

## MEMORIES OF INAYAT KHAN

The writer considers it both an interesting and significant fact that with passage of time his contact with Murshid in 1923 had become much more than a lingering memory. There has been a growing sense of Presence. It was easy to recognize Majesty upon first beholding Inayat. But something more than majesty is involved when the distances of space, time, and physical death seem to have lost their power to produce the illusion of separation. When in the case of contact with any given Soul we find such is the case, and more when added to all this there is a sense of progressively closer Presence, then we may rest assured that such a Soul is One who has succeeded in liberating himself from the Maya of the squirrel-cage existence so common to mankind. It is a matter of little moment by just what specific road one may have found his liberation. The all-important fact is that liberation has been found. He who is truly free transcends the bounds of name and form that necessarily restrict those who are not yet free.

Murshid's personal and public life, in so far as the writer was a witness, was a symphony of beauty. Probably in a peculiar degree Murshid was an exemplar of that, which, to us in the West, has had its best exposition in the concluding portion of Plato's *Symposium*. It will be remembered how, in this immortal discourse on Love, Plato rises progressively from lesser to ever-higher concepts of Love until at the apex is attained love of pure Beauty which becomes on that level indistinguishable from pure Truth. It seemed and seems to the writer, at any rate, that Murshid's love was just that. And so, more than any other standing out before the public eye, he was himself the very incarnation of Beauty itself.

Murshid's task was not especially concerned with those whose problems lie primarily upon the plane of cognition. There are others whose principle concern is on this level. Murshid represented quite another road to Significance. He never claimed that his was the only road. Privately he said to the writer: "Upon this Journey go with me a distance along the road I point." This is a request that is entirely fair and liberal and leaves the aspirant with a curious sense of freedom. In the end we must all find our own roads, which in each case is in some respects different from that traveled by any other soul. But traveling a distance along a pointed road helps. The aspirant learns some of the qualities of the climb and thus is better fitted for his own pioneering.

A curious quality marked Murshid's public discourses. The ideas were essentially easy to understand and always there was a sense of an all-pervading Peace, Harmony, and Beauty that left a feeling of refreshment. Yet it was difficult and not always possible to carry away with one any clear concept that would sum up the discourse. For a long time the writer found this fact baffling and unsatisfactory, until one day he realized that the real language of Murshid was music. The conceptual forms used in the discourses were the tones, and perhaps, no more than the notes of that music. Hence the real message of Murshid was through a medium which he might call a language within a language. And that inner language was music. There are many media through which Meaning may be conveyed. Murshid, a great musician in his own right, naturally as a realized man conveyed his meaning through music. To be truly understood accordingly he should have been listened to as one would attend the creation of a musician. His deeper meaning lay in the rhythm that underlaid the play of the concepts he employed rather than in the direct content of those concepts. Consequently, it mattered little on what subject Murshid spoke. Always it was the same Message he gave.

Yet, however much the Inayat Khan seen and heard by the relative many as in reality the pure musician, yet within Murshid was also Philosopher. Once he said: “Sufism is a religion without but a philosophy at its heart.” The most cherished memory of the writer is in an hour’s contact with the Philosopher. There is no doubt but that he could meet the needs of those whose primary road to Significance is not music. But still for most he played music of significance and something happened so their souls were uplifted and fed even though there be few who understand the meaning of all this.

Murshid is not dead but Lives. And he lives in a peculiar sense for now he is nearer than when enshrouded in a veil of physical matter, lie who looks right will not find Murshid far away.