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De ziel van religie door Hazrat Inayat Khan**

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The soul of religion by Hazrat Inayat Khan**

Is a certain religion important or is living it important?

Perhaps a person belongs to the best religion in the world. He does not live it, but belongs to it. He says that he is a Muslim, or a Christian, or a Jew. He is sure it is the best religion, but at the same time he does not care to live it--he just belongs to it, and thinks that belonging to a certain religion, which is an accepted religion, is all that is needed. And people of all different religions have made it appear so, owing to their enthusiasm, and forced by their mission in life. For they have made facilities for those who belong to their particular religion, saying that by the very fact of their belonging to that particular religion they will be saved on the Day of Judgment, while others, with all their good actions, will not be saved, because they do not belong to that particular religion. This is a man-made idea, not God-made.

God is not the Father of one sect; God is the Father of the whole world, and all are entitled to be called His children, whether worthy or unworthy. And in fact it is man's attitude toward God and Truth which can bring him closer to God, Who is the ideal of every soul. And if this attitude is not developed, then, whatever a man's religion be, he has failed to live it. Therefore, what is important in life is to try and live the religion to which one belongs, or that one esteems, or that one believes to be one's religion.

But one must always know that religion has a body and has a soul. Whatever body of religion you may touch, you touch the soul; but if you touch the soul, you touch all its bodies, which are like its organs. And all the organs constitute one body, which is the body of the religion, the religion which is the religion of Alpha and Omega, which was and which is and which will always be. Therefore the dispute, "I am right and you are wrong," in the path of religion is not necessary. We do not know what is in the heart of man. If outwardly he seems to be a Jew, a Christian, a Muslim, or a Buddhist, we are not the judge of his religion, for every soul has a religion peculiar to itself, and no one else is entitled to judge its religion.

There may be a person in a very humble garb, without any appearance of belief in God, or of piety or orthodoxy, and he may have a religion hidden in his heart which not everybody can understand. And there may be a person who is highly evolved, and his outward conduct, which alone manifests to people's views, may appear to be altogether contrary to their own way of looking at things, and they may accuse him of being a materialist or an unbeliever, or someone who is far from God and Truth. And yet we do not know; sometimes appearances are merely illusions; behind them there may be the deepest religious devotion or the highest ideal hidden, of which we know very little. For the Sufi, therefore, the best thing is to respect man's belief, whatever it may be, his ideal, whatever it may be, his way of looking at life, even if it be quite different from one's own way of looking at it. It is this spirit of tolerance that, when developed, will bring about the brotherhood which is the essence of religion and the want of the day. The idea that you are different and I am different; your religion is different and my religion is different; your belief is different and my belief is different--that will not unite, that will only divide humanity. Those who, with the excuse of their great faith in their own religion, hurt the feeling of another and divide humanity, whose Source and Goal is the same, abuse religion, whatever be their faith.

The Message, whenever, at whatever period it came to the world, did not come to a certain section of humanity; it did not come to raise only some few people who perhaps accepted the faith, the Message, or a particular organized Church. No, all these things came afterwards. The rain does not fall in a certain land only; the sun does not shine upon a certain country only. All that is from God is for all souls. If they are worthy, they deserve it; it is their reward; if they are unworthy, they are the more entitled to it. Verily, blessing is for every soul; for every soul, whatever be his faith or belief, belongs to God.

(The Sufi Message, volume 9, The Unity of Religious Ideals, Religion, The Soul of Religion, Hazrat Inayat Khan)

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