. (TEJA drinks.) Now I feel cooled, I feel ease through my breath. Something seems to tell me that all is well with him. A feeling comes to me as if I was reading his letter that he is coming back.

JOHLA. Will you eat something, Bibi? It is several days since you really had anything to sustain your body. If not for yourself, then for his sake, to give him pleasure. You must take care of yourself, you must feel well.

TEJA. No, don't mention food to me. I have no mind for it. I shrink even from looking at food.

JOHLA. Bibi, you must make yourself strong.

TEJA. Will you help me, Johla, to get up?

*(JOHLA lifts her up. She walks, her head on JOHLA'S shoulder. JOHLA holding her, TEJA looks out of the window; JOHLA looks with her.)*

JOHLA. I don't see him yet.

TEJA *(resting her hand on JOHLA'S shoulder, cries.)* I see him! I see him! He's coming back!

JOHLA. Don't act as if you delirious! You must not stand here, you have no strength. Come and sit down in this chair.

*(JOHLA puts her into the chair and fans her.)*

TEJA*(still softly crying.)* I see him! I see him come!

*(Knock at the door. JOHLA runs to see who has knocked. TEJA opens her eyes and sits up.)*

TEJA. I wonder!

JOHLA. *(entering hurriedly.)* Bib, you will pleased to know that a soldier has come on horseback with a message from Amin.

TEJA. Show him in.

*(Enter SOLDIER who salutes and presents the letter to TEJA.)*

TEJA*( opens the letter and reads aloud.)* 'By the grace of God, the Most Merciful and Compassionate, the battle is won and the enemy has admitted his defeat. The final arrangements are already completed. I am now preparing to come back. I kiss your dear hand, the hand, which I always felt next to my heart.

*(TEJA wiping her tears of joy, gives gold coins to the SOLDIER.)*

TEJA. Has all gone well?

SOLDIER. Yes, lady. Amin showed great bravery; he fought most courageously and wisely made peace. He has won both the love of his friends and the admiration of his foes. He is the young man of the day; we all are proud of him for proving so worthy of our trust. *(Salutes.)* I take my leave, lady.

*(TEJA wiping her tears of joy.- As the SOLDIER approaches the door, JOHLA meets him. She acts as if frightened, he as if amazed to see her, both as if they just missed running into each other.)*

SOLDIER. Hullo, queen of the kitchen!

JOHLA. Hullo, king of spades.

*(They nod at one another and throw a kiss. The SOLDIER goes out.)*

JOHLA. Now I am sure you are happy, Bibi, are you not? Now I shall bring you some food, shall I? I am sure you must be hungry.

TEJA. The news is nourishing to my soul; I don't need any food. But prepare some if you like. Amin may come at any moment.

JOHLA. If I had such good news. Bibi, I would have eaten twice as much dinner as usual! I wouldn't have waited for anyone! You think I'm crazy, don't you: But I tell you, I'd rather die than starve.

TEJA (*smiles.*) You go and eat your dinner; don't wait. You need not starve waiting for me, Johla.

JOHLA. Thank you, Bibi.

(*Knock at the door heard.*)

JOHLA (*returns quickly, exclaiming:*) Amin is here!

TEJA. Call him in.

(*TEJA gets up from her seat; AMIN enters. TEJA runs to meet him and falls fainting into his arms. - AMIN kissing her forehead, makes her sit in the chair and sits by her side.*)

TEJA. Now tell me, Amin, all that happened. You must have had a terrible time!

AMIN. To tell you all since I left here and have now come back! Where shall I begin the story and where shall I end it? All's well that ends well! It was a dream, a dream of one night, a nightmare rather. It's finished with the breaking of the day, and now there is sunshine everywhere.

TEJA. I heard that you fought very bravely; they all admire your courage so much. You did not only make war bravely, but you made peace so wisely.

AMIN. I tried to do my duty, Bibi; that is all one can do. Success and failure are both in His hands, without whose will nothing moves in the universe. Nevertheless, this experience on the battlefield has been quite an event for me. I will no longer look for war, and will try to bring peace, not after, but before, if I can. Did war have a hardening effect upon my heart? No, it made it much more tender than I have ever known it to be. I was known to be affectionate to my friends, but it was this war which has taught me to love even my enemies. I loved you hitherto, but it is during this war that a longing for you was produced in my heart. It had its disadvantages, yet one cannot ignore the advantages it has. I am glad my people won the victory over the enemy; but this has enlarged my view so that I cannot consider only my countrymen as my people. I am beginning to consider all men in the world as my people.

TEJA. But you did not tell me the pains you have gone through, which I have felt all along through this war.

AMIN. It is both pain and pleasure, which make life complete. If there were no pain, one would not enjoy pleasure. I do not wish to recall to my memory the disagreeable past. Only pleasant memories I allow my mind to hold, which were with you.

TEJA. Now the pain has passed, and pleasure is in store for us. Next week our wedding takes place. My people are busy preparing for it God has heard our prayer, Amin, at last.

(*They embrace.*)

## **CURTAIN**

### **Scene 3**

AMIN and TEJA in their new home. TEJA arranging cushions on the sofa. AMIN busy with a bow and arrow. People bringing wedding gifts. - A Lady brings flowers and gives them to TEJA.

TEJA. Oh, how beautiful they are. Who has sent them?

LADY. Bibi, your aunt's cousin's daughter, Salima, who is married to Omar Abdullah Hujuri. (*She leaves.*)

(*TEJA brings the flowers to AMIN, kisses him and shows him.*)

TEJA. How beautiful they are in my darling sweetheart.

AMIN. They were more beautiful on the stem, beloved; are these not plucked in vain. (*TEJA looks surprised. He kisses her forehead and laughs.*) Don't you think so too? All beautiful things are in their greatest glory when they

are in their own place. Arrange them, my sweetest wife. Now that they are brought to us, we may just as well turn our room into a garden.

*(Another WOMAN comes, greets TEJA, touching her cheeks with her hand.)*

WOMAN. I have made this picture of Amin, Bibi, you will be glad to see it.

TEJA. O, wonderful; he looked like this when he returned from the battlefield. Thank you. I am very glad to have it.

*(WOMAN again salutes and leaves.)*

TEJA *(takes picture and shows it to AMIN.)* Do you know this man?

AMIN. I don't know him; who is he?

TEJA. Is it not your beloved image? How *well* the artist has made it! Now what shall I do with it? Shall I frame it and put it on the wall, or shall I place it on the sandal bracket above the divan? I think that is the proper place for it, don't you think so?

AMIN. Place its front against the wall, showing its back outside, beloved, if you ask my earnest advice about it.

TEJA *(looking at him in surprise.)* How could I destroy your picture?

AMIN. This is not my picture. The artist who has made it has not seen me, beloved.

TEJA. He has not seen you? You mean to say, he didn't see you?

AMIN. Yes, I mean it, beloved.

TEJA. Then, perhaps I haven't seen you either?

AMIN. I do not think so. To tell you the truth, I do not want anyone to make my picture; I do not wish my picture to be placed on a pedestal; I don not want my picture to represent me after I have gone. This mortal form itself is a shadow of a shadow.

*(Knock on the door. Two men enter, the carcass of a lamb hanging on a stick over their shoulders.)*

MAN. This is a wedding gift they send you.

TEJA. From where?

MAN. From the community house.

TEJA. How nice! Please give them our thanks and loving greetings.

*(The two men take their leave.)*

TEJA *(to AMIN.)* Here we have something really good to make a three day's continual feast.

AMIN. Yes, the poor lamb should be asked first how it is to be sacrificed for our feast!

*(Enter Dancing-Girls, accompanied by Musicians; they perform the Wedding Dance, wrapped in several veils, which the lift one after the other as they dance.)*

TEJA *(seeing the performance, takes AMIN'S arm, brings him to the room where the dancers are, while he is hesitating.)* Beloved, it is wonderful; these are the best dancers we have in the country. Everyone speaks of their talent. They have trained every muscle, making it supple to twist and turn as they want to, and they move swiftly to the rhythm of the drum that their graceful movements make a living picture of music.

AMIN. May I request these talented dancers not to remove their veils any more!

TEJA. But it is their dance, beloved, it is their way; how skillfully they unveil themselves!

AMIN. But what do they unveil? The earth, not heaven.

TEJA(*gives the Musicians a purse.*) Thank you, take no more trouble.

(*Musicians salute them and depart.*)

AMIN. Do you mind if I ask you something, beloved? (*Shyly, looking down.*) Ever since I have been in the open country and have observed wide horizons in the war, the wilderness has attracted me. I long to walk in the desert and to dwell in the mountains. If you will permit me, Bibi, I will take a trip through the desert that I may unload my mind from the disturbing impressions of the war.

TEJA. Yes, my darling, you may go to the mountains whenever you desire, if it not for a long time! While you are away I shall think of you with every breath.

(*AMIN kisses TEJA'S hand. They embrace.*)

**CURTAIN**

### **ACT III**

#### **Scene 1**

*Hera, a rocky mountain in the desert. - AMIN wandering alone and looking at the wide expanse.*

AMIN. Home is a world; the life outside home is the underworld, but the wilderness is my Paradise. I feel myself only when I am by myself. It is then that I look at the whole world as an onlooker. There must be some reason why I am attracted to this spot.

There are many reasons, but how many can be explained? The heavy responsibility of home life and the continual struggle with the outside world; the smallness of human character; the ever-changing nature of life; the falsehood that exists in the life of the generality; the absence of justice and the lack of wisdom; all these and many other things make life unbearable for me. Besides, the ever-jarring influences coming from all around work upon my sensitive heart and make me feel lost sometimes. It is only here, away from the continual turmoil of life in the world that I find some rest...

And yet I wonder if my heart is really at rest. No, my heart cannot be really rested. If I am here away from the world and my fellow-men are in the midst of the turmoil, it cannot give me the peace I want; it keeps my mind uneasy...

What could I do to make the condition of my people better? Shall I work and be rich, and help them with my riches? But how far will those riches go to provide for their endless needs! Shall I be powerful and control them and rule them? What will that do? It will only turn them from servants into slaves. Shall I teach them goodness? But where does goodness belong? It must belong to God.

I must seek God myself first before I speak of goodness to my fellow-men. And where shall I find Him? If He is to be found anywhere, it is here in the solitude where my soul feels free. I become attuned to nature. I could sit silent here for days, looking at this wide space with endless horizon, where not even a bird makes a sound by the fluttering of its wings. I need not try to be silent here; silence reigns here, the spheres are silence itself...

Oh, Thou, longed-for Beloved, if Thou are anywhere to be found, it is here. I do not speak, I will not speak; I only listen, I will listen. Speak to me!

(*He sits silent. A VOICE comes to him.*)

VOICE. Cry on the Name of thy Lord! Cry on the Name of thy Lord! Cry on the Name of thy Lord.

*(He invokes the sacred Name of God, and again sits silent.)*

AMIN. Through the whispering of the breeze, through the cooing of the wind, through the rippling of the water, through the cracking of the thunder, through the fluttering of the leaves, I hear Thy gentle whisper in answer to my heart's cry.

Beloved God, where are Thou not present! Thou art everywhere. O Thou, who was the ideal of my belief hitherto, art now a reality to me! In the flood that is caused by Thy manifestation, my little self has become drowned. I am lost to my own view. Thou are now before me, O Pearl of my heart!

*(AMIN falls in a sort of swoon.)*

VOICE. Thou art the man! Arise and wake thy fellow from the sleep of ignorance!

AMIN. O, what a task, what responsibility Thou givest me! My Lord, my King, I tremble. I cannot dare look at myself. Let me cover myself from my own eyes! I cannot look at the vastness of the mission Thou givest me, with this, my limited being.

*(Again goes into a swoon.)*

VOICE. Thou art the man! Arise and wake thy fellow-men from the sleep of ignorance!

AMIN. Yes, I obey, I rise, I march to the rhythm of the music of Thy call!

## **CURTAIN**

### **Scene 2**

*TEJA'S house. AMIN sitting on a cushion in an ecstatic condition. TEJA, one hand on this shoulder, sympathizing with him.)*

TEJA. What is it my darling sweetheart: Why are you acting so strangely: You seem to be frightened of something, as if you had a nightmare. It seems as if something frightful had been impressed upon your mind. What is the matter, my beloved? I am most anxious about you.

AMIN. Bibi, I have had an experience, which is indescribable. I did not wish ever to tell anyone about it.

TEJA. Not even to me: I thought there would be nothing you would keep hidden from me.

AMIN. Well, beloved, not even to you. For it is something, which I cannot even, explain to myself. And yet, when I think of it, it seems as if my soul has always known it, although my mind is quite unable to grasp it. It is something so big that I cannot look at it and at the same time look at my little self. For there is no comparison between this experience of mine and what I know myself to be. If I try to say it, my lips tremble and my throat chokes. I feel like covering myself from my own view when that wonderful influence comes over me.

TEJA. I feel very eager, Amin, to hear. Will you not tell me a little more about it?

AMIN. It was to quiet my mind, upset by the turmoil caused by the life in the world, that I sought refuge under the clear sky during the rising moon in the wilderness, I called upon that God whom people seek, some in the idols of rock, some in the spirit of their ancestors, some in the beasts, some in birds, some in trees of long tradition, some in heroes, some in the bright sun. He answered me during my quietude, through nature whose voice I heard, which was louder than the thunderbolts. I was taught to cry on the Name of God. And His answer came to me as an echo of my cry. The spot where I sat in the desert, far away from the world and its noise, produced for me a sublime vision of the immanence of God. The speechless rocks, it seemed, received a tongue to answer my call. God, who is the belief of an average being, then became for me a living identity, and my self for that moment was lost to my own view. How can worlds explain the splendor of that moment, the glory of God, which was in its full bloom at that time? It seemed as though the spheres played music and nature danced. The heaven of which they talk, I saw come on earth!



TEJA. How wonderful! And then what happened?

AMIN. I cannot very well say it to you, my dearly loved wife. It came to me as a command telling me to rise and try to better the condition of my fellow-men.

TEJA. In what way?

AMIN. In every way.

TEJA. But how?

AMIN. To warn people of the coming disasters; to waken them to the light of truth; to help in bettering their conditions in their life in the world; to serve them in their need; to give them a hand as they climb to the height of the spiritual ideal. And to remove thorns from their way.

I cannot, I cannot understand this. Why I should be called for this great talk! A trust, the weight of which trees could not bear, mountains could not sustain. And yet, though my soul has heard, I cannot make my mind believe it. Is it my delusion, Teja? Do you think I have become possessed of a spirit? What is it?

TEJA. My precious one, if you ask me, I will repeat the same words: Thou art the man! I have seen it all along and I have felt it, though could not give full expression to my thoughts.

AMIN. How can I believe this to be true, Teja, in spite of all this experience I have had, when I think of my shortcomings and my limitations?

TEJA. Thou art the man, Amin, who is born to serve his fellow-men, to better their conditions. You do not know how good you have been to all: most attentive in your duties, persevering in your labor, honest in your business dealings, a brave soldier on the battlefield, and a wise peace-maker. Have you not been an ideal husband to me, and a father so kind and loving? Your respect for the aged, your affection for those who depend upon you, and your consideration for those to whom it is due. Besides, your generous spirit covered under your modesty- all these things give me sufficient reason to believe without a doubt that you are the man. And if there was not one person in the whole world to support my my belief, I would yet believe so . For my belief in you are my convictions.

(AMIN, *moved to tears, kisses her hand and presses it to his heart.*)

AMIN. You are my inspiration, Teja, you are my strength.

(*A moment's silence.*)

AMIN. Now, I must leave, well-beloved, and see what can be done. It is difficult being alone, to begin the work. Still the One who has inspired me to work will be my guide.

(*They rise; AMIN about to depart; JOHLA enters.*)

JOHLA. Bibi, your uncle Humadan has come to see you.

TEJA. Show him in.

(*Enter HUMADAN. TEJA goes forward to meet him. AMIN greets and shakes hands with him.*)

HUMADAN. I am needed: I am surprised! I thought nobody in the world needed someone who is now looking at life as the past, and seeing before him his end.

TEJA. Uncle, you must not say that The more one lives, the more precious one becomes; for life deepens a soul. We can always profit by your counsel, your word

of advice, dear Uncle.-Amin is lately having some strange experiences. He feels as if he heard a voice calling him to serve his fellow-men. This has come to him since he has taken to retiring to the solitude; sometimes he spends hours and sometimes days in the wilderness.

HUMADAN. Good tidings! This has always been the experience of those who have been called to serve humanity in a special way. He is a reformer, even greater than a reformer, for he is a prophet. (*Turning to AMIN.*) There is a great task before you, my son! I am afraid you will have a hard time. Man is the worst enemy of his best friend; he has always proved to be so. It is the same old wine put into a new bottle. But the world, before drinking the wines, examines the label on the bottle, and if it is not the same label that it is used to, it will call it a different wine. I should not be surprised, Amin, if your most loving friends did not turn into your bitterest enemies, as soon as you have commenced your work. The people here in this land are very backward; they are in a hopeless state. There is idol-worship everywhere. Religious places have turned into money-counters. Gaiety and merriment are the occupation of the young; and the old indulge in superstitions. Who could be the man, Amin, if you could not? You are the man, I am sure. I wish I were young, to have shared some of your troubles. But I am too old now to venture. You are fortunate, Amin, to have your devoted wife. God be with you both, my children! Goodbye!

(*TEJA embraces her uncle. HUMADAN puts his hand on their shoulders. AMIN embraces TEJA leaves.*)

## CURTAIN

### Scene 3

AMIN *standing on the highway, speaking to the passers-by. Travelers coming and going.*

FIRST TRAVELER. I have heard you talk here to the travelers; tell me to what Church you belong.

AMIN. My church is the globe, the earth is its ground, the sky its dome.

SECOND TRAVELER. But which is your God?

AMIN. The same God who is the God of all.

THIRD TRAVELER. But you don't worship the God of our tribe, do you?

AMIN. I worship the God of all tribes.

THIRD TRAVELER. But every tribe has its own God.

AMIN. Yes, but the God of all tribes is my God.

FOURTH TRAVELER. But what religion do you teach?

AMIN. The same one religion which has always been taught to humanity.

FIRST TRAVELER. You don't mean to say you preach the religion of our sect, for you are not our priest.

AMIN. It is not the religion of sect; it is the religion of all sects. It is the religion, which was revealed before; the same is being revealed now.

FIFTH TRAVELER. But it is not the religion of our ancestors, which you teach.

AMIN. It is the same one and only religion of truth. It is the same religion of 'peace on earth and goodwill to men' now given to you as a reminder.

FIFTH TRAVELER. What are your teachings:

AMIN. Quit all laziness; earn money by labor; live an honest life, a life harmonious and peaceful. Respect your elders; give loving care to the younger. Be charitable to the poor; give a part of what you earn in charity. Worship one God who is the Lord of all people. Know that you will have to give an account of your deeds. Know that purity is the first lesson of piety. Do not shirk your duties. Travel even to the other end of the world if it for learning. Forget not your obligations; practice honesty in business. Know that all things in earth and heaven are made for you to make the best use of them. For man's sake is the world created, and man is the master therein.

SIXTH TRAVELER. What nonsense! What does he know of heaven! Has he been there: if he has been there, why

then is he still lingering on earth?

SEVENTH TRAVELER. He is born on earth, as everyone else. What right has he to teach others when he is only a man? He's not a god!

FIRST COMPANION. What he says is touching. I don't see what wrong he has said. He does not need to be other than a man to guide man on the right path. It's absurd when one expects a guide to drop directly from heaven. It is the son of man who understand the difficulties of man and who can sympathize with him. Therefore, it is man who is needed to guide man, not an angel!

EIGHTH TRAVELER. I have know him for a long time. Is he not the same one who used to work at the farm?

NINTH TRAVELER. I think I have seen him working as a business agent, if I am not mistaken.

TENTH TRAVELER. Is he not the man I knew on the battlefield during the last war? And now he is coming to tell us of kindness!

ELEVENTH TRAVELER. But who made him a priest to give us long sermons? Has he got nothing to do at home? He has a home with wife and children, he is not a hermit!

TWELVE TRAVELER. No, I can't believe all this talking. If he were real, he would show some miracle. Can he give sight to the blind, or can he raise the dead from their graves?

SECOND COMPANION. He need not perform wonders in order to serve God and hiss fellow-men. If he can inspire the ignorant to speak words of wisdom, it is better than if he have speech to the dumb. If he opens the heart of a person to hear the inner voice, it is greater than giving ears to the deaf. If he opens the eyes of the seeking soul to reality, it is better than giving sight to the blind. If he wakens a mortal soul to immortality, it is greater than raising the dead.

*(AMIN sitting on a rock and resting his head on his hands, hears all this silently. Many more persons enter.)*

SEVERAL VOICES. Here he is! Here he is!

FIRST INHABITANT. You have started to work against the religion of our forefathers; you wish to believe in another God rather than the Gods of our tribes. You are influencing our young men to give up the worship of our idols.-Leave the soil of our country at once! If not, the State will punish you.

*(They fight with the FOUR COMPANIONS, who try to protect AMIN. Some try to take AMIN away from the danger.)*

AMIN. Was it for this day that Thou didst command me to warn these people?

*(AMIN is rescued from the crowd by his COMPANIONS.)*

SECOND INHABITANT *(holding his arms.)* If you care at all for your life, never step on this soil again!

*(Many persons rejoice. Some sorrow; a few women weep.)*

**CURTAIN**

## **ACT IV**

### **Scene 1**

*At Yemen.- COMPANIONS of AMIN brought before the Court, as having trespassed upon the land.-A CONSTALBE lead AMIN'S four COMPANIONS before the CHIEF and his COLLEAGUES.*

CONSTABLE. Sir, these men have trespassed in our country without permission, and they come with the excuse that they are exiles from their own land.

CHIEF. Ye, we have received a letter from the authorities of their country saying that they must not be allowed to enter here. (*Turning to one of the four COMPANIONS.*) What have you to say about this?

FIRST COMPANION. We beg to be excused for having entered your land, but it was inevitable. We were persecuted as heretics by our people, and were expelled from our country.

CHIEF. What is the reason of this persecution: What have you done against your people's religion?

FIRST COMPANION. We have done nothing against the existing religion of our people. Our blessed leader has been speaking for some time to those who cared to listen, of the ways to better their condition in life, individually and collectively. And those among them who wish to keep the simple people of our land under their sway oppose the Message of God.

CHIEF. Where is your leader? Send for him. I should like to see him.

FIRST COMPANION. Yes, Sir, I will go and fetch him. I am sure he will be able to explain better to you all you wish to know.

(*The COMPANION leaves the Court. A policeman follows.*)

CHIEF. What is the name of your leader? What is he? Does he work wonders? Has he anything extraordinary in him, which made you follow him?

SECOND COMPANION. We shall follow him, Sir, to the end of the world, whether he takes us to heaven or hell. We trust him too much ever to doubt him. He is to us a messenger of God, though he for himself is most unpretentious. He does not perform miracles; he does not claim to have any extraordinary powers. He says, 'I am a human being as anyone else, subject to pleasure and pain, birth and death.' The only privilege he has is in the service for which he has been called.

(*Enter AMIN with the COMPANION, followed by the policeman. He greets the CHIEF.*)

CHIEF. What have you to say? What do you teach?

AMIN. I warn my people of the coming of that day when man will no longer hold his position, his rank, however high or great. Those near and dear to him will remove him from their midst the moment that the breath leaves the body. If life on earth is a few days only, there is a time to come to answer for every grain one has eaten from this earth, and to pay for every drop of water one has drunk. This world, I say, is not a stage set for man to amuse himself; it is a school for him to learn his lesson.

I tell them that if you will trust anyone, trust in God; if you will depend on anyone, depend on God; if you will confide in anyone, confide in God; if you will revere anyone, worship God. Death is not the end of this life; death is the bridge that unites friend with friend. Therefore, when doing the duties honestly in this world, man must think of that life also, which is to come.

CHIEF. All you say is quite clear to me. I do not think any of us here would make objections to your teaching. On the other hand, we should be only too glad to have among us a man like you, who brings to us the knowledge, which is the need of every soul. Truly, they say that a prophet is not recognized in his own country. I do not see why they had to go so far as to exile you from your country. If one door is closed behind you, another is opened before you. You are welcome here. I am quite sure my Colleagues, who are the principal authorities of our State, think the same as I do.

COLLEAGES. Yes, certainly we do.

CHIEF. We shall give you all facilities to stay here among us, to give the advantage of your teaching to our people, who, I am sure, will be immensely benefited by it. Besides, we shall seek your inspiring guidance in the reconstruction of our Commonwealth, considering your coming now, at the moment of our social and political crisis, as the hand of Providence.

AMIN. I could wish nothing better from you than to be of some service to you, Sir, and to your people, to whom I

feel indebted for having allowed me to live among you. I sought refuge with you and you have confided to me the affairs of your homeland. I will try my best to prove worthy of your trust.

*(Exit AMIN with COMPANIONS.)*

## CURTAIN

### Scene 2

AMIN *sitting in the seat of honor. The CHIEF and his COLLEAGUES seated to his right and left. FOUR COMPANIONS sitting behind him. Coffee served.*

CHIEF *(to all.)* Here we have among us Amin, who has won our hearts, who has illuminated our souls. Our trust in him is eternal; no time however long can develop that confidence in our hearts, which he has kindled in us in a moment. We see before us in our social and political activities a promise, as there is no problem that remains unsolved once Amin throws his light upon it. Things, which seemed difficult he makes easy for us; things subtle become simple in his presence. He tells us nothing new; all he says to us appears as if we have always known it, and yet we were not conscious of it. Amin is our light, not only in life's dark corners, but he is the torch that illuminates our path.

COLLEAGUE. All you have said, Chief is true. We must value and appreciate Amin's presence among us by trying to understand him better, and by trying to follow all he teaches us more closely.

*(CONSTABLE enters.)*

CONSTABLE *(to CHIEF.)* There is an envoy from our neighboring country who wishes to see you, Sir.

CHIEF. Yes, send him in.

*(Enter ENVOY; greets the CHIEF.)*

COLLEAGUE. Please take a seat.

CHIEF. What has brought you here?

ENVOY. I am sent by the authorities of my State, Sir, with a summons. We ask you, Sir, to give us our criminals who have fled from our country.

CHIEF. What crime have they committed?

ENVOY. They are accused of every crime, Sir. All crimes put together make one crime, and that crime is the one of which they are accused.

CHIEF. But what crime?

ENVOY. A crime beyond words.

CHIEF. But I want to know what crime.

ENVOY. The crime is beyond comprehension, Sir.

COLLEAGUE. Do you know before whom you are standing? This is Amin, now the head of our Commonwealth, to whom you have brought a summons.

*(ENVOY is frightened, with starting eyes and trembling like a leaf, turning his head right and left.)*

CHIEF. Go and tell the authorities of your State that your accusations are unfounded. Amin is now the leader of our people in their worldly and spiritual strife.

ENVOY. Then I will go, Sir, and tell my people all you have said. Thank you very much. Goodbye.

(ENVOY *goes out hastily. He falls down on the way; grasps the leg of the POLICEMAN.*)

ENVOY (*to POLICEMAN.*) Come along.

POLICEMAN (*with his hand on his neck.*) Go.

(AMIN *looks sad.*)

FOURTH COMPANION. Our Master, I feel your sadness over the stupidity of our people. I cannot help feeling, since our hearts are focused on yours.

AMIN. Yes, you are right, but it is a passing cloud; it will pass away in time. All balances up in the end, cruelty on their part and kindness on yours.

What I feel deeply, and very often, is that the call for service came to me on the Hera mountain, and it was meant that my people should be enlightened and helped. And in spite of all the good work which is being done here, I continually feel that something remains undone. And so long as that work is not attended to, I shall not consider my task accomplished, I shall always feel a sore spot in my heart.

CHIEF. We will spare no effort, our Teacher! Our means, our energy, even our lives we will place at your command, if we can assist you in accomplishing your task.

FOURTH COMPANION. We are ready to answer your call, Master, even if it be with our life's sacrifice. Command any of us to go and spread your ideas among those who do not understand them.

AMIN. No; I will not risk your lives; you are too precious to me. I only ask of you to let me go to deliver His Message to my people.

CHIEF. No, Amin, that cannot be; if you go, we shall be your bodyguard; if harm comes to you, we shall be your shield. For death in a holy cause will be our liberation.

(AMIN *is deeply touched by their readiness to serve.*)

AMIN. Let us all go, for it is meant that we should share one another's joys and sorrows.

CHIEF (*to AMIN.*) We are most happy that you have granted our request. (*To COLLEAGUES.*) Prepare and be ready to start on the journey to guard our Leader and to defend our Cause.

(All stand and shout, waving their hands: Amin victorious! Exit all, happy and enthusiastic.)

## CURTAIN

### Scene 3

*Mecca.-Commotion at the Town Hall. People rushing hither and thither restlessly. Enter SHERIF of Mecca. The GOVERNORS receive him*

SHERIF. I have just heard the news that we are threatened with invasion by our neighboring State. From one source I have word that they are already on the way. And we are not in the least ready to defend our land. Alas, we have not among our young men another Amin.' One man with the Spirit is greater than an army.' How we miss Amin at this time of our need!

FIRST GOVERNOR. Yes, if only he had not become so crazy over his religious fad!

SHERIF. Now what can we do? Have we any means of defense?

SECOND GOVERNOR . We are not prepared. We did not know of it until this morning. Nothing can be done.

SHERIF. But what can we do to maintain the pride of our people?

SECOND GOVERNOR. Pride! If we have nothing to be proud of, what is it to us?

SHERIF (*sadly.*) These last few years we have gone from bad to worse!

THIRD GOVERNOR. Worse! We cannot fall any lower!

(*Enter SOLDIER.*)

SOLDIER. Sir, a large force of armed men have almost reached the gate of Mecca.

SHERIF. Now what do you think we should do?

FOURTH GOVERNOR. Surrender without hesitation!

(*Enter women in a state of alarm. SOLDIER enters.*)

SOLDIER. They are entering our gate; The Town Hall is surrounded!

(*AMIN enters in general's uniform, his bodyguard following him. SHERIF with the GOVERNORS greets him.*)

SHERIF. We surrender, sir, being unprepared for your sudden invasion.

(*Enter the CHIEF.*)

CHIEF. At the head of our army is Amin, the one who was an exile from your land, whom you threw out of your country with insults and made homeless. His companions were caused all manner of injury by you, and those who sided with him were wounded and killed.

SHERIF. We are sorry for all that was done by our people to Amin. We are willing to pay you the sum of money you demand.

CHIEF. Before you pay us any money, I ask you to deliver to us all Amin's adversaries who have shown him hostility in the past.

(*Criminals are brought. Some are agitated, some trembling, some with stern faces, some repentant.*)

CHIEF (*to AMIN.*) Here are the men who have tormented your life and that of those near and dear to you. Dictate the sentence that must be passed on them.

(*The criminals listen attentively, looking at AMIN to hear what he will say.*)

AMIN. I have forgotten all they have done to me. I forgive and ask the Lord to forgive them.

(*All are surprised. The GOVERNORS are touched, the SHERIF is moved to tears. They bring to AMIN sacks of gold to pay the war indemnity.*)

AMIN (*turning to the CHIEF.*) No, our Prophet! We have accompanied you to be with you. If only we have you, our Master! No money or territory is our object in coming here; it is to serve you.

SHERIF (*to AMIN.*) You are the pride of our people and your absence from here was the cause of our decline. Nothing would please us more than if you took this whole territory of Hedjaz and we shall feel most honored to proclaim you King.

(*The GOVERNORS bring crown and scepter, and the SHERIF holds them before AMIN.*)

SHERIF. Here are crown and scepter for you Amin.

AMIN. Much as I appreciate your asking me to become King, I will not do so. It is not for the kingdom I have come here; it is to serve you, my people, whose welfare is my heart's deep desire. I have come to deliver to you God's Message.

GOVERNOR. I beg your pardon, Sir, where can we find someone as inspired as you to govern our people, to control our affairs? You appeared as an enemy and prove to be our friend.

SHERIF. What Message do you wish to give us? We are ready to accept it from someone selfless as you, Amin!

AMIN. Believe in one God. Remove the gods of the Ka'ba, which are but idols of rock. Consider love greater than law. Know that all men are equal before God; perform your prayers therefore, all standing before His divine Majesty: rich or poor, saint or sinner, all on one level. Tell your sorrows to your Lord, if you are sad; bring your repentance to your God, if you are repentant. Disgrace not your soul by prostrating yourselves before idols, for even man in limited. To God alone all praise is due.

SHERIF. We accept your Message, Prophet, from the bottom of our hearts; we shall hand it down to posterity. We witness that there is on God and that you, Prophet, are His Messenger. It is not your sword, which has won the victory over our Hearts, it is your noble spirit. Therefore, though you have given us our freedom by refusing to rule us, we shall maintain your reign forever over our souls.

AMIN. I am a man, one like any of you, subject to pain and death. Remember not to make of me an ideal, which you will not be able to uphold long. Raise me not beyond my limit, that you may not have to throw me down one day through disappointment. Consider me you brother, an honor which I value most. I leave my word with you, for you to guard the Message against all opposition. I leave this sacred manuscript with you, for you to hand over to the coming generation, uncorrupted. My success is not in earthly gain; renunciation is my real victory. *(To the CHIEF.)* I bless them all, but I will come with you who have been my friends in need.

*(CHIEF and Bodyguards, aloud: Hail to Amin, our Faithful Trustee!)*

**CURTAIN**

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