



A Sufi Message

The Deeper Side of Life, The Art of Personality

Selected Teachings by Hazrat Inayat Khan

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There is a difference between individuality and personality, just as there is a difference between nature and art. No matter how much nature is near to one's soul, art is closer to one's heart. If it were not so a person would have preferred to live in the forest; roaming about in nature and would have been quite satisfied in the wilderness; finding the greatest charm in what the wilderness can offer and in the beauty to be seen in the forest. Instead of all this, humans have created a world – a world which we have made ourself – and in that world we have made a nature of our own imagination, a nature which we call art. If that is art then on this art much depends.

People may say, "Is it not an imitation of nature?" Yes, it is an imitation of nature. You might say, "Then it is not as great as Nature", but I say: "both nature and art are made by the same Artist". Nature is made directly by the Artist, and art is made indirectly through the pen of the Artist. Art is the finishing of that beauty which begins to manifest itself in nature. A person who has not come to this conception of art does not yet know the divinity of art.

Now as to the question what art has to do with personality, personality is art itself, and the greatest art.

Once a lady told me, "My parents brought me up just like a plant grows in the wilderness." When I replied, "It is a great pity", she was surprised.

What is education, what is culture, what is self-development? It is all art, it is the way for individuality to culminate into personality. In ancient times the religious education and human culture in every form mainly had the culture of the personality as their central theme. Today we are expected to learn mathematics, geography, history and other things, but never the art of personality which is of the greatest use in life.

Apart from its spiritual significance, we see in our everyday life that a salesman who is pleasant, courteous and well-mannered is successful. If a person lacks manner they will be repellent; they may have all kinds of beautiful things in their shop, they will have no success.

If a clerk in an office, a secretary, an assistant, a supervisor has a charming personality, a kindly manner, a sympathetic attitude, they will win the affection of all; everything will be light, everything will go smoothly. If one lacks the art of personality, they may have all qualifications, they may be a most capable person, yet things will not run smoothly.

A person, whether man or woman, may be a barrister, a solicitor, a doctor, a most qualified individual, but if the art of personality is not developed, they will be disagreeable and unpleasant - in their own home and in all walks of life. The art of personality is the main thing to develop; if not, a person misses a great deal.

The ancient people lived on tradition, and especially in the East they regarded their ancestors not for their titles or their great works, but for the art of their personality. Today in modern civilization people have become regardless of this art which considers the equality of all people. Equality today is working in quite another direction: instead of rising upward toward the level of the best, people want to go downward and join the level of the worst.

When you hear the word equality it seems a beautiful thing, it sounds very nice, it seems a religious, a philosophical idea. But what is life, if it is not a symphony? And is not every person a note in this symphony? Suppose that you want to hear music and that all the notes are the same. How would you enjoy that music? If all notes are equal, there is no music; if all persons are the same, there is no symphony. The way to understand equality is different: it is rising to the best, to the highest pitch. And everyone can rise to that pitch if they want to rise. But since a person takes the way of the least resistance, they fall to the level of the average person.

It must be remembered that disregard of the principle, which is called the art of personality, may lead the present generation, the modern civilization, there where it can find nothing but disappointment, especially when materialism is prevailing all over and there is nothing to think about but matter; this in itself keeps us away from the art of personality. If this art is not introduced, and if there is no love for it, what then happens is that the human being does not become any better than the lower creation.

Is a human being greater than an animal because they possess wealth, or because they have read many books, or because they have learned much? Does that make a person greater as a human being? No, a man or a woman is greater *when from an individual he or she has become a person*. Very few of us distinguish between individuality and personality. Individuality is that which we have brought with our birth. We are born as a separate entity; that itself makes us an individual. But personality is something that is acquired; it has not come with us, it is something we gain. Besides this, the art of personality is not only something one should learn in order to become pleasant to others: the art of personality fulfills the purpose of life.

Now arises the question: what is the art of personality? Is it mannerism, putting on different airs of expression, a special politeness, a society rhythm? Not at all; that is falsehood, which people adopt by being unnatural and acting unnaturally. Instead of giving a better impression of themselves, they give a worse impression. The art of personality expresses itself spontaneously. One need not act in a certain way, one need not put on something: it is the expression of oneself which shows the art of personality. Expressing the art of personality is the sign of the great. Knowingly or unknowingly a person may develop that manner in oneself and it is wonderful to watch it.

One may ask: If we have a personality, why must we develop it? But even a diamond must be cut! It has light in it, yet cutting is required to awaken it. It cannot show its glow and brilliancy before it has been cut. It is the same with the personality.

Practice: Ya Qabid / Ya Basit

Al-Qābiḍ is derived from its root verb: Qabd, which denotes to decrease, to take, hold, seize, grip or catch, and words meaning like these. It is the holding of something with the hand such as a sword's handle..

Al-Basit which means one who stretches their hand as a gesture of graciousness and good will to help others.

No one who has given a thought to the deeper side of life will deny for one moment the power and inspiration that arise when once the heart is kindled. A person with heart quality need not be simple, one need not discard intellect; only, the heart quality produces a perfume in the intellect like the fragrance in a flower.

Practice: *Ishq Allah Mahbood Allah*

Mystics of all ages have not been known for their miraculous powers or for the doctrines they The Sufi in the East says to oneself Ishq Allah Mahbood Allah which means 'God is Love, God is the Beloved'; in other words, it is God who is Love, Lover, and Beloved. When we hear the stories of the miraculous powers of mystics, of their great insight into the hidden laws of nature, of the qualities which they manifested through their beautiful personalities, we realize that these have all come from one and the same source, whether one calls it devotion or whether one calls it love.

The atmosphere that an awakened soul produces lives for centuries in this world, unbroken and unpolluted. The sky takes care of it and preserves it for generations.

- Ishq: (Arabic: عشق, 'iṣq) An Arabic word meaning "love" or "passion"
- Allah: All 99 Names are manifestations of the qualities of Allah.
- Mahbood: [Arabic] meaning "the one who is the object of love."

- Allah: All of the manifested of the qualities of Allah.

Ishq Allah Mahbood Allah

God is the single source of all good qualities.

With abiding and passionate determination I seek to know and understand these good qualities within myself, within others, and within all of manifestation.

- Murshida Nuria Stephanie Sabato -

- Dedication of Merit
- **Prayer** Khatum
- Giving

We pray this teaching resonates and benefits YOU!

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