



Guidance

Note: These quotations have been selected from the works of Hazrat Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, the founder of the Sufi Order International.

Guidance 1¹

The Sufi says this whole universe was made in order that God might know Himself. The seed wished to realize what it is, what is in it, and therefore became the tree. Sometimes a person asks someone else for guidance, someone living on earth or one who has passed to the other side; sometimes he asks a saint or sage. Whoever is asked can give knowledge only according to the extent of his knowledge. From that store of knowledge that he has gathered, his advice is given. When a person turns for guidance to God, to the inner Being, then all light and all knowledge are his for his guidance. "But," people say, "how can we attach ourselves with the inner Being, so as to have that guidance?" When the mind is fixed upon anything, then the person becomes linked to that, a current is established between him and it. It may be called the guidance of God or the guidance of the self. If we look within, God is nearer to us than our mind and our body, because He is that life in which as is said in the Bible, we live and move and have our being.

The Spirit of Guidance in other words may be called the Divine Mind; and as the human mind is finished after its coming on earth, so the Divine Mind becomes completed after manifestation. Plainly speaking, the Creator's Mind is made of His own creation. The experience of every soul becomes the experience of the Divine Mind; therefore, the Divine Mind has the knowledge of all beings. It is a storehouse of perfect wisdom. It is the Soul of Christ, and the Spirit of prophecy. Intuition, inspiration, vision, or revelation, all have the Divine Mind as the Source from whence every kind of revelation comes.

The Spirit of Guidance is as the yeast which is used to make bread, to prepare humanity for the purpose for which it was created. The Spirit of Guidance is a plant that grows and blossoms when it receives response and care; and when it is watered by the rainfall of divine inspiration it blooms in the light of the Divine Sun. The Spirit of Guidance is the Light of God, which may be likened to a lantern that the farmer carries when walking on the farm in the darkness of night. The Spirit of Guidance is like a searchlight. Any object on which the searchlight is thrown, it shows clearly; so the Spirit of Guidance thrown upon any aspect of life gives one a keen insight into it. In the Spirit of Guidance one finds a living God active in the heart of every person.

All those who begin to receive inspiration receive it first from outer life. Man is created in such a way that he first looks outward; and then, when he is disappointed, when he cannot find all he wants in the outer life, he turns within. He wants to see if he can find it in the inner life, and thus he becomes connected with the source of inspiration which is the Spirit of Guidance. And he who has once found the Spirit of Guidance will always be able to find it again if he keeps close to it; but when he goes astray, when the way of his life takes another direction, then he wanders away from the Spirit of Guidance.

1. These quotations were used in the March 2005 newsletter.



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Those who are confused, who are constantly hurried, who are changeable in their nature, who are afraid of death, of disease, of their own actions, of their enemies, of their surroundings; those who have constant doubt, wondering whether they can trust this person or that, whether a friend may or may not prove worthy, and so on—it is all these who have less possibility of intuition. Those who can trust without troubling themselves, those who have few doubts, are usually clearer in their perception. Those who trust in the inner guidance, who understand the secret of the instinct that works through animals and all creatures, those who are pious, those who wish to walk in the light, who always prefer the right way of thinking and speaking and acting, it is these who often experience intuition.

Divine guidance can be recognized in five different aspects. One aspect and the principal aspect is intuition. It comes to the lower creation in the form of instinct, and to the human race it comes in the form of intuition. Be it inspiration, be it vision, be it revelation, it is one and the same. It is intuition, developed in different degrees. From childhood intuitively a child begins to see what is wrong for it and what is right for it.

And now the other aspect of knowing, of seeing the divine guidance, is in the form of examples. The one whose faculty of intuition becomes blunted, the next thing he can do is to observe such examples as will be of use, of guidance in his life, as they are sent before him. He is sent to such places and brought to such people or put in such conditions that the example that he may take will be a source of guidance for him. For instance, a person who has some little inclination of gambling, when he is brought to Monte Carlo and sees those who have lost every penny that they had, he has there an example for himself.

And when the keen observation is also blunted, so that he can no longer keenly observe life, then he turns his back to examples shown before him. Then the third aspect of divine guidance is to speak. It may speak in the words of a child, it may speak in the words of a foolish person, it may speak in the words of a servant, it may speak in the words of a neighbour, it may speak in the words of a friend, it may speak in the words of a foe. And when the eyes are closed and when the ears are closed also, then even the third way of divine guidance also becomes fruitless.

Besides these three ways, there is the fourth way, and that is the way of temptation, in other words the way of reward. For all the good one does, all that one does that is right, there comes a reward in some form or other, in the form of wealth, in the form of fame, in the form of success, in the form of popularity, in some form or other. In the form of sympathy, friendship, love, comfort: in some form or the other, reward comes. And that reward teaches you to keep on that path and not to go astray from there. But at that time reward is most blinding.

The fifth way of divine guidance is the way of punishment, in the form of a loss in business, in the form of a loss of friendship, in the form of a loss of health and strength, in the form of a loss of happiness and joy. Then a lesson is taught, and that becomes very difficult. Very often a person says, “How cruel God can be.” But one does not know that four methods were used first, and when all those four methods were not understood by man then the fifth method was used. It is most kind of God, it is the greatest compassion, that four opportunities were given, if one would learn, if one would understand.

The greatest responsibility we have in life is to find out our own path, our own object in life, instead of bothering about others. Suppose a person has a better object in life, if he happens to be our friend, we



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need not pull him back. If a person has what seems to be a worse object, let him have it, we need not pull him towards us. If it seems to us at the moment a wrong object, never mind, even from a wrong object, perhaps, he has his lesson to learn. We learn in life much by our faults and mistakes. If a person falls, he learns by his fall. If a person has thought of an object wrongly, if the object is followed sincerely, surely in the end he must arrive at the goal towards which the soul directs every individual.

Those who live in the presence of God look to Him for guidance at every move they make.

He who clings to the light from heaven has a light to warn and guard him at every step, according to his desire for guidance.

No doubt there comes a time in a man's life when even if he were initiated a thousand times by nature he still seeks for a guide walking on earth. Many will say, 'Why is God not sufficient? Why must there be someone between God and man? Why must it be a man who is just as limited as we are? Why can we not reach the spirit of God directly?' But in a man who is your enemy and who has tortured you throughout your life, in another who is your greatest friend, and in your teacher who inspires and guides you, in all these is to be seen the hand of God. They have all three guided you on the path of inspiration; they are all three needed in order that you may go further in life. The one who has disappointed you, who has harmed you, is also your initiator, for he has taught you something, he has put you on the road, even if not in the right way. And he who is your friend is your initiator too, for he gives you the evidence of truth, the sign of reality; only love can give you a proof that there is something living, something real. And then there is the inspiring teacher, be he a humble man, an illiterate person, or a meditative soul, a great teacher or a humble one, he is what you think him to be, as everyone is to us what we think them to be.

You need not look for a saint or a master: a wise man is sufficient to guide you on your path.

The spiritual guide performs the role of Cupid in bringing the seeking souls closer to God.

Every teaching that a *Talib* receives from his spiritual guide he must take, not as a principle, but as an answer to that situation at that moment.

It is not only trust in the spiritual guide and appreciation of his work which a mureed should cultivate, but he must develop in himself his teacher's outlook on life, consideration, and charity of heart.

The Sufi...never troubles which path anybody takes... nor does he worry which way anyone journeys, the way of evil or of righteousness. For every way to him seems leading to the goal, one sooner and one later, one with difficulty, one with ease. But those who walk with him willingly, trusting in his comradeship, are his mureeds and call him murshid, and he guides them, not necessarily through the same path he has chosen for himself, but through the path best suited to them.

The murshid is a friend and a guide. He advises, he does not force anything upon you.

The end and the sum total of all mysticism, philosophy, and meditation, of everything one learns and develops, is to be a better servant to humanity. Everything from the beginning to the end in the spiritual path is a training to be able to serve mankind better, and if one does not do it with that intention, one



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will find in the end that one has accomplished nothing. There are many who seek wonder-working or great power to accomplish things. They may perhaps try and gain some power or other; but their soul will never be satisfied. The true satisfaction of the soul is in honest, humble service to another. If there were two people before me, one with great power of wonder-working who could perform miracles, and another humble and kind and gentle and willing to do anything he could for his fellow-men, I would prefer this last man. I would say: the first is wonderful; but the other is a sage.

Guidance 2²

The soul has within it the inner faculty of guidance, pointing to the person what to do, which way to go. But often a person does not perceive it, he is in confusion. Many are in confusion and remain in confusion all their life, not knowing what they should do in life. This is because he does not hold to that desire that he has. He desires one thing, and then another wish comes and he lets it go. It is just as if a cook were cooking a good dish and were intent upon it, but the housemaid said to him, "A splendid procession is just passing; you ought to see that," and he leaves the dish and goes to look at the procession. Then the dish is spoiled.

If we are willing to be guided, everything can teach us a lesson. If we wish to see the advantage of sobriety, we shall see it among sober people; if we wish to see the disadvantages of lack of sobriety, we shall see them among people who are not sober; if we wish to see the advantage of guidance, we shall see it among those who are guided. It is all a matter of experience and study; and our own guide towards our true ideal will never fail to guide us aright.

The Inspirer is calling us from every direction, but we do not all respond. The voice is always there, the light is there, the guidance is there; but we are not always ready or willing to respond, and are not always open to the call.

It is noise which hinders a voice that we hear from a distance, and it is the troubled waters of a pool which hinder us seeing our own image reflected in the water. When the water is still it takes a clear reflection; and when our atmosphere is still then we hear that voice which is constantly coming to the heart of every person. We are looking for guidance, we, all of us, search for truth, we search for the mystery. The mystery is in ourselves; the guidance is in our own souls.

The seeking of every soul in this world is different, distinct, and peculiar to himself, and he can best attain to it by finding the object of his search in God. The moment one arrives at this belief, one need ask no question of his fellow man, for the answer to every question that springs from his mind he finds in his own heart. The dwelling place of God, which is called heaven, is then found in his own heart. The friend on whom one can constantly depend, someone whom one can always trust, someone whose sympathy and love are secure, someone who will never fail, someone who is strong enough to help, someone who is sufficiently wise to guide one in life, the believer will find in his own heart.

2. These quotations were used in the Sept 2000 newsletter.



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The guidance from the outer knowledge and the guidance from the inner intelligence are both necessary.

Very often someone who is worldly-wise is not really wise. Intellectuality is one thing, wisdom is another thing. Not all the knowledge learnt from books and from experiences in the world and collected in the mind as learning is wisdom. When the light from within is thrown upon this knowledge, then the knowledge from outer life and the light coming from within make a perfect wisdom; and it is that wisdom which guides man on the path of life.

The light which guides the Sufi on the path is his own conscience, and harmony is the justification which guides him onward, step by step, to his idealized goal. To harmonize with oneself is not sufficient; one must also harmonize with others in thought, speech, and action; that is the attitude of the Sufi.

Conscience can give you better guidance than any teacher or book. It is a living teacher awakened in oneself, one's own conscience. The teachers, the Gurus, the Murshids, their way is to awaken the conscience in the pupil; to make clear what has become unclear, confused.

The soul of man is goodness itself, if only he begins to love goodness. This is not something which is acquired; it springs up of itself. Right attitude towards God is a direct response to God. For His voice is continually coming as an answer to every call. The ears of the heart should be open and focussed on that source whence the voice is coming. When that is done then the teacher within is found; then there is continual guidance, and one is guided to the extent that one keeps close to it. Then one needs no other guidance; but first the guidance of a spiritual teacher is necessary in order to come nearer to it.

You need not look for a saint or a master: a wise man is sufficient to guide you on your path.

Every teaching that a Talib (seeker or student) receives from his spiritual guide he must take, not as a principle, but as an answer to that situation at that moment.

The Talib need not follow his spiritual guide's faults, but he can benefit by them.

The whole of the spiritual progress under the guidance of a teacher depends upon the extent of our trust in his guidance. Without this trust all the teachings and practice of occult laws will amount to nothing.

Very often I am in a position where I can say very little, especially when a person comes to me with his preconceived ideas and wants to take my direction, my guidance on the spiritual path; yet at the same time his first intention is to see if his thoughts fit in with mine and if my thoughts fit in with his thoughts. He cannot make himself empty for the direction given. He has not come to follow my thoughts, but wants to confirm to himself that his idea is right. Among a hundred persons who come for spiritual guidance, ninety come out of that tap. What does it show? That they do not want to give up their own idea, but they want to have it confirmed that the idea they have is right.

Why should a message only come in time of pain or after a great sorrow? Why should not a message come every day for one's guidance? There are two reasons for this: one is that there is constant guidance from above, but man, so absorbed in his life's activities, does not open his heart to listen to that message and to see where it comes from. And the other reason is that the deeper the sorrow, the higher the voice of the heart rises, until it reaches the throne of God; and that is the time when the answer comes.



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It is God who would reveal Himself to us, but so long as we keep our minds on anything else but God, He may be speaking but we do not hear. When we hear His Voice, all knowledge, all direction, all guidance will be ours; everything that we need will be ours. With this understanding, one can breast the waves of life. To turn back the tide and to surmount obstacles will become possible.

When the mind is fixed upon anything, then the person becomes linked to that, a current is established between him and it. It may be called the guidance of God or the guidance of the self. If we look within, God is nearer to us than our mind and our body, because He is that life in which, as is said in the Bible, we live and move and have our being.

In a man who is your enemy and who has tortured you throughout your life, in another who is your greatest friend, and in your teacher who inspires and guides you, in all these is to be seen the hand of God. They have all three guided you on the path of inspiration; they are all three needed in order that you may go further in life. The one who has disappointed you, who has harmed you, is also your initiator, for he has taught you something, he has put you on the road, even if not in the right way. And he who is your friend is your initiator too, for he gives you the evidence of truth, the sign of reality; only love can give you a proof that there is something living, something real. And then there is the inspiring teacher, be he a humble man, an illiterate person, or a meditative soul, a great teacher or a humble one, he is what you think him to be, as everyone is to us what we think them to be.