



**Personal Account
from the 'Biography of Hazrat Inayat Khan'**

I found my work in the West the most difficult task that I could have ever imagined. To work in the West for a spiritual Cause to me was like travelling in a hilly land, not like sailing in the sea, which is smooth and level.

In the first place I was not a missionary of a certain faith, delegated to the West by its adherents, nor was I sent to the West as a representative of Eastern cult by some Maharajah.

I came to the West with God's Message, Whose call I had received, and there was nothing earthly to back me in my mission, except my faith in God and trust in Truth.

In the countries where I knew no one, had not any recommendations, was without any acquaintances or friends.

I found myself in a new world, where commercialism has become the central theme of life under the reign of materialism.

In the second place there was a difficulty of language, but that difficulty was soon overcome; as I worked more so my command of language improved.

The prejudice against Islam that exists in the West was another difficulty for me.

Many think Sufism to be a mystical side of Islam, and the thought was supported by the encyclopaedias, which speak of Sufism as having sprung from Islam, and they were confirmed in this by knowing that I am Moslim by birth.

Naturally I could not tell them that it is a Universal Message of the time, for every one is not ready to understand this.

My Message of peace was often interpreted as what they call pacifism, which is looked upon unfavourably by many.

I always sensed suspicion from all sides, searchlights thrown on me in suspicion whether my Movement were not political, which always made my work difficult, to my great sadness.

When Gandhi proclaimed non-corporation I felt a hidden influence coming from every corner, resenting against any activity, which had a sympathetic connection with the East.

I then felt that the hour had come to remove the seat of our Movement to a place such as Geneva, which has been chosen as an international centre by all, in spite of all the urging on the part of my kind mureeds to stay on in England.

I have always refrained from taking the side of any particular nation in my work, and have tried to keep my Movement free from any political shadows.

Vast fields of political activity were laid before me, during and after the war, and if I hesitated to take interest in such activities, it was only that my heart was all taken by the need of a universal brotherhood in the world.

My own country people, who found me busy with something quite different from what they would have expected of me, looked at me and my work with antipathy, and from many of them harm came to me, to add to the many difficulties I had to face.

Therefore in my struggle in the West instead of the support of the East, I had to face opposition, which made my life squeezed between two stonewalls, and I have borne this pain, consoling myself with the idea that history repeats itself.

I would have been most happy sitting with my vina in my hand in some corner in the forest, in solitude, and nothing better would I have asked.

There came a time when I could not have sufficient time to keep up my musical practice. This was too great a loss for my heart to sustain. Yet I had to bear it, for every moment of my time was absorbed in the work. I especially yearned for the music of India, the fluid with which my soul was nourished from the moment I was born on earth.

But for my music the soil of India was necessary, the juice of that soil for me to live on, the air of India to breathe, the sky of India to look at, and the sun of India to be inspired by. It is just as well that I gave up my music when in the West, for if I had kept it up I would have never been fully satisfied with it, although the sacrifice of music was not a small one.

In the West I often felt homesick; especially whenever my longing for solitude showed itself I felt very uncomfortable under all conditions, in spite of all in the West that I loved and admired.

My brothers being with me in the West gave my longing soul a great consolation, for they - represented India to me.

I learnt later why a darwish soul like me, indifferent to the life of the world, constantly attracted to solitude, was set in the midst of the worldly life. It was my training.

I learnt as a man of the world the responsibilities and the needs of the worldly life; which one, standing apart from this life, however spiritually advanced cannot understand.

To feel in sympathy with my mureeds placed in different situations in life and to be able to place myself in their situation, and look at their life, it was necessary for me.

Besides to have to do with different natures and souls in the different grades of evolution, it was necessary to have had the experience of home life, especially with children, with their different stages of development, which gives a complete idea of human nature.

Ora Ray, afterwards Amina Begum, who was born at New Mexico on May 8th 1892, came of a family from Kentucky called Baker, whose great uncle Judge Baker is known in Chicago.

From childhood, Amina Begum showed great strength of will. In this she showed a tendency of a relation of hers, Mrs. Eddy Baker, who had spread that idea in the world as Christian Science.

In early youth Amina Begum once saw near her bed a phantom, an Eastern sage, who appeared a moment and passed across. She afterwards had a dream, that an Eastern sage held her in his arms and rose towards the sky, and carried her away overseas.

At the same time, with a heart born to admire and respond to everything good and beautiful, a heart, brave to venture anything, I was ready to yield to the call from the maiden who was destined to be my life's partner.

I perceived in meditation, indications of my future marriage, also visions which showed me the one who was meant to be my wife, and visions in which my Murshid suggested to me that the life to come was a necessary one towards my future life's purpose.

Amina Begum became the mother of my four children

In spite of the vast difference of race and nationality and custom she proved to be a friend through joy and sorrow, proving the idea, which I always believed, those outer differences do not matter when the spirit is in atonement.

The tests that my life was destined to go through were not of a usual character, and were also not a small trial for her.

A life such as mine, which was so wholly devoted to the cause, and which was more and more involved in the ever growing activities of the Sufi Movement, naturally kept me back from that thought and attention which was due to my home and family.

Most of the time of my life I was obliged to spend out of home, and when at home, I have always been full of activities, and it naturally fell upon Amina Begum always to welcome guests with a smile under all circumstances.

If I had not been helped by Amina Begum, my life, laden with a heavy responsibility, would have never enabled me to devote myself entirely to the Sufi Movement as I have. It is by this continual sacrifice that she has shown her devotion to the Cause.

After twelve years of wandering and homeless life in the West, with a large family to look after, in addition to having my laudable object to carry out, I was provided at last with four walls at Suresnes, thanks to the kind sympathy of my Dutch mureed, Mevrouw Egeling.

The purpose was, that when going about to preach in the World, I might have the relief of thinking that my little ones are sheltered from heat and cold under a roof.

This saintly soul came into my life as a blessing from above, was called Fazal Mai, which means Grace of God.

The house was also named Fazal Manzil, as a hand of Providence, became my backbone, which comforted me, and raised my head upwards in thanksgiving.