



THE INNER LIFE

The Sufi Message of
Hazrat Inayat Khan

The Angel-Man

The Hindu word deva denotes an angel-man, and the Sufi term for this is Farishtakhaslat. Every soul has as its first expression angelic life, and therefore it is not surprising if man shows angelic traits in his life, for it is in the depth of his soul. The soul coming through different spheres and planes of existence partakes of different attributes; and the attributes of the lower world become so collected and gathered around the soul, that it almost forgets its very first experience of itself, its purest being. The soul that through all the worldly experiences has a tendency to turn towards its origin, its angelic state, shows a different character from the general characteristics of human beings. This soul shows the tendency of the compass, that always points in a certain direction, whichever way it is moved or turned; and it is the same with a soul whose nature it is

to be pointing to the origin and source from which every soul comes.

Now this soul may have the same tendency from childhood and through youth, and when grown-up it may still have the same tendency; it may develop it more and more, but this tendency is born with the soul and its magnetism is great. It attracts every other soul, because it is in contact with its real self, and that real self is the real self of every soul which it contacts; and therefore it acts as a magnet towards these souls. Deva is the name of this pure kind of human soul.

The next type of soul is the jinn. This is characteristic of a soul that keeps in contact with the inner region, which is reflected outwardly in all that is beautiful. While the soul of every person is looking for the beauty which is outward, the attention of the jinn soul is directed not so much to the beauty which is reflected outwardly as it is to the source of that beauty, which is within.

It is among those who live the inner life that these two characteristic types of the deva and the jinn are mostly to be found, because they are less absorbed in the life of this world, and thus more attracted to the inner life. It does not mean that they are not occupied with the worldly life; it does not mean that they take no interest in this world; in fact it is the interest in the external life which brings the soul towards it. If the soul were not interested in the world, it would not come; it is its interest which brings it. But

to such a soul, while the external life is of interest, at the same time it is a disappointment. All that interests a free soul in this world only interests it as long as the soul does not touch it; once it has touched it this soul loses interest. Its natural inclination is to withdraw. The things which hold the average soul cannot hold this soul; they can only attract, for this soul is seeking for something, and it sees its reflection outwardly, but when it touches it, it finds it was a shadow and was not real, and it goes back disappointed; and so the life of the deva or jinn is spent in this manner.

The characteristic of the deer, as described by the poets of India, is that when it is thirsty it runs about in the forests looking for water, and it is greatly delighted on hearing the sound of thunder and runs about with a desire to drink; but sometimes there is only thunder and no rain afterwards, or if it rains it is perhaps only a shower and not enough to drink, and the deer still remains thirsty. And so is the thirst of a fine soul in this world. The soul of the spiritually-inclined man is constantly thirsty, looking for something, seeking for something; and when it thinks it has found it, the thing turns out to be different; and so life becomes a continual struggle and disappointment. And the result is that instead of taking interest in all things, a kind of indifference is produced; and yet in the real character of this soul there is no indifference, there is only love.

Although life seems to make this soul indifferent, it cannot really become indifferent; and it is this state working through this life that gives a man a certain feeling, to which only a Hindu word is applicable, no other language having a word which can render this particular meaning so adequately. The Hindus call it Vairagya from which the term Vairagi has come. Vairagi means a person who has become indifferent; and yet indifference is not the word for it. It describes a person who has lost the value in his eyes of all that attracts the human being. It is no more attractive to him; it no more enslaves him. He may still be interested in all things of this life, but is not bound to them. The first feeling of the Vairagi is to turn away from everything. He shows the nature of the deer, which runs away at the flutter of a leaf; for he becomes sensitive and convinced of the disappointing results that come from the limitation and changeableness of life in the world.

Hurt within, he becomes sensitive, and the first thing that occurs to his mind is to fly, to hide somewhere, to go into a cave in the mountains, or into the forest where he will meet no one. No affair of this world, no relation, no friendship, no wealth, no rank, position or comfort, nothing holds him. And yet that does not mean that he in any way lacks what is called love or kindness, for if ever he lives in this world it is only out of love. He is not interested in the world and it is only love that keeps him

here, the love which does not express itself any more in the way of attachment, but only in the way of kindness, forgiveness, generosity, service, consideration, sympathy, helpfulness, in any way that it can; never expecting a return from the world, but ever doing all that it can, pitying the conditions, knowing the limitations of life and its continual changeability.

When this Vairagi becomes more developed, then he becomes like a serpent, he becomes wise like a serpent; he seeks solitude as the serpent seeks solitude. The serpent is never interested in moving among the crowd; it always has its home where it hides itself. It only comes out when it is hungry or thirsty; and once it has taken its food it does not hunger or thirst after more as the dogs and cats do. You can give them food again and again, and they still want more. When the serpent is once fed it goes into its hole and stays there until it wants food again; it has lost all voraciousness.

And so has the soul of the Vairagi; he only wants to live in this world for the sake of others, not for himself. His connection with people in the world is to serve them, not asking for their service; to love them, not asking for love; to be friends with them, not asking for friendship. He never allows himself to be deceived a second time; once disappointed is sufficient. Once the Vairagi has come to realize the falsehood of ordinary life he never allows himself to be deceived again.

He sees the world with the eye of experience, and he says, 'I do not expect anything from you; if I come to you it is to give to you, not to take from you. I do all things for you, but will not be bound to you.' That is the watchword of the Vairagi.

When the Vairagi is still more developed in this feeling of Vairagya, then he becomes a lion. He is no more the serpent seeking solitude, although he loves it still; he is no more the deer running away from the crowd. He is the lion, who stands and faces all difficulties. No longer sensitive, but with all strength and power, with all balance, with patience, he endures, and with a brave spirit he stands in the crowd in the world. For what? To bear all things that come to him; to endure all the jarring influences that the world offers to a sensitive person; to look into the eyes of all, being brave in spirit and strengthened in truth and clear of conscience.

It is in this way that the lion-like soul of the deva, the angelman, comes to the rescue of humanity. What is called the Master or Saint or Prophet or Sage is this developed Vairagi. He is like the fruit that has ripened on the tree, helped by the sun. In this way this soul that is ripened by experience in life, and has not allowed itself to become decayed by that experience, but has upheld the truth with balance, with hope and patience, directed by love for humanity and desire to serve God, without any desire for appreciation or return from below or from

above. It is this soul of the deva that brings the divine Message, whenever the Message comes, to a community, a nation, or to the world.

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