



A Sufi Message

Unlearning, Part 5

Sufi Message Volume 6, The Alchemy of Happiness The Knowledge of Life's Battle by Hazrat Inayat Khan

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*Every blow in life pierces the heart and awakens our feelings to sympathize with others;
and every swing of comfort lulls us to sleep, and we become unaware of all.*

Bowl of Saki, July 20, by Hazrat Inayat Khan

Because life means a continual battle one's success, failure, happiness, or unhappiness mostly depends upon one's knowledge of this battle. Whatever be one's occupation in life, whatever be one's knowledge, if one lacks the knowledge of the battle of life one lacks the most important knowledge of all.

The question arises, of what does this knowledge of life's battle consist? It comprises the knowledge of warfare, how to fight and how to make peace. Human nature very often makes the mistake of taking sides, either the side of war or the side of peace. But if one studies the history of nations and races one will find that it was this mistake which often caused their failure. There have been times when nations and races have developed in their character the knowledge of peace, for instance people such as the Hindus with their most ancient civilization; but it could not bring them complete satisfaction as one side of human nature was neglected and misunderstood.

Practice: Ya 'Alim (yaa 'a-LEEM), Ya Khabir (yaa k̄h̄a-BEER), Ya Shahid (yaa sha-HEED)

Al-'Alim is the omniscient knowledge of God. Its ultimate meaning is all-inclusive.

Alim includes the inner knowledge, al-**Khabir** (The One who has perfect knowledge and understanding of the true reality of all things)

Alim includes the outer knowledge, ash-**Shahid** (The One from whose knowledge nothing is hidden)

War comes from God in the same way that peace comes from God. A fruit goes through many processes to become ripe and sweet. Sunshine and rain are both needed to make the fruit ripe; and that shows that war and peace both have their place. But with our limited understanding we do not always comprehend the justice of what is done to us. For instance, if a man had lived through all civilizations, he would think very differently from the ordinary man of today; and so, it is with God in regard to His knowledge of the entire world. We are too limited to understand.

Practice: Ya 'Alim (yaa 'a-LEEM), **Ya Khabir** (yaa ḳḥa-BEER), **Ya Shahid** (yaa sha-HEED)

In this present age, it seems that the knowledge of warfare has developed; but on the other hand, the knowledge of peace is absent; for the full knowledge of warfare is both the knowledge of battle and the knowledge of peace. This can be learned according to the mystics by battling with oneself, and by bringing about peace with one's own soul. The life of an individual being is not very different from the life of the world. An individual person's home is not different from the world. An individual's body and mind and spirit form the whole universe. An individual life can fill the gap between the dawn of creation and the last day. Man does not realize how important is his own life, his self; and the study of his own life and his own self is a study of the greatest importance.

A healthy person has waiting at his door several illnesses, several diseases, waiting for the opportunity when they can attack him. A person with wealth has many who wait at his door for the chance to take away from him what he possesses. A person about whom good is said, has many awaiting a moment when something bad may be said about him. A person who has power or position, how many are not waiting for the opportunity to pull him down and see him slide down from the place where he stands! And what does this show? Why is it so? One may give a thousand reasons, and yet no proper reason. The best explanation one can give is that life is a continual battle.

The process of creation began like this. According to science light comes from friction. It is one power against the other power, fighting; and from these two different forces striking upon each other comes an effect, and that effect in reality may be called life.

In this lies the secret of both love and hate. One sees in the animal kingdom that the first tendency of the animals is instinctively to fight one another. This tendency becomes modified; and it is its modification and its reduced force that produce in them what we call virtues. As it is said in the Qur'an that the world was created out of darkness, so wisdom comes out of ignorance. And the best knowledge is not only the knowledge of all that is good and beautiful, all that is harmonious and peaceful, but also the knowledge of the causes that are behind all the conflicts and all the battles that one has to face in life. The reason why man generally lacks this knowledge is because when he is faced with a battle he wants to fight, instead of first wanting to learn how to fight. And the one who goes into life's battle without first acquiring the knowledge of warfare loses in the end. But one who learns about this warfare of life first learns its reason and its causes, becomes more capable of fighting the battle of his life.

Practice: Ya 'Alim (yaa 'a-LEEM), **Ya Khabir** (yaa ḳḥa-BEER), **Ya Shahid** (yaa sha-HEED)

Christ pointed to this secret when he said, "Resist not evil." This means that if one resists or wants to fight a battle every time something in another person appears wrong or unjust, one will lose one's power. For the competent general is not the one who always attacks. The competent general is the one

who stands firm in defence. His success is more secure than the one's who is continually attacking. Very often in everyday life one sees that by losing one's temper with someone who has already lost his, one does not gain anything but only sets out upon the path of stupidity. He who has enough self-control to stand firm at the moment when the other person is in a temper, wins in the end. It is not he who has spoken a hundred words aloud who has won, it is he who has perhaps spoken only one word.

- Closing Prayer
- Dedication of Merit
- [Link to Complete Text – Unlearning, Part 5](#)

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