



A Sufi Message

The Deeper Side of Life, The Mystical Meaning of The Cross

Selected Teachings by Hazrat Inayat Khan

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Many think that this symbol has existed only from the time of Jesus Christ, and no doubt it became better known after the time of this Master; but in fact, this symbol is an ancient one used at different times and in all ages by the mystics. It has many mystical meanings.

The cross shows a vertical and a horizontal line. Everything that exists has come from these two lines and extends vertically and horizontally, as may be seen in the leaf which develops in length and in breadth. In its first meaning, therefore, the cross is the symbol of manifestation; it belongs also to the journey towards the spiritual ideal, and no better picture could be given of this journey than a cross.

Practice: *“Ya Allah! (head sweeps left to right creating a crescent.
In love, reverence and humility I surrender to Thee and Thee alone, (head bows down in surrender
And Thou dost **fill** me spiritually.” (head lifts up in fulfillment and gratitude)*

By keen observation of light one realizes that it is the nature of light to form a perpendicular and a horizontal line; and if it is the nature of the external light to form a cross it is also the nature of the inner light. The external light is the reflection of the inner light, and it is the nature of the inner light that is expressed in the outer light; by this one can see that the inner light is not only manifested in the outer light, but that the outer light is the picture of the inner light.

Practice: Ya Nur / Ya Hayy (Movements as above)

Ya Nur (yaa NOOR)

An-Nur is the essence of light. Nur is self-revelatory light. The light that shines out from the soul that illuminates all things. Whatever way we may turn, we see the all-pervading light of an-Nur. Even the darkness shines from within it. What continues to live on in God when we die as a legacy of light.

Ya Hayy (yaa HAIYY)

Al-Hayy is the perfection of everlasting life, and the only one who truly lives. It is the life principle that never dies, and it is inside every being. Al-Hayy is filled with vitality; it is the inner life of the heart. Repetition of Ya Hayy arouses a kind of life energy and freedom. Al-Hayy is an antidote to the deadened condition of the heart that is often the result of grief and sorrow.

Our journey towards spiritual progress can be pictured as a cross. In the first place our ego, our self, is our enemy and stands as a hindrance to our progress. Feelings such as pride, conceit, selfishness, jealousy, envy, and contempt are all feelings which hurt others, and which destroy one's own life and make it full of that misery which springs from that selfish personal feeling: the ego. The more egoistic, the more conceited, the more miserable a life a person has in the world and the more one makes the lives of others miserable. This ego, or Nafs, is a natural development in our life or heart: the more we know of the world, the more egoistic we become; the more we understand and experiences the world, the more materialistic we are.

It is not that we bring our faults along with us when we are born. We arrive with innocence, with the smiles, the willingness to become a friend of everyone who comes near us, ready to cast our loving glance on everybody, regardless of whether they are rich or poor, friend or foe. The same soul which comes with such purity of heart, purity of expression, develops a nature as it grows up in the world all that is hurtful and harmful to oneself and to others. It is in the world that, as we grow up, we create our Nafs – the ego. Yet at the same time there is in the depths of the heart that goodness, which is the divine goodness, that righteousness which we have inherited from the God in heaven.

A longing for joy and rest and peace is in us, and this shows that in us there are two aspects: there is one nature which is in the depths of our heart; and there is another nature which has developed after coming on earth. And then there arises a conflict, a struggle between these two natures, when the nature which belongs to the depths begins to feel that it yearns for something. This constant conflict between our real, original self and this self which hinders our spiritual progress, is pictured in the form of a cross.

It is this which is the real crucifixion; but with it there comes still another crucifixion which always follows and which every soul experiences, for the perfection and liberation of every soul depend on it. This is the crucifixion of that part of our being which we have created in our self, and which is not our real self, although on the way it always appears that one has crucified one's own self.

The mystery of perfection lies in annihilation, not annihilation of the real self, but of the false self, of the false conception which we have always cherished in our heart and has tortured us during our life. Do we not see this among our friends and acquaintances? Those who attract us, and those whom we love and admire deeply, have always only one quality which can really attract us: *Personality*. It is not only that their **selflessness** attracts us, but what repels us in the life of others is nothing but the grossness of the Nafs, or one might call it the denseness and hardness of that self-created ego.

There is a poem by the great Persian poet Iraqi, who tells us how he went to the gate Heaven and knocked at the door; and a voice answered, *'There is no place for anyone else in this abode. Go back to where you came from'*, and he went back. Then, after a long time, and after having gone through the process of bearing the cross and being crucified, he came again, this time full of that spirit of selflessness, and he knocked at the door and the word came, *'Who art thou?'* and he said, *'Thyself alone, for no one else*

exists save thee. ' And God said, 'Enter into this abode for now it belongs to thee.' (Commentary added here on audio/video)

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. *We see this reference to the sword in hand in the statues and painting of Saint Michael the Archangel, Saint John of the Cross, Manjushri-The Buddha of Wisdom and so forth. The meaning of which is the battle between Good and Evil, the battle of between the real self and false self, the battle to slay or cut through ignorance so that true, unobscured wisdom is revealed.*

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

Even if at the beginning your inner pearl was mixed with bestial and predatory attributes, once it has been sifted by the sieve of good fortune and struggle.... it will be worthy of the neighborhood of the Sultan's Presence. It is a heavenly pearl on the face of the earth. What is the expression of this state? *"Recognition is the radiance of lights flashing in the hearts and lifting them away from faults to the unseen things."* (THE REPOSE OF THE SPIRITS, A Sufi Commentary on the Divine Names by Ahmad Sam'Ani, Translated by William C. Chittick. Another greatly acknowledge translator is R. A. Nicholson) To download pdf this text and many more visit. Sufi Literature o Facebook. [Click here.](#)

It is this selflessness, to the extent that even the thought of self is no longer there, that this false self is dead, which is the recognition of God. Love accomplishes its work when it spreads its wings and veils oneself from one's own eyes. *(In other words, when we forget our small, limited self.)*

Note: *During class there was a reference to the veiled Sphinxes at the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri USA. Below is an image of the Liberty Memorial and closeup of one the Sphinx. Two Assyrian Sphinxes guard the south entrance of the Liberty Memorial. "Memory" faces east toward the battlefields of France, veiling its eyes from the horrors of war. "Future" faces west, veiling its eyes from an unknown future. I am very proud to say that my maternal great grandfather and grandfather contributed to this project.* [Click here to learn more.](#)



God speaks to everyone, to the ears of every heart, but it is not every heart that hears Him. His voice is louder than the thunder and His light is clearer than the sun – if one could only hear it, if one could only see. To hear and to see we must remove this wall, which we made of our self. Then we become the flute upon which the Divine Player may play music of everlasting love; then we can rise from the cross into the life everlasting.

Closing Prayer: Khatum

We pray this teaching resonates and benefits YOU!

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