

Rhythm



As rhythm is innate in man and maintains his health, so upon rhythm depend all a man's affairs in life; his success, his failure, his right acts and his wrong acts, all are accounted for in some way or other by a change of rhythm.

The law of rhythm is a great law which is hidden behind nature. It is in accordance with this law that every form is made and that every condition manifests to view.

The rising and the setting of the sun, the waxing and the waning of the moon, the regular change of the tides in the sea, and the seasons as they come and go, all show rhythm. It is rhythm that makes the birds fly, it is rhythm that makes the creatures of the earth walk. And if we delve deeper into the science of rhythm we shall find that it is rhythm which causes a certain thing to be made in a certain way.

Harmonious forms are manifestations of a right rhythm, and inharmonious forms are manifestations of a disorder in the rhythm.

The Winged Heart

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*These quotations were selected from the works of
Hazrat Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan*

What repulses or attracts us in a person is very often his rhythm. One man is rhythmic, and his influence is soothing; another is out of rhythm, and he upsets everybody.

Why should rhythm have such an influence upon us? Because we ourselves are rhythm. The beating of our heart, our pulse throbbing in wrist or head, our circulation, the working of the whole mechanism of our body is rhythmic. And when this rhythm is obstructed, then disorder and illness come; all discomfort, despair, and disappointment follow the breaking of the rhythm.

When we look at this question symbolically we find that our gain and our loss, our success and our failure, have much to do with the rhythm with which we pursue our motive in life. It will always prove to be true that when a person takes no heed of rhythm, whether he does right or wrong, good or evil, in both cases a wrong rhythm will make him fail; for rhythm is not only a law to which nature is subjected, but rhythm is something that maintains things as they are and gives to things and beings the power to continue to live and to progress.

By being regular one maintains rhythm in everything one does, and an irregular person will always find himself lost, because he cannot accomplish anything for want of rhythm.

Rhythm is a great mystery, and a sense which one should develop more than anything else in life. But if one were to explain what the right rhythm of work and rest is, the whole Western way of life would be in question, for when we look at it from the point of view of rhythm and balance, there is far too much activity in the life of the West. It would make any person abnormal. The bad effects of this are continually felt, but since the people are so much absorbed in life, they are not yet able to realize to what an extent they suffer from these bad effects. However, before long there will come a time when thoughtful people will begin to realize that this problem has been neglected too long. And what has caused it? This life of competition; the whole misery is caused by competition. People do things not for their own pleasure or for the pleasure of God, but in order to compete with one another.

The law of rhythm can be considered as governing four actions: right or wrong rhythm in feeling, right or wrong rhythm in thinking, right or wrong rhythm in speaking, and right or wrong rhythm in acting. Not only hate but even love that is not maintained by rhythm will fail; not only an evil thought but even a good thought will prove to be disastrous without regard for rhythm. Not only false but even true speech which has no rhythm will prove to be fatal; not only a

wrong action but even a right action devoid of rhythm will prove to be out of place.

With the wrong person, even if we do right it sometimes turns into wrong, for instance when we say to someone who is in a rage and who has just been quarrelling, 'You have done wrong'. By saying this we have not given him a good thought, but have only added fuel so that he may fight with us too. One often sees that when two people are fighting and a third person approaches them with the best intentions, they will both turn on him, and that will make three persons fighting at the same time.

Every plane of man's being is dependent upon the other planes. For instance if the body has lost its rhythm, something goes wrong with the mind; if the mind has lost its rhythm, the body goes wrong; if the heart has lost its rhythm, the mind is puzzled; if the rhythm of the soul is lost, then all is wrong. To say that the virtue of a sinner is sin and the sin of the virtuous is virtue is an extreme statement, but it would not be an exaggeration.

The rhythm of the soul is influenced by the mind and by action. The soul has not got its own rhythm. As in a higher sense the soul is pure from all things which can be distinguished and divided, one may ask, how then can it happen that the rhythm of the soul is lost? But if we see our friend in great grief we also will feel grief. It is not because we have a grief ourselves; we feel it only because our friend is in grief and this reflects on us. The soul is not subjected to a right rhythm or a wrong rhythm, but a right rhythm or a wrong rhythm can be reflected in the soul. For instance when a person says of something that it is ugly, what is ugly is outside him. Then why does he feel discomfort or ugliness? Because it reflects upon him. For the moment, while he is looking at the ugly thing, that ugly thing is in his eyes and in his mind, just as when we are standing in front of a mirror our image is not engraved upon the mirror but is only reflected there; and it will remain there as long as we are standing before it. Thus the soul may experience misery or wretchedness, a wrong rhythm or a right rhythm, but when these are removed the soul is again free from them. In order to maintain a perfect condition in life one must be the master of rhythm.

Life is rhythm. This rhythm may be divided into three stages, and at every stage this rhythm changes the nature and character of life. One rhythm is mobile, another is active, and the third is chaotic. The mobile rhythm is creative, productive, constructive, and through that rhythm

all power and inspiration are gained, and peace is experienced. The further stage of that rhythm, the active rhythm, is the source of success and accomplishment, of progress and advancement, the source of joy and fulfillment. And the third stage of this rhythm, the chaotic rhythm, is the source of failure, of death, of disease and destruction, the source of all pain and sorrow.

The first kind of rhythm is slow, the second kind is faster, and the third is faster still. The direction of the first is direct, of the second even, and of the third zigzag. When one says that a person is wise and thoughtful, it means that he is in the first rhythm; when one says that a person is persevering and successful, he is in the second rhythm; and when it is said that this person has lost his head and has gone astray, he is in the third rhythm. He is either digging his own grave or the grave of his affairs; he is his own enemy. Everything he wants to accomplish, however much he wants to advance or progress, all goes down in destruction because he has taken this third rhythm, the chaotic and destructive rhythm. Therefore it is up to us to tune ourselves either to the first, to the second, or the third rhythm, and accordingly this will become our condition in life.

If we are in favorable or in unfavorable, in congenial or uncongenial surroundings, it all means that we have put ourselves in that particular rhythm. When we experience success, good luck or bad luck, good or bad fortune, it is according to the rhythm we have brought about.

In our life at a certain time one rhythm prevails, at another the second rhythm, and at still another the third; and yet in our life one rhythm is predominating through all changes, whether a person has the third, the second, or the first rhythm.

The rhythm has a great influence upon the state of man's mind and body, and the rhythm can be kept even by keeping the rhythm of the breath even. For the breath is like the pendulum in the clock, on the movement and rhythm of which the regularity of the clock depends — so on the rhythm of the breath the order of the body and mind depends.

Contemplation sets the heart in rhythm, which makes even the circulation of the blood regular, and the pulsation and the whole mechanism of the body become rhythmic. When the mind is also set in rhythm by its awakened response to tone, the Sufi's whole being becomes musical. This is why the Sufi can harmonize with each and all.

The work that a Sufi considers his or her sacred work has nothing to do with any particular creed nor with any particular religion; it is only this simple thing...to be in rhythm with life's conditions and to be in tune with the infinite.

Activities

The Message Class: provides an opportunity to experience the teachings and practices of the Sufi Order on an ongoing basis. These classes, based on teachings given by Hazrat Inayat Khan and Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, are deepened through the use of complementary meditation practices which may use the breath, light, Dhikr (remembrance of God) and Wazifa (mantra).

Classes in the Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan are held, in *Toronto*, each *Wednesday at 8:30 pm* and, in *Brampton*, every *Thursday at 8:00 pm*. The last meeting of each month is dedicated to the practice of Dhikr. For this evening only, no instruction is offered.

Dhikr: means remembrance of God. Participants unite in intensive exploration and experience of this central practice of the Sufis. *If you have never been to Dhikr, please call in advance.*

Healing Circle: Open to members of the Sufi Healing Order. The Healing Circle is held in Brampton, at 9:30 am, on Saturdays. If you wish to attend, please phone [redacted]

Universal Worship Service: [redacted]

Dances of Universal Peace: [redacted]

Your donations are used to cover our costs so that we can continue dancing. We suggest a donation of \$6 - \$10.

Contact Information

Coming Events

Feb 21-22, in Toronto: our regular Friday dance (at a different location for this evening only) and a full day of dancing on Saturday. For more information, please see the enclosed poster or call either Fred (416-778-5318) or Mark (416-694-8601).

Feb 28—March 2 in Montreal, QC: with Shahabuddin Less and Sherif Baba. For information, please contact Sarah by phone at (514) 845-7114. By email, contact [redacted]

May 9-11 in Niagara Falls, ON: *Wait list only!* A residential retreat with Tasnim Fernandez, Saadi Neil Douglas-Klotz and Kamae A. Miller. For details, visit the Toronto Sufi Order or Dance website or contact [redacted]

May 23-25, near Ottawa: A residential retreat with Aziza Scott and Waïid Gallien. For details, contact [redacted]