

THE SUFI'S AIM IN LIFE

by

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The aim of every individual, in the end, is the same. In the beginning, the aim of every individual is different. In the end, man comes to a stage when his object becomes the object of his soul; and as long as he has not arrived at this object, he has several objects before him, but the accomplishment of any motive is not satisfactory for long.

According to the philosophy of the Hindus, there are four motives in life. One motive is what they call *Dharma*, which means: Duty. There are some who consider that virtue lies in performing their duty, and when they perform that particular duty which is before them, they feel that that is the due accomplishment of their life. But if one duty is accomplished, another is waiting ! Life is full of duties. When a girl is young, she says: " My mother, my father is my duty. " Then a time comes when the pleasure of her husband is her duty; and as time goes on, there is the duty of the mother towards the children. But even there it does not end; there comes the duty of the grandmother. There is no phase in life in which duty expires; it begins in one form and goes on in another.

For the one who considers duty a pleasure, for him duty is a pleasure; for him who considers its virtue, it is a virtue; but for the one who considers duty a captivity or a pain, for him it is a pain. For one person it becomes a virtue, a privilege; for another a crime.

In the Hindu language there exists the word *Ardh*, which means the acquisition, or collecting, of wealth. It begins with the need of daily bread, and it culminates in millions, and is never finished. The more one has, the less one feels one has. The attainment of wealth is never fully satisfactory; there is always a lack.

And there comes a third motive, which is pleasure. For this one neglects, one sacrifices; it is the main object in life. But, at the same time, pleasure is such a thing that this desire *is* never satisfied, and the more one experiences that this desire is never satisfied, and the more one experiences the pleasures of this earth, the more there comes the desire to experience them. This pleasure is not lasting, and costs more, usually, than it is worth.

And there is the fourth desire, which is of a different character. And that is for a kind of reward in the hereafter, for the attainment of a paradise, or reaching some bliss which one does not know. It is a desire for some kind of gain or happiness, bliss or exaltation, which one does not know, but one hopes to experience some day. But even that, if it were vouchsafed, would not be fully satisfactory.

And from this the Sufi deduces, that in all these four different things that humanity is pursuing after, there is no stage where he can say it is finished; it has no end. Therefore, his effort is to rise above these four different desires that humanity has. And the moment he rises above these four desires, there comes only one desire, and that desire is the search for Truth. Not only Sufis, but every person disappointed in this world, who has been through a disillusionment, a suffering or a torture, has this only desire.

The seeker after Truth goes out into the world, and he finds so many sects and so many different religions. He does not know where to go. Then the desire is to find out what is hidden under these sects, these different religions; and therefore he begins to seek that object, which he wishes to gain, through wisdom.

Wisdom is veil over Truth; but wisdom, even, cannot be called the Truth. God alone is Truth, and it is Truth that is God. And Truth can be neither studied nor taught nor learned; it is to be touched, it is to be realized; and it can be realized by the unfoldment of the heart.

For a Sufi, belief in God is not sufficient. A belief, which has no foundation underneath, is just like a scrap of paper floating in the air. When there is no breeze, it will fall to the ground. How many in this world, with all their belief, give it up when there is a strong influence in their surroundings of one who does not believe ! If belief is such a thing that it can be erased, then what use can this belief be ? Really speaking, there is not only belief. The next step one takes, after belief, is the love of God. In the one who only believes in God, in him God is not living; in the one who loves God, God is living. But even that is not sufficient. For what is human love ? The human being is limited, his love is limited. The more one has seen the world, the more one knows human nature, the more one knows the falsehood of human love. The one who cannot be constant to a human being who is near him, how can he be true in his love for the Beloved whom he has never seen ? Therefore, even what man calls the Love of God is not sufficient. What is necessary, is the knowledge of God. For it is the knowledge of God which gives the love for God, and it is the knowledge and love of God which give a perfect belief in God. No one can have the knowledge of God and have no love for God, but one can have a love for God and no knowledge of God. No one can have the knowledge of God, love for God, and no belief in God; but there can be some one who has a belief in God, but no love for God.

Therefore, for a Sufi these three stages are necessary for the attainment of his aim in life. In the first place, he attains, by his belief, respect for the belief of others. A complete believer is he who does not only believe himself, but respects the belief of others.

For a Sufi in this world, there is no one, neither heathen nor pagan who is to be despised. For he believes in that God who is not the God of one chosen sect but the God of the whole world. He does not believe in a God of one nation, but of all nations. To him, God is in all the different houses where people worship Him. Even if they stand in the street and pray, it makes no difference to Him; that is the holy place where He is worshiped. The Sufi leaves sectarianism to the sects. He has respect for all. He is not prejudiced against any, does not despise any. He feels sympathy for all.

The idea of the Sufi is, that the one who does not love his fellowman, cannot love God. He thinks, as Christ has said, " Love your neighbour, love your enemy. " And what does it mean ? It means, not " Love him, because you consider him as your enemy", but " Love him, because in God you are related to him. " If humanity had believed in this simple and most valuable teaching, these wars would not have taken place. Do you think that all this hatred that exists - one nation against the other, one party against the other; there seems to be a conflict everywhere - do you think this would have been if this teaching had been followed ? If the world had believed this teaching, all this would not have taken place. Is it the work of political people to bring this home to men ? Or the work of commerce? No, it is the work of the Church, of religion. But as long as the religious authorities will make of themselves a sect and divide religion and look upon each other with prejudice, this truth brought by Christ is not practised.

We must know that every change that takes place in the multitude, in time comes among individuals. For instance, if two nations are against one another, opposed to one another, working to hurt one another, what will be the consequence ? The result will be, that in those nations there will be parties that will oppose each other; and then there will come the same opposition in families, and you will see that in time this spirit will be found in a

family of two people - two people living in one house and both in conflict with each other. And where will it culminate ? It will culminate in every individual being in conflict with himself.

Where does the Sufi learn this ? He learns it in the Wisdom of God. The man who does not recognise God in His Creation, never will recognise the God in Heaven ! It was all right for those simple believers in God and Religion who quietly went to church and said their prayers, and came back with a feeling of exaltation, and did not meddle with the world. But now the conditions have changed.

Now there is a great battle between Truth and Life. The illusion of matter is in the fullness of the part it is performing in life. Therefore there is a greater battle that life is fighting with the Truth than religion has ever had to fight. On one side, science cries: " Matter, matter, matter! " On the other side, politics are crying:

" Self, self, self-interest ! " The religions are crying: " Sect, sect, sect ! " And where could man stop to think of the ultimate Truth, which is the only thing that the soul seeks ?

The Sufi Message, therefore, has its mission, not for a particular race, nor for a particular nation, nor for a particular Church. It is a call to unite in Wisdom, which is *Sophia* in the Greek words, and which we call *Sufism*. The Sufi Message is a group of people belonging to different religions, who have not left their religions but have learned to understand them better, and their love is in life, as the love for God and humanity, instead of for a particular section. The principal work that the Sufi Message has to accomplish, is to bring about a better understanding between East and West, and between the nations and races of this world. And the note that the Sufi Message is striking at the present time, is the note which sounds the divinity of the human soul to make human beings recognize the divinity in the human soul. If there is any moral principle that the Sufi Message brings, it is this, that the whole humanity is as one body,

and any organ of that body hurt or troubled can cause trouble to the whole body indirectly. And as the health of the whole body depends upon the health of each part, so the health of the whole humanity depends upon the health of every nation. Besides this, to those who are wakening, and feel that now is the moment when they feel inclined to know about the deeper side of life, of Truth, to them the Sufi Message extends a helping hand, without asking to what religion, sect, or dogma they belong. The knowledge of the Sufi is helpful to every person, not only in living his life aright, but in his own religion. The Sufi Message does not call man away from his belief or religion : it calls man to live it. In short, it is a message intended by God to unite humanity in brotherhood, in wisdom.

