

Stories



Moses and the Peasant

Man, with his limited self, cannot see God, the perfect Being, and if he ever can picture Him, he can best picture Him as man; for how can he imagine what he has never known? 'We have created man in Our own image.' Krishna to the Hindus, Buddha to the Buddhists, was God in man. Angels are never pictured in any other image than that of man. Even the worshippers of the formless God have idealized God with the perfection of human attributes, although this is only a ladder to reach the love of the perfect God, to which by degrees one attains.

This is explained very clearly in a story of the past. Moses once passed by a farm and saw a peasant boy talking to himself, saying, 'O Lord, Thou art so good and kind that I feel if Thou were here by me I would take good care of Thee, more

than of all my sheep, more than of all my fowls. In the rain I would keep Thee under the roof of my grass-shed, when it is cold I would cover Thee with my blanket, and in the heat of the sun I would take Thee to bathe in the brook. I would put Thee to sleep with Thy head on my lap, and would fan Thee with my hat, and would always watch Thee and guard Thee from wolves. I would give Thee bread of manna and would give Thee buttermilk to drink, and to entertain Thee I would sing and dance and play my flute. O Lord my God, if Thou wouldst only listen to this and come and see how I would tend Thee.'

Moses was amused to listen to all this, and, as the deliverer of the divine message, he said, 'How impertinent on thy part, O boy, to limit the unlimited One, God, the Lord of hosts, who is beyond form and color and the perception and comprehension of man.' The boy became disheartened and full of fear at what he had done. But immediately a revelation came to Moses: 'We are not pleased with this, O Moses, for We have sent thee to unite Our separated ones with Us, not to disunite. Speak to everyone according to his evolution.'

The Bowl of the Dervish

Once a dervish came to Sikandar, the great king, with the bowl of a beggar, and asked Sikandar if he could fill this bowl. Sikandar looked at him, and said, "What is he asking of an emperor like me? To fill this little bowl?" He said immediately, "Yes." But the bowl was a magic bowl. Hundreds and thousands and millions were poured into it, but it would not fill; it always remained half empty, its mouth wide open to be filled.

When Sikandar began to feel poor in filling his bowl, he said, "Dervish, tell me if you are not a magician. You have brought a bowl of magic. It has swallowed all my treasures, and it is empty still." The dervish answered, "Sikandar, if the whole world's treasure was put into it, it would still remain empty. Do you know what this bowl is? This is the want of man. Be it love, be it wealth, be it attention, be it service, be it comfort, be it happiness, be it pleasure, be it rank, position, power, honor, or possession in life, the more man receives, the more man wants. He is never content, he will not be content. The richer man becomes, the more poor he becomes, richer with everything, with anything. For the bowl that he has brought with him, the bowl of wanting, can never be filled, is never filled."

The Son of the Murshid in Delhi

There was once a pupil, a young man who was son of a famous teacher who had a number of pupils all over India. Not only was he a very great teacher, but he had made many teachers. In fact there was one of his pupils who was now a teacher in every village and town in the land. Of course this son of his had received all kinds of attentions. Now this son as a boy had a dream one day, and in it he saw himself visiting all the saints. He dreamt that there was a great gathering of saints and spiritual teachers and many masters. He was going along with his father. But his father was admitted to the gathering and he himself was not allowed in. This was 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, "That is a true message for you. It is not enough for you to be my son to enter the spiritual path. 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 they met my father, they paid him such respect, such great respect. There cannot be anything better in them than there is in me." So he thought he ought to stay with his father and said, "Can there be anybody better than you, Father, that I should be his disciple?" But he answered, "No, I am no use for that. There must be some other person who is proper for that purpose." "Who?" asked the young man. The father replied, "That pupil of mine who was a peasant, and is now teaching among the peasants. Go to him and be initiated by him."

His son was very surprised because 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 any way. 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 dwelt. It so happened that he was traveling on horseback from his own farm to another, and he saw the young man coming towards him. When he came up to the young man, he looked upon him as he bowed before him. But the teacher said,

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Hazrat Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan*

"Not enough." So he bowed to his knees. The peasant teacher again said, "Not enough." So he bowed down at his feet, and still the teacher said, "Not enough." Then he bowed down at the horse's knees. But still the teacher said, "Not enough." So the young man bowed again at the horse's feet, but this time touched the horse's hoof. Thereupon the peasant teacher said, "You can go back now, you have had your training." That was all! No exercises, no word to learn, nothing to study, no training course. He had learnt the lesson he had to learn; it was for that his father sent him, it was for that lesson he came. And now he was admitted to the circle of the mystics.

Recognizing God

One day I was walking in the city and met a dervish with a beautiful personality. He was clothed in rags, but his speech, his voice, his thought, his movement, his atmosphere were so 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" (teacher) I was very glad. He addressed me as "Murshid" every time he spoke to me! Presently we met another person who seemed to be without any education, seemingly without any knowledge of philosophy or religion or anything out of the way. But he called him "Murshid" also! So my pride was broken, for next he came across a policeman and called him "Murshid" too! So then I asked my teacher what could be the meaning of all this, and he said, "Your dervish shows 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 person, a wicked person, even a little child: everyone can teach you something. Therefore have that attitude towards everybody. Then it may be said that you recognize God. When the chela is ready, the guru appears." That is, when you are ready to discern it, you find your teacher beside you. We can even learn love from doves, and faithfulness from dogs.

The Ideal Life

Once I was with a sage whom many people went to see. He pleased them all, and he was not fond of disputing or discussing, because to a sage there is nothing to discuss. Discussion is for those who say, 'What I say is right, and what you say is wrong'. A sage never says such a thing; hence there is no discussion. But the world is always fighting and discussing and disputing.

Many would come and try to dispute with him, but he did his best to avoid dispute. I was very fond of listening to his way of dealing with inquirers. My friends wanted to discuss what the ideal life is. He said, 'Whatever you think it is.' But my friends were not satisfied with this; they wanted a discussion. They answered, 'Do you think this worldly life, with so many responsibilities, with strife from morning to evening, can be the ideal life?' He said, 'Yes'. They asked, 'Do you not think that the life you lead, retirement and seclusion, is the ideal life?' He answered, 'Yes'. They said, 'But how can we give up our present life, our responsibilities to our children, our occupations, and all these things that take up so much time; how can we leave that life in order to follow your ideal life?' He said, 'Do not leave it'.

They went on, 'But if we do not leave it, how can we get on in the spiritual life?' Then the sage asked, 'What do you mean by the spiritual life?', 'We mean by spiritual life a life like yours', they answered. He said, 'If you think my life is a spiritual life, be like me; if you think your life is a spiritual life, keep to it. It is not possible to say which life is best. If you think your worldly strife brings you happiness, just keep to it; if you think my life gives you happiness, give up your own. Whatever makes you happy and makes you think you are doing right, do it from that moment, and see what the result is. If it gives you more happiness, go on regardless of what others say. If it gives you happiness, if you are satisfied while doing it, while reaping its effect, then it is all right. Go on with it, and you will always be blessed.'

Coming Events

June 3-4, in Ottawa: A weekend Seminar with Aziza Scott and Wajid Gallien. For details, please see the enclosed flyer or contact [REDACTED]

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.

Mureeds Class: This class is for initiates in the Sufi Order. For information, please contact Hafiz: by phone at (416) 658-7340; via email at: nrothenberg@rogers.com

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: Universal Worship Services are held at 1:30 pm on the **second Sunday** of the month, except July and August, at the Gallery Arcturus, 80 Gerrard Street East. For information, please contact [REDACTED]

Universal Worship services are also held at 7:30 pm on the **third Tuesday** of the month in the Bathurst and Eglinton area. For more information, please contact [REDACTED]

Contact Information