



The Privilege of Being Human By Hazrat Inayat Khan

DAY 1: Overlooking-Darquza – There is a tendency which manifests itself and grows in a person who is advancing spiritually, and that tendency is overlooking. At times this tendency might appear as negligence, but in reality negligence is not necessarily overlooking, negligence most often is not looking. Overlooking may be called in other words rising beyond things: one has to rise in order to overlook; the one who stands beneath life could not overlook, even if he wanted to.

- Overlooking is a manner of graciousness.
- It is looking and at the same time not looking.
- It is seeing and not taking notice of what is seen.
- It is being hurt or harmed or disturbed by something and yet not minding it.
- It is an attribute of nobleness of nature.
- It is the sign of souls who are tuned to a higher key.

One may ask: Is it practical? I may not be able to say that it is always practical, but I mean it all the same, for in the end the one who overlooks will also realize the practicality of it. Maybe he will realize it in the long run after he has met with a great many disadvantages of it. Nevertheless, all is well which ends well.

Very often overlooking costs less than taking notice of something that could well be overlooked. In life there are things which matter and there are things which do not matter. As one advances through life one finds there are many things that do not matter, and one could just as well overlook them.

The one who, on a journey which takes all his life to accomplish, will take notice of everything that comes his way will waste his time. While climbing the mountain of life, the purpose of which is to reach the top, if a person troubles about everything that comes along, he will perhaps never be able to reach the top; he will always be troubling about things at the bottom.

No soul, realizing that life on this earth is only four days long, will trouble about little things. He will trouble about things which really matter. In his strife with little things a person loses the opportunity of accomplishing great things in life. The one who troubles about small things is small, the soul who thinks of great things is great.

Overlooking is the first lesson of forgiveness. This tendency springs from love and sympathy; for of whom one hates one notices every little fault, but of whom one loves one naturally overlooks the

faults, and very often one tries to turn the faults into merits. Life has endless things which suggest beauty, and numberless things which suggest ugliness. There is no end to the merits and no end to the faults, and according to one's evolution is one's outlook on life.

The higher a man has risen, the wider the horizon before his sight. It is the tendency to sympathize which brings the desire to overlook, and it is the analytical tendency which weighs and measures and takes good notice of everything.

"Judge ye not lest ye be judged.", said Christ.

The more one thinks of this lesson, the deeper it goes into one's heart, and what one learns from it is to try and overlook all that does not fit in with one's own ideas as to how things ought to be in life, until one comes to a stage of realization where the whole of life becomes one sublime vision of the immanence of God.

Practice: Ya Aziz: Al-'Aziz is God's power as a refined strength that is rare and graceful. Such a sense of power allows your ego to become detached from clinging to its presumed power, and then you can start to forgive. *Def: The Mighty, The Strong, The Dignified, The Powerful, The Eminent/Esteemed.*

Closing:

- Prayer Khatum
- Dedication of Merit
- Donations Welcomed

Day 2: Graciousness-Khulq – No sooner does the soul touch the inner kingdom, which is the divine kingdom, than the true nobility of the soul becomes manifest in the form of graciousness. Kings and those belonging to aristocratic families were trained in the manner of graciousness, but it is born in the heart of man. This means that every soul shows the aristocratic manner from the moment it touches the inner kingdom, and it shows that true aristocracy is the nobility of the soul: when the soul begins to express in every feeling, thought, word and action that graciousness which belongs to God Himself.

Graciousness is quite different from that wrong manner which is termed patronizing in English. The gracious one, before expressing that noble attitude, tries to hide himself even from his own eyes. The reason why the great ones, the truly noble people, are gracious is because they are more sensitive to all the hurt and harm that comes to them from those who are unripe. Therefore, out of their kindness, they try to keep themselves from doing the same to another, however unimportant his position.

There is a story of a dervish who was standing in the royal road at the moment when the procession of the king was passing. Happy in his rags as he was, he did not at all mind who was coming, and did not move an inch at the warnings of the pages who were running ahead of the procession, until they pushed him away. Yet he did not move far, he only said, "That is why." Then came the bodyguards on horseback. They did not push him, but they said, "Away, away, dervish! Do you not see the procession coming?" The dervish did not move an inch, but only answered, "That is why." Then followed the noblemen. They saw the dervish standing there. They did not like to tell him to move, they moved their own horses instead. The dervish seeing this said, "That is why." Then arrived the chariot of the king. His eyes fell on the dervish in his rags standing boldly in the middle of the road. Instead of waiting for his bow the king bowed himself, and the dervish said, "That is why." There was a young man standing by his side who could not understand the meaning of these words "That is why", spoken by the dervish whatever way he was treated. When he asked the dervish kindly to explain what was meant by these words, the answer was, "They explain all I mean."

There is a great truth in what Christ has said in the sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." This will always prove true whatever be the time and whatever be the evolution of the world. Be it the time of aristocracy, be it the period of democracy, the value of that nobility of nature which is expressed in graciousness will always command its price. It is easy to know the word, but most difficult to practice graciousness through life, for there is no end to the thought that needs to be given to every action in life. It wants judgment and a fair sense of weighing and measuring all one does. Besides, it needs

a fine sense of art and beauty, for in refining the personality one attains to the highest degree of art. Verily, the making of the personality is the highest art there is. The Sufi considers the cultivation of humane attributes, in which lies the fulfillment of the purpose of his life, as his religion.

A young man one day showed a little impatience towards his aged father, who could not hear very clearly and had asked him two, three times to tell him again what he had said. Seeing the disturbed expression on his face the father said, "My son, do you remember that there was a day when you were a little child, and asked me what was the name of a certain bird? I told you: a sparrow. You asked me perhaps fifty times, and I had the patience to repeat it again and again to you without being hurt or troubled about it; I was only pleased to tell you all I knew. Now when I cannot hear you clearly, you can at least have patience with me and, if I did not hear you the first time, explain it twice to me."

It seems that, in order to learn that noble manner of life, what is most needed is patience - sometimes in the form of endurance, sometimes in the form of consideration, and sometimes in the form of forgiveness.

Practice: Ya Aziz: Al-Aziz has the qualities of being engaged with life, having a sweet nature, and being strong at the same time. Union, or remembrance, in al-'Aziz, produces fluidity. *Def: The Mighty, The Strong, The Dignified, The Powerful, The Eminent/Esteemed.*

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Day 3: Conciliation-Ittifaq – Any efforts made in developing the personality or in character-building must not be made for the sake of proving oneself superior to others, but in order to become more agreeable to those around one and to those with whom one comes in contact. Conciliation is not only the moral of the Sufi, but it is the sign of the Sufi.

This virtue is not always learned and practiced easily, for it needs not only good-will but wisdom. The great talent of the diplomat is to bring about by agreement such results as are desirable. Disagreement is easy; among the lower creation one sees it so often. What is difficult is agreement, for it wants a wider outlook, which is the true sign of spirituality. Narrowness of outlook makes the horizon of man's vision small, and he cannot easily agree with another. There is always a meeting-ground for two people, however much they differ in their thought, but the meeting-ground may be far off, and man is not always willing to take the trouble of going far enough - as far as required in order to come to an agreement. Very often his patience does not allow him to go far enough: to where he can meet the other. What generally happens is that everyone wants the other to meet him in the place where he stands, and there is no desire on his part to move from there.

This does not mean that in order to become a real Sufi a person must give up his ideas so as to meet others in agreement. There is no benefit in always being lenient with every thought that comes from another, and there is no benefit in always erasing one's own idea from one's heart. That is not conciliation. The one who is able to listen to another is the one who will make another listen to him. It is the one who agrees easily with another who will have the power of making another agree easily with him. Therefore, in doing so one gains in spite of the apparent loss which might sometimes occur. When a man is able to see from his own point of view as well as from the point of view of another, he has a complete vision and a clear insight: he so to speak sees with both eyes.

No doubt friction produces light, but light is the agreement of atoms. When one seeks stimulus to thought it does not matter so much if two people have their own ideas and argue about them, but when a person argues for the sake of argument, the argument becomes his game; he finds no satisfaction in conciliation. Words then provide the means of disagreement, reasons become fuel for that fire. Wisdom is there where the intelligence is pliable, when one understands all things: the wrong of the right, and the right of the wrong. The soul who arrives at the perfect knowledge has risen above right and wrong; he knows them and yet he does not know. He can say much, and yet - what can he say? Then it becomes easy for him to conciliate each and all.

There is a story that two Sufis met after many years, having travelled along their own lines. They were glad to meet each other after all those years of separation, for they were both mureeds of the same Murshid. One said to the other, "Tell me, please, your life's experience. After all this time of study and practice of Sufism I have learned one thing: how to conciliate others. I can do this very well now. Will you, please, tell me what you have learned?" The other one said, "After all this time of study and practice of Sufism I have learned how to master life. All that is here in this world is for me, and I am the master; all that happens, happens by my will."

Then came the Murshid whose mureeds they were, and both spoke of their experiences during their journey. The Murshid said, "Both of you are right. In the case of the first one it was self-denial in the right sense of the word which enabled him to conciliate others. In the case of the other one nothing was left of his will any more. If there was any will, it was the will of God."

Question: You said the other day that self-denial in the right sense of the word is "I am not, Thou art." What is self-denial in the wrong sense of the word?

Answer: The right meaning is always one, wrong meanings are many. Among many wrong meanings the one which is most often understood is that self-denial is denying oneself the pleasures and happiness that the world can offer.

Practice: Ya Aziz: When al-'Aziz is fully reflected in your awareness, you realize the appropriate manner of expression in all your relationships in life, and this results in behavior that is described as having adab (respect and politeness). *Def: The Mighty, The Strong, The Dignified, The Powerful, The Eminent/Esteemed.*

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Day 4: Consideration-Murawwat – Murawwat is a virtue most delicate to express in words. It is refraining from action out of respect for another, be it in consideration for his age, position, knowledge, goodness or piety. Those who practice this virtue do not necessarily have that respect only for someone who has a high position or who has much piety; when they develop this quality it manifests itself in their dealings with all people.

Murawwat is the contrary of what is called bluntness in English. It is not necessarily respect, it is something more delicate than respect: it is consideration and respect together. This virtue in its full development may even rise to such an extent that, out of consideration and respect, a person may try to sustain the lack of the same virtue in another. But when one arrives at this stage then ordinary manner ends and sage manner begins.

Man in this world is not born only to eat, drink and make merry. He is born to arrive at the fullness of humane character, and he realizes this by a greater thoughtfulness and consideration. If not, with power, position, wealth, learning, and all good things in the world, he remains poor without the riches of the soul which is good manner. All the beauty around man is something outside of him; the only beauty which is dependable is to be found and developed in his own character.

A person may show lack of murawwat, if not in words, in his glance. He does not need to speak in order to be rude; in his look, in his turns or twists, in his standing up or walking, in closing the door on leaving the room, he can show his feelings. If man does not speak he makes the door speak. It is not an easy matter to manage oneself when one's mind escapes one's hands. Plainly speaking, murawwat is acting with consideration and respect for another in a situation where a rude impulse is called out; it is controlling oneself, refraining from committing an insolence, out of respect for another.

Delicate ideas such as these are most difficult to learn and to practice in life. Today many may wonder if they are not weaknesses. But nothing in the world can prove to be a weakness when it can only be practiced by mastering oneself. There is no loss if thought or consideration is given to someone who does not deserve it; for if such an action does not bring any profit, it is still practice -- and it is practice which makes man perfect.

Practice: Ya Aziz – Ya 'Aziz (yaa 'a-ZEEZ) Def: The Mighty, The Strong, The Dignified, The Powerful, The Eminent/Esteemed.

Al-'Aziz is a kind of divine strength or power that is beyond the dualism of praise and blame. It is the strength that naturally flows from intrinsic, essential worth. The power of al-'Aziz is sweet, and it actually carries an inner meaning of sweetness. It also means precious and rare.

The strength of al-'Aziz is the power of God itself. It is the true worth, utmost dignity, and strength that manifests directly from God, without an intermediary. It can be contemplated in the incredible precious value of the human soul. Invocation of Ya 'Aziz brings freedom without limitations and is a remedy for our experience of being powerless and under great restraint due to restrictions that may be real or imagined.

Repetition of Ya 'Aziz is also an important remedy for the common human experience of feeling undervalued and worthless. Al-'Aziz is the marriage of strength and self-worth.

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