

Addresses to Cherags



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*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master,
the Spirit of Guidance*

Our Sacred Task (August 13, 1923)

I wish to speak on the subject of our sacred task, what is our sacred task, not only as members of the Order, but as the servants of the divine cause. Our sacred task is to awaken among those around us and among those whom we can reach in the first place the spirit of tolerance for the religion, scripture and the ideal of devotion of one another; our next task is to make man understand people of different nations, races and communities, also of different classes. By this we do not mean to say that all races and nations must become one, nor that all classes must become one; only what we have to say is that whatever be our religion, nation, race or class, our most sacred duty is to work for one another, in one another's interest, and to consider that as the service of God. A spirit of reciprocity we must create among the people of different races and nations, different classes and communities, for the happiness, prosperity and welfare of each depends upon the happiness, prosperity and welfare of all.

Besides that, the central theme of the Sufi Message is one simple thing, and yet most difficult, and that is to bring about in the world the realization of the divinity of the human soul, which hitherto has been overlooked, for the reason that the time had not come. The principal thing that the Message has to accomplish in this era is to create the realization of the divine spark in every soul, that every soul according to its progress may begin to realize for itself the spark of divinity within. This is the task that is before us.

Now you may ask, what is the Message? The Message is this: The whole humanity is as one single body, and all nations and communities and races as the different organs, and the happiness and well-being of each of them is the happiness and well-being of the whole body. If there is one organ of the body in pain, the whole body has to sustain a share of the strain of it. That by this Message mankind may begin to think that his welfare and his well-being is not in looking after himself, but it is in looking after others, and when in all, there will be reciprocity, love and goodness towards another, the better time will come.

Now the question is, how are we to set to work? It is a difficult question to answer because we all have our own way of working in the world and one form of work cannot be accepted by all. But it must be remembered that a great sacrifice on the part of the worker is necessary. Without sacrifice a worker will not be able to fulfill his mission. You will have to stand

oppositions from your friends, from your acquaintances. There will be monetary sacrifices to be made if occasion arises. A great deal of time will have to be sacrificed, action besides. Then you will have to sacrifice the desire for appreciation: work, and the reward of the work is the satisfaction that "I have done it." You will be hindered by those who oppose, also by those who sympathize, by the bitterness of some and by the ignorance of some; and it will be easy, if you are sensitive, to take the work up one day and give it up one day. It will need a great deal of courage to go on with it against all sorts of opposition. But besides this, a great amount of prudence is necessary, and in the absence of that, the work cannot be successful, on the other hand it can suffer. Not prudence before strangers, opponents, but even prudence to those near and dear to you, your best friends, even there you will have to use prudence. What is wanted most of the worker in the Cause is prudence. You will have to work quietly, unassumingly, for this task cannot be accomplished and cannot be made known by the noise of drums; for that there are other movements. The less we are known, the better it is; our profit is in not being known. Publicity is not our reward. Our reward is if Providence only allows us to work quietly. If nobody in the world knew of our work, we do not mind. It is His work, His Name be glorified, and in the glory of His Name is our satisfaction. It is for the benefit of humanity, for the well-being of the world. What does it matter if we worked and others became known, if we sowed and other reaped the harvest? It is our work, our mission to sow and to leave the harvest to others to gather.

Therefore, what forbearance you will need with those who will persecute you and the Message, who will say things against you! You will need a great strength of will to tolerate instead of defending. We are not here for fighting, to argue and to defend, we are here quietly to work. If anyone says, "Yes, you are right," say, "Yes, thank you"; if anyone says, "You are wrong," say "Yes, thank you." If anyone says, "You do good," say, "Yes, thank you." If anyone says, "You do ill," say, "Yes, thank you." That is all, no defending. What is the use? Against how many people will you defend? Against one person, against twenty people? If you will be answering those who blame you, when will you be doing your work? It must be done quietly, no one must know that you are doing it, and the satisfaction must be only in the accomplishment of our sacred task.

This I have told you to make things clear and easy for you. If it were a human enterprise, there could have been a doubt whether it will be accomplished or not. It must be accomplished and it will be accomplished. Only those of us who are privileged to serve the Cause may just as well find an easier way, a better way, rather than strike a way of difficulty. Greatness is in humility, wisdom is in modesty, success in sacrifice, truth is in silence. Therefore, the best way of doing the work is to do all we can, do it thoroughly, do it wholeheartedly, and do it quietly.

God bless you.

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

Words of Advice (August 20, 1923)

A few words of advice I want to give to my Cherags. Your work in the world in some ways is more difficult than the work of the other two activities of the Sufi Movement for this reason, that you have to work before the world in the midst of the crowd.

There are certain things, which for psychological reasons you must not unveil, and yet by not doing so, you must not hinder the spreading of the Movement, which must be done at this time, for every moment of the Movement just now is most precious, and its value is on the increase as the time is passing.

Your responsibility is great for this reason, that you are privileged in life to become the foundation stones of the Church of All. The church when it will be built, then many will come and worship with facility, but yours is the work of difficulty. Your friends may disapprove of it, your nearest friends and relations may oppose it, no end of difficult situations you will have to pass through in life, but in spite of it all, your blessing is as great as your troubles.

What is most necessary just now, are the things which now I will tell you.

1st: Strengthen your faith in God, in His Message and in His Servant, who is intended to give His Message to the world. According to the strength of your faith, your power will increase, your words will become effective and your personality will become suitable for the giving of the Message.

2nd: Remember that the Message, which is being given just now, is the real interpretation of all Scriptures, many of which by various versions and translations and for many reasons, have not remained the same, therefore the receiving and the preserving of the Message, which is now being given and the spreading of it, is like giving the Message of All the Prophets and the teaching of all religions.

3rd: This activity of the Church of All is organized to make a facility that the Message may reach to all the people, whatever be their stage of evolution, that the lack of religion which is

felt at the present moment may be supplied and at the same time all the bias of faiths and narrowness of view and prejudice against one another's religion, may be rooted out.

4th: You will remember that your piety, personality and spirituality, will help you and enable you to deliver the Message in your capacity, therefore this you will esteem as the greatest boon in your life, to live such a life, that it may be an example for others to follow.

5th: In your dealings with others, with people of different religions, faiths and beliefs, and with the people of different ideals, you will hold the Sufi ideal, the ideal of tolerance, of overlooking, of forgiving, of having friendly inclinations, you will not lose your poise, your balance, if you are insulted or persecuted, you will maintain your tranquility and will stand firm on your feet and will show in your thoughts, speech and deeds, that Sufi spirit which will win all in the end.

Besides these five things if I have anything more to say, it is for you to have a firm belief in the thought, that it is the Message of God, and that it cannot but spread and nothing in the world will hinder it for spreading and it will be fulfilled as the promise of God.

God bless you.

The Voice That Speaks Is One and the Same

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

The Voice That Speaks Is One and the Same (September 3, 1923)

Why must Buddha be called the Shiva on earth? Why must Christ be called the Moses on earth? There is no reason, Buddha is Buddha and Christ is Christ. It is God Who spoke and Who speaks in each. And there is no reason why one must be anxious to call one person by the name of another person. Beethoven is Beethoven and Wagner is Wagner. All have their peculiarity and yet it is one spirit. The voice which speaks is one and the same and that is the thing we must understand and preach. Those who think that they raise the rank of their teacher by calling him so and so, they do not raise him, they only make him smaller. Why should the teacher himself be not what he is? Wagner is not greater by being called Beethoven; if he is great himself, why must he be called Beethoven?

Remember at the same time one of our ten principles, "there is one Master." Why must that Master be called by this or that name? In whichever name he appears to give the Message to the world, that is his name. He does not need a greater name or the name of another however great. If the moon is crescent call it not full moon, call it moon, but it is certain the crescent will someday become the full moon.

The different names Krishna, or Buddha, or Jesus, or Moses, or such names as we may use in our language, by calling the full moon of July, of August, of October, of January, it is still the moon; we add names to distinguish for our convenience, but names make no difference to the moon.

My Cherags must remember one thing and that is: you are the trustees of the Message, your responsibility is great, and so great, that you cannot realize how great it is. What has worked against Jesus Christ? The noise made by his immature disciples and before that, the noise that was made by soothsayers. In the life of all the prophets and teachers, this one thing has been the cause of their sufferings and the greatest pity is, when the Teacher gives the Message to the world and is taken away in the midst of it before he has fulfilled the Message. No doubt to a great extent the life of the Teacher is in the hands of God; he is supported and protected and his Message and his workers; nevertheless, we are given free will and our discernment of right and wrong ways and methods, and if we fail to accomplish our duties in some way the fault is ours.

The Voice That Speaks Is One and the Same

What is the work of the disciple? The disciple thinks that his teacher is greater than anyone else in the world, better than anyone else, that he is God living on earth, at least, that is what I believed of my Murshid; if I saw God in the form of man, it was my Murshid I saw.

The voice that speaks is one and the same.

But again, there is the other side of the question. Human nature is egoistic, and as soon as you say, "My friend is good," you will hear, "He is bad," too; as soon as you say, "My friend is great" you will hear, "No, he is small," too; as soon as you say, "I love my friend" you will hear, "No, you must love me, I do not like you to love your friend." As soon as you say, "My friend is to me as God," they will say, "No."

If that is human nature, would it be wise to express one's ideal, one's devotion, one's opinion of One's Teacher before others even for the good of the Cause, for in the end it would prove to be for the disadvantage of the Cause. If your friend does not understand then he will not understand; therefore, I would like to impress deeply upon my Cherags that no mention should be made of your ideal, your devotion for your Murshid, but only the Message. That is the one point, the ideal for which we are working and that ideal must be kept before the world and not Murshid. By that you will secure his life and his infant work and the only fortification you can make for the Sufi cause in its utter infancy is by your prudence, your faith and your trust in your Teacher and in the Cause and by your solidarity of purpose and your single-mindedness.

Questions and Answers

Q: What must be said in the church about the Prophet of the time?

A: When you give the high ideal of the movement then the world would accept it. In the heart it need not be divided, but for its security it is better that the Message should be spoken of, not the Messenger.

The Murshid's personality is for you, who have devotion, faith and trust in your Murshid, but you must spread the Message as far and as wide as you can. You cannot make differences between the Message and the Messenger, but music and instrument: the music is heard, the instrument is put on one side.

You are serving the Cause, I am serving the Cause, there is no need of distinguishing, we all give the Message, we all can be the instruments of God.

The Voice That Speaks Is One and the Same

Do not put it onto one person if it is to work for God and humanity. What does it matter who gives the Message? I again say, much more good is done to the Message by not putting before the world any particular personality. The personality has been useful for you in helping you to understand the wisdom of God and to give it to the world.

We cannot fight outwardly. We are working for peace; we must create peace in our hearts and don't let our enthusiasm make trouble. Cover it with humility, gentleness, prudence, spread it as far as possible and know that every man whether worthy or unworthy has to receive it, and if you can give him the Message that is your privilege.

God bless you.

The Church of All or the Temple of Universal Worship

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
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The Church of All or the Temple of Universal Worship (September, 1923)

By what name will it be called? The “Church of All” or the “Temple of Universal Worship.” Either of these two names. From a practical point of view “Universal Worship” is a more acceptable name, but the name “Church of All” has been given by inspiration. Therefore, this name may remain to be used for these sacred ceremonies and ordinations, but for the world outside the word “Universal Worship” is more practicable as you will understand. The word church is not always agreeable to the people, in some countries they are inclined against it, in some countries the word church is difficult to be accepted, and the word “Universal Worship” does not excite people. To us names are a necessity, if not we should have been more satisfied without.

Now about the scriptures. We have scriptures on our altar, more for the principle than for the study. By keeping the scriptures there we set an example of tolerance towards different religions and of our belief that Wisdom comes from all sources. Therefore, from the discussion and arguments over questions, why this scripture and why not another, is of no importance, for it must be known that if the Divine Scriptures had been kept always authentic, there would not have been so much need for another scripture. But for this reason and for another reason and that is to give to the world “the needed Message for the time,” the Message has been sent time after time.

As to the candles we have 7, not 8. The 8th is a burning flame, though in the absence of that burning flame we use a candle for it, and that one candle in the center is the candle of the Spirit of Guidance, to which we attach the name of the Messenger and of all the known and unknown souls, who have come upon the earth to deliver the Message.

The Cherag is the priest to perform duties pertaining to the ceremonies, but it must be understood that we have also a formless service and that in the time of necessity the work of the Cherag is to be performed by any follower of the Message. The Sufi Movement keeps itself free from form and priesthood, it does not discard it, it uses it for the purpose, but it does not bind itself with it. Therefore, we have in our movement a freedom given to our members, to choose the service that takes place with a form, or to come to a service that takes place without form

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and to feel that they are not bound to any priesthood in the Sufi Movement, for there is no such thing excepting to answer the need of life. We never have had a distinction of woman or man for the ordination in the Church of All, and we never shall have it.

Music is allowed at ceremony, at the same time it is not necessary, nothing is binding in our service; the central theme of the Sufi Message is and will be the freedom of the soul towards spiritual liberty.

These things are to be kept in your hearts and not necessary to speak about to everyone.

Questions and Answers

Q: What do you mean by saying that we are bound to nothing in the service?

A: Binding means not that. Suppose a Roman Catholic says the service is such and such and if it is not believed he is an infidel. In the Sufi Movement there is not such a thing, no one needs to come to the service if he does not want it. It is a provision made for those who can be blessed, but nobody is bound to come in order to be a Sufi.

Q: What do you mean by a formless ceremony?

A: A formless ceremony will be sent to all the Cherags in time.

Q: Must Cherags also go to pray to the ill and dying, if they are called?

A: Yes. To refuse anyone is to refuse God.

Q: Also if they are not members?

A: Yes, if they do not belong to us, we belong to them.

Q: Must we not be careful not to marry those who are not married according to the law of the state?

A: Yes, in every country it is most necessary to regard the law of man and first to ask for the certificate of the civil marriage, before performing marriage according to the Sufi rites.

Q: What do you mean by the necessity, which may allow a non-Cherag to do the service?

A: Suppose some Sufis are traveling, among which is no Cherag, and they wish a child to be baptized. Then one of the mureeds can do it and the blessing is the same. By death also, when death takes place and there is no Cherag, a mureed can and must do it.

The Church of All or the Temple of Universal Worship

God Bless you.

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Faith (January 20, 1924)

I should like to speak a few words on the subject of faith. Faith is higher than religion, and prayer is higher than church. For the church is on the earth as religion is on the earth, but their prayer goes to the depth of a man.

And now, what is faith? Faith is something which is not dependent upon religion and that person whose faith is dependent upon religion, his is no faith, his is only religion. But that does not mean that faith has no religion. Faith is a light thrown upon mind, which sooner or later creates the reason to support it. Yet faith is not dependent on religion. A Moslem asked a Brahman, who was worshipping the idol of a god, he said: "How can this god listen to your prayers or realize your worship? This god of stone! I never can bow to such a god. My God is far beyond comprehension." The Brahman said: "If one has faith, even the god of stone loves and will listen to his prayers." The one who lacks, for him even the God in the heart of man is a formless God.

Before the birth of the soul, it is faith which prepares the soul for the birth. The man who says: I cannot believe because I do not see how; is the man who only believes and therefore he will keep his eyes open and his heart closed. If in order to gain faith, he depends upon reason, he will be disappointed, because the reason of today will not be the reason of tomorrow. With every step which evolution takes reason will change, but nothing can change faith, for it stands firm ... The reason is the outcome of the experience on earth, a person's reason will be one day contradicted. When you say: I believe he is good; another may come and say: I can prove he is not good. But when a person says: I believe my friend is good, in all conditions; that is faith.

This Universal Worship which is laid before you here, represents that one Teaching, brought to the earth by different Servers of humanity, who came from time to time, either recognized or not recognized in this world, which is the martyrdom of the loving heart and the living soul. They have been exposed to more endurance; they have been put to a greater test than in the life on earth.

This service represents their teaching, their self-sacrificing service, without trying to compare them or hold the one above the other. These candles represent the names of the Great Servers, who have come to the earth in order to awaken the souls in it. The price they paid for this

servicing of humanity was their life, their comfort, their happiness. All was given to the children of the earth and in this way, they gave people consolation in their deepest needs.

One might ask: Are there only a few servers who have been sent to the earth? The answer is, many more than we know of; think of all the centuries and then of the few names known therein. All we can do is to represent the names of those who came to the earth and show respect for the memory of those ... by this we see that the Master and the Lord are one and the same, that it is one Divine Light, which manifests itself, which takes form, the form of service, when man begins to forget himself. When the burden of whole humanity one bears in one's consciousness, and one's every moment is taken in order to help humanity. A great many have come; many of whom are known, many of whom are not known at all.

The candles represent their lives and names. For in whatever name they served, it is all one Truth and at the back of it all was the Source of all. We therefore try to read their scriptures with perfect, equal tolerance for all. It is this which was a prayer of Moses and the desire of Jesus Christ—that a day should come when communities and creeds and castes should be overbridged and the religion of every soul should be performed in the service of the Universal Worship, as here are all the different aspects of life grouped together in one worship.

The Use of Form in the Universal Worship

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

The Use of Form in the Universal Worship (April 6, 1924)

Beloved Ones of God,

After this service I want to say a few words on the idea of this form of worship. No one with some thought will ever deny that there is one God, one Truth, one Goal, one Source and one longing in the human heart: to arrive to spiritual realization. That is the yearning of every soul, in every race and faith. But why are there so many creeds, castes and religions? One might say, it comes from human nature. Every person has his own way of worshipping, his own ideas, his religion. It is nothing to be surprised at that there is such a variety of churches and beliefs. What can surprise, is that they do not tolerate, that they think their own way the best way, and the other way wrong.

The Sufi Movement therefore in its form of this blessed worship is endeavoring to bring union between the followers of the different religions. So that no one of whatever faith may be able to say: My Great One, my Lord has not an altar, is not mentioned in its prayers. When God is one, wisdom is one. We respect and tolerate and learn just to lay our hearts open to wisdom. Wisdom is not belonging to the East or to the West, it is a Divine heritage, it is for us all. We bow to Wisdom; we try to be the propounders of that Wisdom. Whatever creed, we respect it.

Yes, there are people who say: Why is there any necessity of form? Allow me to say that the soul first was without form before it was manifested in the body. The body has become so near and dear to us that we forget our soul, it has become estranged to this form, so that all that is form only seems real, from all other things we do not know if they exist. About the soul we say: it may be or still more: it does not exist. But what is mind? A moving picture in the brain. We do not touch it and feel that it exists.

Many go to church to worship the church, not God. It is difficult for man to have his ideal in the abstract alone. That is the last stage. What is the use of art and beauty? It is a medium of spiritual realization. If we see beauty of form, we wish to experience abstract wisdom. Matter and spirit are one. Within and without, above and below, everywhere is the glory of God.

The Use of Form in the Universal Worship

Now coming to the question: how must this form of worship be spread through the world? For we have to introduce an ideal. Those who look with eyes of faith, see all the Ones behind us, those who have come from time to time, their ambitions, their prayers. One who worships feels the power around us. Working in the abstract we shall manifest it before the world. It is our happy privilege to work for this great ideal among those who from time to time have come to humanity and are blessed by God.

Religion Consists of Five Things

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
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the Spirit of Guidance*

Religion Consists of Five Things (May 29, 1924)

Beloved Ones of God

The religious side of the Sufi Movement is named: Church of All. Why do we call it "Church of All"? Because it contains all churches. It is likened to the League of Nations - it does not stand for one nation, but for all nations. This is the same ideal which the Church of All holds.

Now coming to the subject of religion. The less spoken of it the better it is. For religion is something which touches the depths of the heart; and every person has a certain conception of religion. And it is that conception which he holds as something sacred. By expressing freely, one can easily hurt that conception which another one is holding as sacred. Nevertheless, the need of the Church of All has been felt in all times. In ancient times it has been the ideal of the Great Prophets to bring the whole humanity in one religion. But as humanity has variety of conception, it has not always been easy. Now I should like to explain what religion consists of. Of five principal things: belief in God, adoration of the spiritual ideal, moral conception, the form of worship and the philosophy of life. When we come to the variety of religions in the world; some believe in one God, some in many Gods. Some are monotheists, some pantheists. In this way the conception of God changes among the civilized people of the world. It is to be thankful that the time does not exist any longer in which every family had its own God.

Now how does the Sufi look at the question about God? Does he believe in one God? If he believes in one God, how can he tolerate the belief in many Gods? The answer is that the point of view of the Sufi is to bring peace among the different believers. He does not differ from them; he sees their point of view. He sees that those who have many Gods also worship God. They worship the different attributes of God. The great Ones, in order to make God intelligible to man, have given Him different names. They make man see clearly the divine manifestations. It is therefore that the wise Ones have given different Gods. As there is a saying: "to understand all is to forgive all." It is according to this saying that the Sufi looks upon life. Even he is willing to tolerate the conception of many Gods, having the realization of one God.

Then arises the question: but is one a pantheist or a monotheist. Yes, many who look at theology from outside say they are two distinct ideas upon God. And they would be willing to take up one idea, not two. But in reality, it is of great necessity that these two opposing ideas should exist. When you look at the center it is one line, when you look at the ends, there are two. Monotheism is as important in life as pantheism. No one can be pantheist if he was not once a monotheist. And if one began to be pantheist, one would never understand one God. One may say: Yes, the idea of pantheism I can understand. God is in every being. Another says: it is too abstract for me. I cannot find God in such an idea. I want to have God before me, exclusive, separate, remote. In reality the monotheistic idea is necessary in order to realize fully the beauty of the pantheistic idea.

Then there is the idea of God being personal. Some say: It is very difficult for me to imagine God as a person. It is like limiting God. Another says: If God is not a person, He no longer exists. He might just as well be air, space, time. Both of these have reasons. The Sufi makes himself ready to look at both from the point of view of those who hold them. And he finds from it that the natural way is that from the personal ideal you can rise to the complete idea, the complete ideal embracing the seen and unseen, within and without, the Absolute. Therefore, the Sufi has no difficulty either with the worshipper of one God or of many Gods because he sees from their point of view. He gives their point of view a place in his life; he sees the natural development of human conception; from the small perception it expands to the highest ideal. But if one asks the Sufi: Yes, you tolerate different conceptions, but what is your conception? Well; he says: there is no such a thing as the Sufi conception; but I have my personal conception. The God who is considered by people as the Judge and Creator, as the Lord of Heaven, to me He is my Beloved. He is my Beloved Ideal who only deserves all my devotion. He is all the Beauty that is to be loved. Therefore, as the relation of Beloved the Sufi establishes his relation with God. His worship of God is his expansion of heart. His love for all beings, for every being is his love for God. He cannot find anyone to love except God because in all he sees God. If it is shown in devotion to parents, to wife, to children, if it is shown to neighbors, to a friend or in tolerating enemies, the Sufi considers this action of his towards God. In this way he fulfils in life the teaching of the Bible: "we live and move and have our being in God."

Now coming to the second ideal of religion: the spiritual ideal in man. If man has ever found God manifest on earth, He is manifest in the Godly. Whenever humanity has touched the height of civilization, they see divine manifestation in a human being, a human being who in his life expressed God the most. Before some that great ideal has appeared and they have called him Jesus Christ. In other parts of the world, in other races, the same manifestation they have called Buddha. At the same period, in a certain race, this manifestation who impressed human

beings with the Divine was called Moses. In another period before certain people the same manifestation they knew as Mohammed. People followed them, loved them, adored them, helped them in their difficulties. Through them a certain manner of living a harmonious life was given to their followers. The world has always had different manifestations whenever it was needed. But it is the limitation of mankind that made them dispute the great personalities they themselves adored. They have tried to question the greatness, the goodness of the Teacher of the other community. In this way humanity has become divided into sections. The Sufi looks at it from a tolerant point of view. He says: to have devotion for a spiritual ideal, for a human personality is an individual outlook. One has to leave it to him. A person who esteems Buddha, let him; who holds Moses in high esteem, let him; one who has devotion for Jesus Christ, let him. The Sufi says: it is too sacred to interfere with the sacred ideal of the Teacher one holds in esteem. In this way he unites with them all. If one asks the Sufi: What is your ideal? Which Ideal do you hold? he says: One Teacher; the only One who has always been there, who claimed to be Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. All those different names which the world holds in high esteem are the name of one personality. Whatever name it is, the Sufi feels exaltation; he sees one Personality behind all those names. In other words, he calls his Divine Ideal with all those names.

Now coming to the third idea: the idea of morals. The followers of one religion dispute with the followers of the other religion for not having the same moral, the same standard of moral. But it is presumption on the part of mankind to judge another by his own standard of moral. It is not just to try to judge another community from their point of view. There is no such action which one can point out as sin or virtue, nor right or wrong. Things become right or wrong according to the place or the right or wrong time. Good and evil are understood by a natural insight of the soul. The soul is beautiful and it looks out for beauty. What is lacking beauty, it is that which may be called evil. What is beautiful, it is that which is called virtue. One may preach all through life: it is not this, it is not that, and one will always find to be mistaken. No doubt, for a certain time a certain rule of life was given. But on that rule of life, it is not right to judge the religions of different people. Therefore, the work of the Sufi is to wake in his heart sensitiveness which will make him able to distinguish right from wrong, good from evil. And with the ever-increasing wakening of this spirit of sensitiveness, the Sufi builds his character. The Sufi is ready to tolerate another, to forgive another. He takes himself to task if he lacks beauty in expression, in thought, in speech or in action.

Now coming to the fourth question: the form of worship. The form of worship of all different religions must be different. But it depends upon what one is accustomed to, what is akin with one's nature. One cannot make a common rule and say: this form is wrong and that form is right. One person will perhaps feel more exaltation in the form of worship if there is some art

in it; it excites his emotional nature. Music, pictures, sculpture, perfumes, colors, light, all these make an effect upon a person. Another person can concentrate better if there is nothing in the room if nothing strikes his attention. It is all a matter of temperament. There is nothing wrong if one prefers the first thing or the next thing. The Sufi sees the variety of forms as different ideals. He does not give importance to the outer expression. If there is a sincere spirit behind it, if a person has a feeling of worship, it does not matter what form of worship it is. In the church, in an open place, everywhere there is an answer to the feeling of worship.

In order to make a facility to people of all different religions, this Universal Worship has been inaugurated which is called the Church of All. It is not a church included among the variety of churches as an additional church. It is a church which gives facility to those belonging to different religions, to worship together. Also, it is a practice of respecting the great Ones who have come from time to time to serve humanity. Those who have taught wisdom in different scriptures are read at the altar of the Church of All. Nevertheless, no Sufi is compelled to even attend this Church of All. A Sufi, to whatever church he goes, is a Sufi. Sufi is a point of view, a certain outlook on life. It is not necessarily a particular church.

And now we come to the fifth idea: the idea of the philosophical side of religion. Through Universal Worship what one gathers is that there is one Source from which all scriptures have come; and that it is by one spirit that all great persons have come. And that in spite of the beliefs of many Gods, there is only one God. And by this we come to the realization we seek through worship, through devotion: that there is only one Truth. If ever anyone reached it or will reach it, it is one and the same Truth. Truth can be traced in all the great scriptures of the world and is taught by all the great Ones, who have come from time to time. Nothing, a community, a church or a belief should keep one back from that realization in which resides the purpose of life. Verily Truth is the seeking of every soul and it is Truth which can save.

God bless you.

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
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the Spirit of Guidance*

The Task Before Us (June 17, 1924)

I wish to say a few words to my workers and friends in the path of Universal Worship. We must realize that here before us there awaits a duty, a task, which is beyond comprehension. The more we try to explain it in words, the less we make of it. But those among us desiring to render their services for the Cause must realize that this aspect of the Sufi Movement, which is called Universal Worship, will one day be the future religion of the world. I do not mean to say that all existing in the world will come and join the Sufi Movement by this. I mean to say that all will partake of the Message directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously in the future. Those among us whose souls without the slightest doubt accept this and believe this, then what remains for them is to make up their minds to do what little they can in furthering the Cause. One must be conscious of its significance before one begins to work; and its significance is the future religion of the world. Yes, just now we feel the great lack of workers, but with the poverty we do not need to be disappointed because we perceive the promise and the demand, which is increasing every day, inwardly incomparably more than what we see outwardly. So far Europe and the United States seem respondent, but now in Asia an awakening is anticipated. We do not need to be discouraged by our small number and scanty means that is at our disposal. If we only knew what is in store for the Message, if we only realize Whose Message it is, if we realize to Whom we offer our services in serving the Cause. He is responsible for it. Whose Message it is; we are only the workers. We must do our best, and leave it to Him, Whose Message it is, to accomplish it. No doubt, when we look at the vast world and our limited means and small number of workers, it is distressing. But instead of allowing our self to be distressed, we ought to become courageous and feel a greater responsibility that we are so few, that our task is so great, that our means is so little. For if we were large in number then perhaps the responsibility would be divided, and the task for each would be easy. But if it is not so, we should be wide awake and feel more responsible, and at the same time feel more privileged and blessed to have to work at this time of need. For there are many friends, but a friend in the need is the great friend.

And how shall we work? With enthusiasm, but enthusiasm as a battery, not as an outward thing. Because enthusiasm used outwardly is lost; it does nothing; it accomplishes nothing. It is just like a leak in the battery; the enthusiasm goes out. It must be preserved and used behind the battery, providing all the power that is necessary. One may say, "Yes, I am enthusiastic, how

shall I use it?" There are thousand ways, if one only were wise. We do not need to work as the missionaries of the different Churches. That is not our mission. Why? Because we are not the missionaries of any particular Church. If we are, we are the missionaries of all Churches, our task is different. We must not be compared with the missionaries of the world. Someone asked me of which Church I was a minister. I said, "Of God." So then we may be taken as priests or clergymen or missionaries. We are not. If we are, we are the missionaries of God. For His Cause, Message, Service, we devote our life and service. Not for a community, or sect, or a limited circle of humanity. And with this spirit when we stand, we shall find many ways open for us to work.

When a person says to me, "I cannot work because people are not respondent," "I cannot do anything because the weather is so bad," or "I cannot accomplish anything because no one listens," or "I cannot do because I cannot work outwardly," or "I cannot do because I am not gifted, because there is opposition from my family, or from those around me, or from those hostile to the Cause, those who live in my house, from my neighbors or associates." These excuses all sum up in one thing, and that is that the person is not yet ready to do the thing. Once the desire is born in the heart, nothing in the world can stand before you as a hindrance. Remember therefore that no excuse of any kind must disappoint you, once your heart has heard the call from within. You must go on in spite of all disturbing and opposing influences, and with faith and trust you will overcome all difficulties and climb the summits.

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the Spirit of Guidance*

Responsibility of the Cherag (June 24, 1924)

I wish my Cherags to remember that they must not be too narrow in working for the Cause nor too broadminded, for in both these things they may spoil the Cause. When a Cherag forces his belief upon those unripened and incapable of appreciating the beauty of it, he will prove himself to be narrow. By wanting to prove their belief to be better than that of another, they expose themselves to all sorts of arguments which will never end, for argument creates argument. If they stand for the Cause so that by their enthusiasm they show any contempt for the belief of another, they will defeat their own cause.

And what I mean by too much broadness is to feel, "I am holding the Services, that is enough, that is all that can be done; if anyone wishes to come a thousand times, let him come; if he does not care to come, I don't mind; all paths are God's paths; let him go to heaven or hell; it does not matter as long as he goes somewhere." This is broadmindedness no doubt, but if a parent were so broadminded with a child, what would be the result? Is not the Cherag the representative of the Divine Message? Had his responsibility not some essence of the parental attitude of the Divine Being? It is natural and it is the best thing anyone can do to wish to share his good with another. It is through this tendency that the workers of religion have accomplished their task. There has never been any other reason for it.

The Message is like the rainwater: every year it falls, the water is preserved. The rain which fell ten years ago may still be there, it is nothing but water. Yet the water of this year has its own significance, its own purpose. The past does not supply the need of the present, nor does the present supply the need of the future. The need of every time is to be fulfilled at that time. Therefore, the workers of the Message need not feel that because there is the water kept in the reservoir for twenty years, we do not need the rain just now. Their work is to engage themselves in the present supply and to use it for the best advantage of the farms.

Without doubt, arguments on different points must be avoided, even if you are in the right and the other person in the wrong. One must know that every person who argues has at the back of his argument the ego "Nafs." The psychology of the "Nafs" is that it does not like to be contradicted, even if the person knows he is in the wrong; because he said so, it was his

argument and he will stand by it. You will, by disputing, make him more firm in his point of view which otherwise he would have given up in time.

Therefore, in short, I wish to say that you must take every person as he is, without antagonizing him in any way. You will accept his argument, first by looking from his point of view, and secondly you will be able to bring him closer to your point of view.

If the Cherag is qualified in taking the Service correctly, that is not enough. He must be able to inspire those who come in touch with the Message and deepen in their hearts that belief which is the main object of the whole Message.

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

Attitude in Life (July 29, 1924)

I wish to speak to my Cherags on the subject of the attitude they must have in life. Will they live in the world like a religious priest, like a clergyman, or like a person living a worldly life? The answer is: They will live like everybody else, an unpretentious life, without any apparent show of a religious position; no outward form which could show anyone that, "This person is different from me." To do one's everyday duty at home or outside the home, whatever be one's profession or business and then to perform the functions of Cheragship as one's contribution to humanity, as one's service to the Cause. For spirituality is an inner ideal, the less shown the better it is, and you can come closer to a person by being like him rather than by appearing more religious than that person is.

The psychology of human nature, especially today, is such that if a man is not closely connected with religion, his first tendency is to be antagonistic towards any sign of religion or spirituality; as soon as he sees it he says, "I have run away from my own church, and now some other priest wants to get hold of me." He shakes like a turtle and wishes to hide himself in the hard shell he has built round himself as a defense that will not allow him to be touched. You may have the best intention to serve him, but it will be depreciated, and you will be discouraged. Human psychology is such that there is something in every soul that hardens as soon as the soul thinks that there is a battle. There is a soldier part in every soul, it may be guarding something to its own disadvantage, but nevertheless it fights. As soon as friendly conversation takes place then there is established a way between two hearts. If you appear to him like everyone else, as an ordinary person, he will come closer to you and listen to you with greater response, because he will know that you are in the same boat as he, subject to all problems and difficulties; and once he opens his heart to you, you have a ground before you to sow some seeds of wisdom in which is the fulfillment of your life's mission.

I was traveling one day and met an Italian on the boat. He was a modern student, quite opposed to the church, and he knew nothing but matter. He looked at me in my robe with the certainty that I was a priest, and yet he had some curiosity about me, which gave him an inclination to speak a word to me. His first question was, "Are you a priest?" And he was much consoled when I said, "No." "Then what are you?" I said, "I am a human being." But he said, "You are dressed like a priest." I said, "This is the dress of my country; you will find many

priests and others dressed like this.” This broke the monotony and we became friends. Then he asked, “What are you, what is your work?” I said, “My work is anything I like to do.” Then he still thought, “He certainly is a priest.” Maybe in order to test me he said, “I do not believe in God.” I said, “But you believe in something.” “Yes,” he said, “I believe in eternal matter.” I said, “My belief is not far from yours.” He was surprised; he expected me to be cross, to defend my God Ideal. He said, “I mean what I say.” I said, “What you call eternal matter, I call spirit. Matter cannot be eternal; you call it eternal, but it is the same aspect that I call ‘spirit.’” He was touched but not ready to accept. We talked on many different points of materialism that might create in me revolt, but I went along with him in his material discourse, till I brought him to a point when he would have thrown away any book on religion, but was very pleased to read my book through all the voyage to America. He did nothing but read, and the outcome was that he said, “May I have the honor to make you my guest when you come to Milan? I am sure my people will be very glad to welcome you.” Many subjects arose on which we could have disputed all the way, but that would not have brought a fruitful result. Our way is not the way of the rock which breaks everything that falls upon it; our way is the way of the water that surrounds the rock. If the mountain does not open its heart, the water surrounds it and takes it into its own heart.

Arguments and disputes have no end. No two persons can think alike, the evolution of two beings is never equal. Even if they think alike on four points, on one point they differ. The success of our religious work is in unpretentious working, to keep our knowledge in humble guise, and to make use of it in establishing friendship. There is only one way of teaching spiritual things and that is the way of sympathy. Build a bridge of sympathy with every person you come in contact with, then a channel is established through which your ships may pass, loaded with the treasures of spiritual ideas.

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A Temple (July 15, 1924)

Our greatest need today is the building of a temple, however small, but something which will be a miniature form to be copied in the different countries. Therefore, to make a miniature temple will not be such a difficulty if only we will all agree upon one idea. One might say that in the past, when the Message of God was given, they gave it standing in the shade of the trees, on the banks of the rivers, and on the tops of the mountains. Yes, it was so for that time but you would not have listened to a Sufi Message if your Murshid talked about it at the street corners. That time has passed; it was in a hall that you heard your Murshid lecture, and the lecture was advertised and made known according to modern custom. When the soul, the dweller of the heavens, has to adorn itself with a physical body, it is natural that even the Message of God must be given under proper conditions. You would not be proud of your Murshid if he went and spoke in Hyde Park in London, with hundreds of people joking about it. No, that would hurt your feelings. You, yourself, would like your Murshid to stand in a frame which you consider worthy of the dignity of the divine Message. Besides, for everything a convenience is necessary; even for God it was necessary to make the world in which to manifest Himself — the roof, the sky; the floor, the earth. Even God, Himself, could not have accomplished His purpose without having made this material manifestation through which to accomplish it. For us to hold weekly services, to have everyday devotional meetings, to have our silences together, we badly need a hall, a place not only representative of the Sufi Message, but that it should be the Sufi atmosphere of love, harmony, and beauty. We do not stand for ugliness, we put in a foremost place art, music, harmony, and beauty, and for us something which, even though small, but expressive of our ideal, for us such a place is necessary.

And now the question comes, “Why is it not coming?” When we think of the words a Sufi says, “When two hearts unite, they move mountains,” and when we are so many, united in one thought, what is hindering? If anything hinders, it is ourselves, nothing else. It is for us to unite in heart and soul, in the common cause, and accomplish this little thing in which, even if it is against your own wishes, you would certainly like to please your own Murshid. I see no one among my Mureeds who does not desire to please his Murshid.

Also, this will make a material beginning, after which will follow buildings in different countries, perhaps twenty or even a hundred times larger. For America will not be contented

with one floor; they will want twenty floors and they will have it. In England, large cities like London will not be contented with a small cottage; they will have grand buildings. It will all come, but must we not make a beginning, a small beginning, just to make it easy for us to meet together, to meditate together, to have silences together. In order to unite our forces, what is first needed is to unite in this thought: that a certain thing must be done. All must agree on this first step to be taken before thinking how it must be done, for when the question how it must be done comes first, then all the Mureeds have different ideas, their minds clash and it all drops. The question "How?" comes afterwards. Now we must all agree that it must be done; the rest will follow in its natural course.

Symbol of the Crescent Moon

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master,
the Spirit of Guidance*

Symbol of the Crescent Moon (July 22, 1924)

There comes the question: what is the explanation of the Message from the metaphysical point of view? A Cherag will be asked to explain it, for an intellectual mind is not satisfied with belief only; he wants to know the reason, the process. And the answer is that the wisdom of the whole creation, from the beginning of creation until now, attained by all living beings, is gathered up in One Mind. It is that mind which is the Divine mind, it is that mind which is the Spirit of Guidance. It is that mind which knows all, and that mind, as a sun, shines out, whose light is reflected in the planets and stars, and yet it functions as the moon. It is therefore that the crescent has been made the sign of the Message because the symbol it pictures is the respondent attitude of the moon to the sun, and the gradual development of the crescent, which perfects its work in the form of the full moon. That God's Message is received through a human being is not surprising, for it is in the moon that the sun functions its light, and so there is the explanation of the Divine Message.

Our Pioneering Faith in the Cause

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

Our Pioneering Faith in the Cause (August 5, 1924)

Our position in the world and our work gives us a greater responsibility than the priest or the clergyman has, for this reason that the priest and the clergyman have something already built for them for their protection. They are already in a mechanism which has been built for a long time, and they have the benefit of it; and we have to stand in the position of the clergyman and priest to those who come to us and at the same time we have to expose ourselves to doubts, antagonism, criticism, and all manner of difficulties that a worker has to face. The priest and clergyman of all countries have a community to support them, have followers to stand by them; we have to go without either the first thing or the other.

Then what is there that gives us the strength to stand all opposition and difficulty and the lacks which we find in our work? Only one thing, and that is our faith in the cause. That is the only one strength we have and it is by this strength that we stand against all things that hinder our work. It is this strength therefore that must be developed. If there were not this element in my Cherags they would not have been ordained; the ordination is given in understanding that they have that faith, their ordination shows Murshid's trust in them. Nevertheless, this faith must be kept uncovered, undisturbed and so it must be strengthened. From what must it be kept undisturbed? From doubts, for doubts are the clouds which come from outside and cover the light within, making one wonder: am I on the right or on the wrong path? One thinks that by that one proves oneself more intelligent, but it is on the contrary. Intelligence is not linked with doubts, intelligence is linked with the inner light: intuition. If the bottom of your heart has given you faith and strength then the outside influences must not disturb the peace of your mind, making it restless and producing ever rising "why and which", for this only disturbs the peace of mind. However intelligent a doubting person may seem, you will find in the end that the person is lacking in intelligence, and not only lacking intelligence but lacking power, because power and wisdom both come from self-conquest. Our reward in the work is our sacrifice.

Questions and Answers

Q. Only few meet or contact the Teacher; others follow the light they know. But do they really lose by not knowing the Teacher?

A. Every soul has his own privileges in life and if he questions, why did I deserve them and why have others not got them, he will go on asking and listening to the answers, and if even a thousand answers were given, the question would not be answered. The best way is to be thankful for our privileges and to hope that all we think good and valuable may be given to all.

Q. Must souls to be saved, only come through the one door?

A. Every soul is a door and the One Triumphal Arch is God Himself where all must meet, and when the door of the Self is opened then the person is safe. The safety of all souls is under one arch and that arch is God. Knowledge of God, knowledge of the truth which is the savior. All our work is to lead our fellows to that realization which alone will save.

Q. Why are we the few so privileged?

A. Always the few, the privileged, reach the many. In the history of the world the sacrifice of the few adds to the benefit of the multitude. Our work is pioneer work, our troubles have no end. Nevertheless, we must not compare the privileges with the troubles; privilege is always a privilege. The greatest privilege is that we are allowed to become human beings, that we are allowed to be under the sun; to feel there is something to reach to, and that life has allowed us to work in the field of service.

I would like to add a few words about the work. We must make a balance between two most important things in order to make our attitude right in working the religious order of the Universal Worship. To be accurate in conducting the form, the formal side of the Universal Worship, in arranging the altar, in standing facing the altar and facing the people, in doing every movement and in uttering every word, on one side.

On the other side, to rise above the restrictions of form. If not, we shall be like the priest who disputed for six months over one particular ceremony, one saying it should be done this way, the other saying no, the other way. If we make ourselves so material as to cling to the form in such a way that we differ, dispute and discuss over it, we shall not always be able to perform our spiritual duties with the right attitude. For it is the spiritual feeling which is the main thing, not the form, and yet knowing this form side, not neglecting it. It must be done carefully, skillfully, artistically, keeping to the uniformity which has been prescribed for us.

Faithful Cherags and Co-workers

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

Faithful Cherags and Co-workers (August 19, 1924)

(given at an ordination of Cherags)

Faithful Cherags and co-workers,

The real is tested, and the real in the end proves to be real. For real can endure tests. Be it in friends, relations or in service, the service which unites us in God, in Truth, in spiritual ideal, and in serving humanity. When we see the difficult conditions of the work in business, in politics, in industry, in other aspects, no doubt the truth plays its role in all works of life. But it does not show its need so much as in the work which we do. Truthfulness in this work is the true expression of devotion, and faithfulness is the guarantee of success to be achieved in service. No doubt, when we look at the ideal and the work, it seems that we have to carry mountains. But outward things give strength, hope, and courage, sincerity, devotion and faithfulness to the Cause.

And it is in this great ideal that I hold you near to my heart, and pray for your success, wherever you go. Be sure that your Murshid is with you in all your difficulties and strife, and that he values your work and appreciates it.

Ordination in the Church of All

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master,
the Spirit of Guidance*

Ordination in the Church of All (August 26, 1924)

My blessed Cherags,

It is my wish that you should awaken every day and every moment of your life more and more to the spirit of the Message. You will appreciate the privilege that all the workers for the Message have in being workers at the foundation of the Cause. In spite of the infancy of the Message, in spite of the difficulties we have to meet, in spite of the smallness of our numbers, you will feel the Spirit behind the Message, you will feel the Power which is leading the Cause, the great blessing which awaits us. You are not asked to teach any particular dogma, nor is it expected of you to judge humanity. You are only the channels through which the Message of God will be given to humanity; and your work is like the work of the musician, who before he plays upon a new piano sees that it is in tune. With everyone who comes to you, with the multitude before whom you will give the Message, you will try and feel the pulse of your audience, and then you will trust in the Spirit of God, and the inspiration within you, in the Message, for guidance to answer the demands of your audience. You will choose your words, you will weigh and measure them, before allowing them to come out from your lips. You will feel your responsibility and yet not be crushed by it. You will be aware of your difficulties and yet not afraid of them. You will be conscientious in all you say and do, and yet you will not be worried. You will feel your way with open eyes, and yet you will be confident in the divine guidance which you have.

I am with you always; distance will make no difference. It is this knowledge which will connect us, and in this faith the work which will be done will meet with success. For success is truth, and truth is success.

We are very glad to receive some more friends in the ordination of Cherags today.

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master,
the Spirit of Guidance*

The Universal Religion (June 14, 1925)

My blessed Cherags,

What position shall we take towards other religions? We shall remove the wall that the word 'other' creates. For as there is no religion that is the other religion, it is by our own example that we shall show for us there is no other religion. Every religion is our religion, and in this way ours is the religion.

Every service where four persons unite to offer prayer to the God of All is sacred, and the form matters little. It is the one religion that is the only religion, the universal religion, which is the spirit of all religion; and we who profess the Universal Worship, if we have any barrier against any form of religion, we will not be able to accomplish our sacred work. We must be free from the sense of differences. But then the question comes: If the people who follow a certain religion look upon us as outcasts, what, then, shall we do? But that is the most honored position. If we can then still hold the feeling of brotherhood, that is the last test; we have won the battle; we have arrived at the true stage of brotherhood. Remember that though outwardly people will show differences, and we shall have difficulties, in reality our position is more sure than that of those who divide men into sects. The reason is: the idea of one religion of all people is the innermost ideal of every soul, and sooner or later every soul will awaken to it. So as difficult as our task is, it is in reality easy. There are many who will not sympathize, and yet in their innermost being their real sense of justice will never deny it, and it is our confidence in it that will give us power to overcome all difficulties.

God bless you.

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Confession (June 21, 1925)

My blessed Cherags,

What I wish today to say is, that we have not in our Universal Worship a custom of what they call “confession.” But I should like to explain two sides of this custom. One side is that if a priest made a person confess against his will, by force of the religious authority, and if he abused in some way or other the authority by influencing the person for any worldly benefit, no doubt in that case it is wrong. But the right side is shown in what is coming out in the medical or, perhaps, philosophical world as psychoanalysis. This shows how from one thing man goes to another. Man says this thing is wrong; and yet in another form he thinks it is right.

We are not going to make a custom of confession in the Universal Worship. At the same time, my Cherags must know their duty in giving sympathy and advice to the members of the congregation. Their work is not finished after conducting the service and giving the sermon; their duty remains to those who follow the services. They need not urge that they should come to confession, but they should show the warmth of sympathy, the desire of service, to help not as a priest but as a Cherag — if they are in any difficulty which their own mentality is not able to solve. This is to be done most tactfully without pretense of confession; it must be done most humbly and with the greatest modesty; if you say, by the authority of the Cherag, they must come and tell you their difficulties, this is not right, but if as a Cherag, you see it is your duty to befriend them, especially in their time of need, you will do good work for the Cause. They need not always be members of the Sufi Movement; they may attend the Services, and you may see they have problems and difficulties — if in no pretentious way you went and talked to them and gained their confidence, they may, of their own accord, tell you of their difficulties. But remember not to let curiosity work in this direction. Do not do it because you are inquisitive, but because you see there is need of counsel that could bring a solution to the problem. Then, by your warmth, sympathy and kindness, work as a key to the lock of the heart and the heart will open, and you will bring them the solution. But as Cherags you are trustees of the Message, and trustees of those who consult you, and you should consider this as your most sacred trust, and you will guard the confidence as your sacred trust; it will not go out. You will treasure their sorrows and difficulties in your heart; if they tell a hundred persons, no

matter – you will not tell — you will always prove worthy of their confidence and will answer their need in the Service of God.

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Perseverance of the Cherags (June 28, 1925)

My blessed Cherags,

As our work is pioneer work, you need a courage of a thousand priests, each one of you. Imagine the position you are placed in—everyone looks at it from his own point of view before you can interpret it to him. And if he is not ready to understand, he may come and listen to all you say, and he will go out by the same door he entered. I tell you this now, because after you have experienced the difficulty, it is more difficult for you—it is best that you should know before than after—and if you still remain full of confidence to face these difficulties, no doubt the blessing of God and Murshid's prayers will be with you. You must have a strong will to stand against a thousand opposing forces. You are doing the very thing which is the seeking of every thoughtful soul—even if every thoughtful soul will not admit it— and if they are not accustomed to it, they will never look upon it as something which was the desire of all the great ones—that the religious ideals of the whole world should become one. They wished it just as well and as much as we do, only those times were different, sectarianism was the principal thing limiting religion in those times. Now things are better; thanks to the material power, they are less sectarian. Owing to science, people think differently, but still, everyone comes with his preconceived ideas and looks on us as a new religion. We cannot help it, but for us to be aware of it beforehand is a great help. We can defend ourselves better. We shall try our best not to let our Universal Worship appear as a sect. We shall try also, each one of us, not to antagonize the authorities and followers of other religions; for as our faith is to respect all religions, we shall do so more and more, only we must be so firm in our conviction that no opposition could shake us. It could only strengthen us. We are few, but that is not why we should be disappointed. A new plant has few leaves to begin with but it promises that it will grow and bring forth many leaves and branches, it is only a matter of patience. It is our conviction and single pointedness that will help us and lift us up above all difficulties, as the two wings of the heart.

Questions and Answers

Q: Please show proof that our ritual does not represent one sect but all sects, not one scripture but all scriptures.

A: Our idea is to bring together all forms of religion in one form. This proves we are not a sect. We have grouped ourselves together as the followers of different religions have always done; but in reality, we are the followers of Wisdom. People have always given names such as: New Thought, Eastern Wisdom, Western Wisdom, some have called their ideas Advanced Thought. Any name limits, though the name is given that it is not a sect, it becomes a sect. By our works and teaching we must PROVE we are not a sect.

You must respect the freedom of the human mind. You must not have the spirit as if they were customers. You must not say, "If you go to OUR shop, you must not go to another shop." Those who wish to come, we are very glad to welcome and if they wish to go and have found something better, we are just as pleased. Real friends never part, and those who part have never been real friends. Friendship is not a small thing. If friendship cannot endure, then nothing in the world can. Our Sufi Message is a friendship, grouped together in the seal of God and Truth. If a person does not feel at home with us, he has not been a friend in reality. When souls come together in the Light of God, such a friendship lasts forever.

I remember my Murshid said, "There are many forms of friendship. But the friendship formed in the search of Truth, in the Love of God, is greater than any other in the world. This endures. This lasts."

I think my Cherags show me the greatest friendship. They are as soldiers of the Message, facing opposition and trouble. Their work is to come out before the quarreling world, before mockers. For them to stand firmly it cannot be done but for sincere friendship. When your friend stands firmly by you through trouble, it is a sign of friendship.

Pioneer work means trouble and difficulties. Established things are easy, they go on mechanically. But here it is different. Only a sincere friend can stand the difficulties.

It is NOT the purpose of the Universal Worship that people should leave their own church. The purpose is that they should unite together to worship the God-of-All. That need not stop them from going to their own worship.

From our part, we do not ask them to attend their own church if they find in the Universal Worship a benefit and blessing. We do not tell them to go to their own

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church, we are not missionaries or any particular church. But let them go to their own if they wish. We are glad if they come to us as well.

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the Spirit of Guidance*

Prayers (July 5, 1925)

I wish to speak to my Cherags on the subject of the prayers used in the Service. There is a prayer for every period of human evolution. The prayers which have been given in the past among Hindus, the people of Beni Israel, in the Christian Church, among the people of Islam, have been given at that particular period for which they were meant as the key to health, inspiration and happiness. The prayers used in the Universal Worship: Saum, Salat, and Khatum, have an inner significance besides their outer meaning. These prayers are not only praise to God or thanksgiving, but they are to draw us nearer, closer to the Divine Being; this is the mission of the Sufi Message today. Therefore, it is most essential to keep the words of these prayers exact, that you may give it to future generations in an authentic form, uncorrupted. In this you will be doing great service to God and to humanity. There should be no attempt made to add something to them or to take something from them in order to create beauty. For if every person makes a choice in that prayer, at the end of the year it will be quite a different prayer. These prayers are too sacred to touch, for they are not coming from a human brain; they are poured out by the tongue of God; and it is in this understanding that one will benefit fully by the prayers of the Universal Worship.

These prayers increase inspiration and power as many times one repeats them. The more one repeats them, so the more one is blessed, so the greater becomes one's psychic power, and they awaken inspiration. If there is any deep desire that one has, by the repetition of these prayers that desire will be fulfilled. But the greatest blessing is that they help one to come closer and closer to God, Who is the seeking of every soul.

You will find people who are not accustomed to the different names mentioned in Salat become sensitive and nervous about repeating them; you must take it all silently and tolerantly, for you must see that it is natural. What one is not accustomed to is foreign to him, if it be lump of sugar, a person will call it poison. By forcing it upon people incapable of understanding the beauty of this, you will reduce the beauty and sacredness of the prayer. The best thing is to say no more once you hear a person mention an unwillingness to repeat the prayer. However great be the prayer, if a person is not willing to say it and repeats it by force, it will do him no good. The most nourishing food, unwillingly eaten, one cannot digest and one will not benefit by it. But you can see the beauty of Salat as the beauty of the rose with so many

petals — one flower and so many petals. Every name you repeat in Salat is a petal which makes the flower. Salat makes the embodiment of the illuminated souls; it is the embodiment which may be called Christ, in other terms, Rasul, in other terms, Boddhisatva.

And the third prayer, Khatum, is an answer to the need of today, which is to bring the divided sections of humanity together in the realization of Truth, which is the principal aim of the Sufi Message.

There Is No Danger to a Divine Cause

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

There Is No Danger to a Divine Cause (July 12, 1925)

My Cherags,

I have often heard some conscientious workers ask, "What if the Sufi Movement formed into a sect? There awaits this danger for it." It sounded to me like asking, "What if the rain caused mud and the lakes were flooded; the rain must be prevented from coming down!" They did not understand that the danger was much smaller than the benefit. In spite of all the sects formed in order to preserve the Message at different times, do you think that the Message was limited only to that particular sect? Do you mean to say that Christ's Message did not reach the Buddhists? Or that Buddha's Message made no effect in the West? The sect only became an excuse in order to hold it; even the degeneration of the sect did not deprive humanity of the Message that was preserved by it. The sect served for a certain purpose. The soul would have thought, "Would it not make me mortal if I am imprisoned in the body?" Yes, it does make the soul mortal, and yet it is through this mortal body that the soul realizes fully its immortality. If by fearing that we shall become a sect, we ceased our activity; it means that we are frightened of something which is of little importance; and we have shirked our sacred duty. We certainly are doing everything in our power not to form ourselves into a community. We read week after week, to ourselves and to those who come to us, the objects of the Sufi Message, which show that it is rising above divisions and differences which is the main object of the Sufi Message. We constantly repeat this idea in our meetings and in our publications. The central theme of the whole Message is this. If we are too sensitive, by this sensitiveness we only paralyze our activities at a time when action is most necessary. We can never have enough Services; in cities like Paris, London, and New York, if there were twenty places for Services, even that number would be too small.

There are some among us who are sensitive about propaganda. They say, "We don't believe in propaganda." Yes, they don't believe in the propaganda which they know as propaganda, but if a thing which exists is not made known, if it is not brought before the world, how will the world know about it? They say that when the mountain did not come to Mohammed, Mohammed went to the mountain. There are many mountains in this world, if they will not come to us, we must go to them. If a work is not done in order to awaken interest in the

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Divine Cause, if people are not called, they go on sleeping and waiting. By this I do not mean to say that there should be beating of drums to call them; we do not need to use such methods as those adopted, for instance, by the Salvation Army; we should refrain from such a kind of propaganda.

Then there are some who say, "What about these poor uncultured minds, what do you do for them?" My answer is, "What about these poor cultured minds?" Do you think that cultured minds need no help?" It is these cultured minds which when once kindled, will draw and raise the uncultured minds, and then the conflict between cultured and uncultured will cease to exist. Therefore, one's first work is to waken the cultured world to the Message; the next work is to bring the uncultured closer to the cultured, that is the next step. We should stand without legs if we had no cultured minds to present the Message to the world. The Message of God must be presented through a fine culture.

Another question is, "Why must there be an exoteric side different from the Esoteric School?" This may be answered that there is body and mind, both are necessary. Some will say, "Is the Esoteric School not sufficient? Why must there be exoteric Movement?" The truth is that a philosophical school does not suffice the purpose of every soul; the soul needs not only the philosophic explanation of life for its joy and peace; the soul needs devotion, idealism and beauty. The soul has a yearning to humble itself before its Lord; the soul awaits in exaltation. And therefore the religious exoteric Movement is of great importance. If the esoteric schools have kept something of the past, it is only the essence of the past that they have kept. But if the Message has been kept by any group of people, it is in the exoteric religions which have kept a Message for thousands of years. Zarathustra lived before Christ, and the Message he gave, though not all the Message, some of it has been kept intact until now, kept for the benefit of the world. The exoteric side is the lake, the esoteric, the water that it contains. If there were no lake to keep the water, the water would come out like a flood and be absorbed by the earth.

There are some who expect oppositions from different sects, but they must know that if we have faith in a certain ideal, nothing must frighten us; for what is danger after all? Life is a small thing to sacrifice for the ideal that one really considers sacred, something which one really keeps near to one's heart. Mohammed taught that death in the sacred Cause is holy and it is holy. If one does not consider life cheap before one's ideal, then one does not know what the ideal means. Once we have undertaken to work for God and humanity, the fear of life must not trouble us; and if we are not afraid of life, then we are not afraid of danger for the Cause. The Cause which is divine can never be touched by danger. If it is subject to danger, then it cannot be divine; danger may touch its outside, but not its spirit. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we must antagonize sects. We have no reason to, for our principle is to place on our

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altar the symbols of all different beliefs. We read all the Holy Scriptures of humanity, and we consider it our sacred service to pay homage to all the great Teachers of humanity. If in our own conscience we know that we are not doing anything against any sect, is it not enough? It is good to please everybody, but it is impossible. The best thing, therefore, is always to try so to act in life that we do not displease anyone.

God bless you.

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Neutrality and Tact (July 19, 1925)

My blessed Cherags,

I wish to bring one particular problem before you. As you are doing the work of the Universal Worship, there will come times when you are faced with the cynicism of the unbeliever, of the orthodox, of the materialist. Of the one who hates religion and the one who mocks at religion. You will be faced with another trouble — someone who prefers virtues and principles to religion, who believes in good living rather than good showing, who believes in silent work and is in opposition to all forms. Your position is very delicate; for if you oppose him, you will only weaken your position; if you condemn him as someone on the wrong way, you only weaken your position; and the best thing at such times is to see and appreciate his point of view, and understand that he is meant to be there, just now at least. Never even say that someday he will come, for you will antagonize him and take away the possibility of his coming, for the reason that you have told him. Man is wise and man is foolish, but beyond all man is proud. You must very carefully study human susceptibilities and always try to work extremely gently. Never try to interest a person before the time for him to be interested. Never try to force upon him the universal idea if he has not been prepared for it by life. The more neutral you are in your actions, so much more powerful. The more freedom you give, the more respect to his thought and feelings, the more he will be drawn to you, and you will open in him the capacity to receive sooner or later, most responsively, the Message.

You can never be too tactful, but you can be too indifferent. Sometimes you may say, “Well, if that is the case, let them come or not, what does it matter?” That is too much indifference. But to be tactful, and spread the Message at the same time, that is most necessary. All priests and all clergy, all those who work in the religious field are faced with the same difficulties, and many of them are ignorant of this psychological point of view. Instead of attracting, they repulse — for the reason that, instead of being neutral, they oppose their opposers. The best way of spreading the Message is one’s sincere belief in the Message. That will work as magic and will spread the Message more than anything else could. Let everybody respond to the extent he is ready to respond and do not expect more of him. This attitude itself will create a new life in the feeling of the person attracted to you and to the Message, and will bring him sooner or later to understand and to appreciate the beauty of it.

God bless you.

Questions and Answers

Q: What answer should one give to the person who says that good living is better than forms of worship?

A: First, readily accept the idea, and then say, “Yes, but good living with form is better than only good living.” But if a person says, “I do my business honestly, I consider my obligations to my fellowmen. I do my duty at home. But I do not attend church,” then say, “Yes, that is true religion. But if in addition to that, there were communication with God, it would be still better.” There are many examples of strange mentality, who say, “I want to believe in God, but I can’t.” The best way is to deal very gently with them. One must show them one’s sympathy — nothing attracts a person more than sympathy. What the world needs is sympathy, and that is our special work.

Q: What answer shall we give to those who say they don’t want new forms?

A: It is like a person saying, “I don’t want new clothes. I want my old ones.” We must leave them their freedom, but if they say, “Why do you have a new form?” Then you can say, “It is not a new form, but a grouping of many different forms into one form. The worship of the Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist — collected together, and formed into the Universal Worship. So it is not a new form, but all forms.

Q: The question is sometimes asked, “What does your church offer? Only worship? Or does it give some definite way to salvation?”

A: The Universal Worship in the first place offers a wide point of view, and a larger altar for worship. But what is the meaning of worship? It means the opening of the doors, to bring one into communication with one’s God, and what does one want more? The symbology of everything is as you look at it, when you look at it with sacredness, then it is sacred. It is according to your point of view. The benefit of the Universal Worship is according to the point of view of the person — how he looks at it. Furthermore, if a person were never initiated into the Esoteric School, if he only followed the Universal Worship with an open heart, I am certain he could attain to a higher and greater bliss without going through definite studies, because if one sincerely seeks God, even only in the Universal Worship, one certainly arrives. The Esoteric School is for a certain temperament, which wants intellectual knowledge; but to arrive at the final goal, a soul is elevated — he goes through initiation, even though he may not know it. The real meaning of initiation is ‘unfoldment.’ And every unfoldment in the

life of a person is an initiation. The outer initiation in the Esoteric School is as necessary as the inner one, because an outer initiation makes things clear and definite — while the inner initiation is vague and has a different character. Both go hand in hand.

It is not necessary to become a mureed before belonging to the Universal Worship. The first step is to become a member of the Universal Worship; and then, if among them there are some who are not satisfied, they can take initiation — that is another way. It is true that nothing initiates better than Life, but it is like someone saying that because nature cures, he does not think it is necessary to go to the doctor. But if he goes to the doctor, it does not mean that he may not be cured by nature also.

Really speaking, there are two forms of sacrament — and inner and an outer form. The inner sacrament is the real sacrament. And the outer sacrament is the sacrament of form. That sacrament is in the Universal Worship and will be given when the time is ripe. But the main sacrament, of which the outer is the symbol, is the Message itself. So what is not said in words, comes as bread and wine.

Q: Is there a special gift in ordination?

A: When a florist gives you a flower, it is different than the flower that your friend brings you, for he brings you something from his heart. Feeling, thought, imagination, all come with the flower your friend brings you. So when ordination is given, it means something behind it — Light and Life. It is a sacrament given to you in person, and when it is not given to you in that way, it is not the same. There is no difference in the flower you buy at the florist and the flower your friend gives you. The difference is in what you cannot see.

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Faith in Ordination (July 26, 1925)

My blessed Cherags,

I would like to say a few words on the problems and difficulties and difficult situations that you may be faced with. When you can reach Murshid in a difficult situation, then the solution can be given; and when you cannot reach Murshid, you can take the solution from Murshid's teachings; and when you have no teachings for that problem, then you may draw from your own heart the solution. In time you may so develop that your heart will always answer how to meet a difficult problem. One thing must always be remembered, and that is our trust in God. No matter what problem, by our trust in God, the problem can be solved.

There is a story of the Prophet. The Prophet and his companion, Sadik, were hiding behind a rock when a troop of riders were following to attack them, and when the noise of the hooves of horses came to their ears, Sadik said, "Hark, they are coming!" "Why fear?" said the Prophet. "They are very near!" "What matter?" said the Prophet. Sadik said, "They are many and we are only two." "No," said the Prophet, "we are three — you and I and God." God must never be kept apart, that is our strength. In difficulties and troubles, no matter how dreadful, keep God before you and you will in the end get over the trouble.

Then I wish to tell you that the very fact that Murshid gives you ordinations as Cherags, means that you are blessed to give a sermon, and if you are not able to do it, it means that you do not yet believe what is meant by ordination. The more you believe in the secret of ordination, the more you will be conscious of the power and inspiration already sown in your heart by ordination. The power of belief is so great that when it culminates, it become Faith.

Shankaracharya, the great teacher of the Hindus, was once addressing a very large conference of religions in Calcutta. He inquired, "Is every one of my pupils in this meeting?" "Yes," they said, "except one who is busy washing dishes and preparing the teacher's dinner." He said, "He must come — all must be before me. I am surprised that you left him behind." Shankaracharya gave a conference which made the whole audience spellbound. Then he asked if there were any questions, and he looked at his pupils, many among them were doctors and professors, and men of great qualifications. Instead of answering them, he pointed out the man who was not

present at the teachings given by the Guru to the others, but was always dusting, making beds, washing dishes. He got up without hesitating for one single moment, without thinking, “I am always washing dishes, cooking food. I did not even sit in the presence of the teacher.” He simply got up among those learned men and answered their questions, and he did it with such a satisfaction that all present marveled at it. What was it? The power of faith, the power of trust. His faith in his teacher gave him trust in himself — nothing made him refuse — never. Did he think, “I have no practice. I have no teaching. I am not accustomed?” The very fact that the Guru said, “You will do it,” was enough for him. It gave him power and inspiration, everything that was needed. It seems a phenomenon, but if a phenomenon cannot be performed in the spiritual path, where can it be performed? Where does it exist, if not there?

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

Sermons (August 2, 1925)

My blessed Cherags,

This evening I should like to speak to you on the subject of the sermons you will give.

In the Universal Worship you will have to be most careful what sermons you give, for it is possible to take a one-sided view when it is necessary that you should present all points of view to the world. Besides that, it is necessary to discriminate between esoteric teaching and the sermon of the Universal Worship. A sermon must not be an esoteric teaching; a sermon is a step towards esoteric teaching. In the sermon of the Universal Worship, you prepare the minds of those who attend by giving them a thirst for the inner way, the spiritual ideal. You will not make your sermon too philosophical or too psychological; the idea of the sermon is to give the moral conception of life, how to live life harmoniously and how to progress through the continual struggle of life.

Once a Cherag asked me, "When sermons on moral conceptions are given by the clergy and authorities of the different churches, why do we add to it?" The answer is that my mureeds who have become Cherags are the channels of the Message, and the moral conceptions which the Message has to give to humanity must be expressed through these channels distinctly. But, sermon apart, the presence of the Cherag must create an atmosphere, must give something more living since, by ordination, that Cherag is connected with a living battery. You must not think for one moment of comparing your work in the Universal Worship with the work of others. By this, I do not mean that you will consider yourself superior to others. That must never be. But you must be conscious of the living power of the Message when giving sermons, and that consciousness will give life to your sermons and will charge the atmosphere of the services you take with a new magnetism.

Questions and Answers

Q: What is the best and most suitable length for a sermon?

A: I think one hour is the proper time for the whole service. And if you give fifteen to twenty minutes to the sermon, that would be good.

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The Pleasure of God (August 9, 1925)

My blessed Cherags,

What will be your sword is your faith, and what will be your shield is your wisdom, and the torch in your hand the Message of God, and what will be your seeking is the pleasure of God. The pleasure of God is sought by deep insight into oneself as to a discrimination between pleasure and displeasure of God, a sympathy for one's spiritual guide, with a sincere devotion to the Cause and trust in God for a right guidance. In order to know this more fully, one must know the law of friendship. The more your sense is awakened to friendship, the more you are sensitive to your friend's pleasure and displeasure. If the friend spoke to you plainly, or in sarcasm, in both cases you would know well, if you are real friends, what he means. In the same manner when you are seeking the pleasure of God, a sense is wakened — the sense that tells you what pleases the Lord, and what not. No doubt it is difficult for a mortal being to understand the pleasure or displeasure of God. But the first step is to understand the pleasure and displeasure of mankind not in the realm of words, but in the realm of sense. Besides, the greater the being, the less he speaks. The finer a person, the less he gives explanation in words. The one who wakens to that sense is likened to the Arab horse — he does not need to hear a sound, he knows the thought — when to be slow and when quick. It is to that fineness a man should rise in order to know the pleasure and displeasure of God.

The mission of the Universal Worship is to elevate mankind, raising him from man to person and that sense must be developed. Is the work of God the first thing? No, the knowing of His pleasure and displeasure is the first thing. Is sympathy the first thing? No, the understanding of the pleasure and displeasure of your friend is the first thing. And it is that that gives sympathy; it is understanding which deepens sympathy. The head power is not enough to give the Message to humanity. The heart power is needed — the heart first, the head comes after. If the head is first and the heart follows, then the heart will become weak, the head will get the upper hand. It is the development of the heart quality that will enable us to work in a field of wisdom and to bring to those who come in contact with us the Message we are destined to bring.

Questions and Answers

Q: Please explain what you mean by the pleasure and displeasure of God?

A: The idea that God is the Only Being and exists as All, is the end, not the beginning. It develops at the end of life, not at the beginning. But the pleasure and displeasure of God is felt when once we have made God within us. The making of God is the same as the making of friends — when you make a real friend the friend is within you, and then you can very well imagine the pleasure and displeasure of your friend. The dutiful son, the loving daughter, the kind mother, etc., all these have not only got their relations before them, but also within them. They understand how the child, friend, beloved, feels. They understand not because they are outside, but because they have the duplicate within; and when we communicate with that duplicate, we understand very easily. So when we make God within as perfect, as great, as large, as beautiful as possible, that is the only way of communicating with God. We cannot communicate with the Only Being — it is too far. It is through the God within that the Only Being speaks to you. That is the symbolical meaning of idolatry. In the inward idol, we make a God of our own within, and see him expand more and more.

Q: Why has not a Cherag to help a person to die?

A: The work of a Cherag is to help a person to live. Life is eternal, so the Cherag must help a person to realize that he is eternal. But that help is always given by the Cherag, so there is no need to hurry his death in order to tell him that he is immortal. What I said was, do not hasten the death of a dying person. A person on his deathbed always hopes, even to his last breath — and then the Cherag goes and frightens him, first with his robe, and then by saying, “You are passing,” and this impresses him a little more. He then says, “Think of the Only Being.” It is like telling a child, “The doctor is coming and he has prepared for you a bitter pill.” So anything that is done and said before the dying person that suggests to him that he is on the point of dying, personally, I do not like — but this is a personal point of view, it is not official. I do not want to make the dying person feel he is dying, but you many say if there is something he should do, something he should arrange before his death, what then? I should say that the doctor performs that mission very well.

Q: Is it desirable to make life on earth as long as possible?

A: I think that the best way of looking at it is with the idea of resignation. In the Eastern language, death is called Qadr (meaning Almighty Power, nothing can stand before it). It is like the bubble standing before the sea saying, “I do not wish to be a bubble. I wish to be the sea.” So to be resigned to Qadr is the most desirable thing.

Q: If a person calls a priest, and, as in the Catholic Church, receives the sacraments, or the clergy comes and give consolation, is not that good?

A: I don't know how often consolation is successful in this way — with how many among ten persons is there any success? Personally, I would feel very sensitive of giving him the suggestion of death. This may be my personal point of view, but I think that even the slightest suggestion given to a dying person by us might sometimes frighten. In the name of religion, people often do cruel things.

Q: In cases of sorrow, can the Cherag help people who are dying?

A: The process of dying is so serious that the dying person is beyond the reach of the living person, so it is better to leave them to their own higher thoughts — what they are feeling at the moment. I do not mean that we might not do good once in a thousand times; but if some person, much more evolved than ourselves, is dying, and we spoke to them from our plane, it is a great pity. Some people just before death are lifted up to the higher planes, and when we, absorbed in our earthly life go and tell them something which is beneath those planes, it is a great pity. To respect the dying and pray for them is the best thing.

Q: But if we are called to a dying person who is afraid of death?

A: In that case it is all right, but we must be careful of every word that is not hard, not tactless, not unsympathetic.

Q: Does the impression of fear before death remain with a person as fear?

A: Yes, of course, so it is best when the person passes away unconsciously.

Q: Sometimes a person is on the higher planes at the time of death, so should oxygen be given to call them back?

A: It is not right to tamper with dying people too much.

Q: Why is it inadvisable to commit suicide?

A: It is a weakness. The strength is to face everything that comes, no matter what it is. Perhaps through that pain and suffering there is something that develops the character. Besides, life has much in it that could make one live, if one could see and appreciate it, and the one who does not look at life like this, and only sees one thing and is absorbed in that one thing and says all is useless, it is narrowness of view.

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
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The Need for More Cherags (August 16, 1925)

My blessed Cherags,

Today I wish to bring before you our great necessity in order to do the work of the devotional side of the Sufi Message properly. We need an indefinitely larger number of Cherags, and the lack of this, psychologically, causes a very great delay in the spreading of the Message. It is my great wish that every Siraj will consider it a part of his work, and the most important part to prepare at least twenty candidates for Cheragship in his country. If he can prepare more, it will be still better. And every Cherag will consider it a part of his work to interest ten candidates from the members of the Order who could work as Cherags. Since several Cherags perform the Service, it is not necessary that a new Cherag must be someone who could do the work alone, as long as you think that in three years' time, by working with other Cherags, he would be ready to work alone if necessary. If it could be possible that in one city there could be many services, the Siraj must consider it, and naturally then there would be need of more Cherags. In large cities such as Paris, London, New York, one service is not sufficient. There ought to be twenty services going on, and even that is not enough. Of course, this arrangement must be made by the Siraj of the country. It is not necessary to change the day of the Services. It is preferable to keep the Services on Sunday, if for no other reason that that the people who come are accustomed to attend Services on Sundays. On other days they do not feel in a devotional mood, because they have set apart one day in the week. On other days they have other programs, and it hinders their programs, and seems to them strange to attend Services which are held on any other day—which for many is a day of amusement.

Care must be taken that the Service is not held in an inadequate place, such as a place of business where customers come and go, or a place of show with pictures and statues all around, or any place that takes away the dignity and sacredness of the Universal Worship! It would not be a bad idea that Cherags should be invited by other Cherags to go and help them in different towns, so that they could exchange their work. It would produce good feeling as well as creating variety in the way the Message should be given. It would also be desirable if there were some Cherags to spare, whose work it would be to go to different places and take the Universal Worship in different villages and towns, interesting people in the Universal Worship, performing the Service at first once a month, then twice a month, then four times, adding at

the same time to the number of Cherags more and more from those interested in the work in that place. After working in a town for a year, there should be one or two persons in the audience sufficiently interested and willing to carry out the work.

Words are too poor to tell you how greatly we need a large number of Cherags, and many blessed souls are waiting for the opportunity in all countries. Will you then not give them that opportunity for which they are waiting? There are souls born with an inclination to work for the Message — they are not conscious of it, but they are born for it and waiting for the time when you will bring the news to their ears! Those who are not for us, even if they are Cherags, they must leave us. They do not belong to us. But those who are born for the Message are only happy when they are allowed to work for it. They will feel themselves blessed when ordained as Cherags and in working for the Cause they will fulfill their life's purpose.

Questions and Answers

Q: Do you prefer three Cherags in one service, or that each one should give a service in a different place at the same time?

A: To begin with, it is better, that three should give the service in one place and create interest. As soon as you begin to hear people say that, "We are attracted, but we live too far away. Can we not have a service in our district?" If ten people would like to attend it at that place, two Cherags could stay here and one go there. There is no restriction of numbers. Three is a good number, but this does not mean that two, or one cannot take the Service.

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The Time Has Now Come (August 23, 1925)

The time has now come when the Universal Worship need not be limited to Mureeds, but that it may be performed before a larger audience. Every effort, therefore, must be made by you to bring the Universal Worship before a larger section of humanity. Wherever you perform the Service, you will do your best to arrange it so.

There was a time when it was considered necessary to keep the Universal Worship only for Mureeds, members and friends. That time has passed. The time has now come to perform the Universal Worship more publicly. Some might think that there are places in the world where the Church has a strong influence, where the opposition to the Universal Worship would be very great. But you must know that there is no place in East or West where we shall not find difficulties. We shall meet them always, and everywhere, in some places a little more, in others a little less. Anything that seems to be new, however old it may be in essence, people naturally oppose it. But so long as we do not wish a conflict, so long as we stand on neutral ground and do our work, we can leave others to think anything they like. We must be thankful that these times are not so bad as in the past, such as we read in history when there was a chance of fighting and bloodshed. But those times have gone. No doubt now we have to struggle with materialism, but in that time it was a struggle against savagery. But now it is complete materialism and unbelief that we have to struggle against. If people are opposed to the outer form, they will not be opposed once they understand the motive behind it all. Cherags must make every effort to make their motive understood by those who come to the Service.

In the beginning, we shall find among a hundred persons that perhaps ninety-five at the first moment oppose us. But upon hearing our explanation and understanding the motive behind, you will find ninety-five in favor and only five oppose. This idea will appeal to every thoughtful soul if we make the effort to make the idea clear. If we are only busy with the form of the Worship, and if we think, "Now, we have performed our duty, every candle lighted on the altar naturally representing a great Teacher," they will not see the universal side of our service, for very often man will not give any trouble to his brain; very few people will take the trouble to understand. They come to see what it is like, and with the outside impression only they are not satisfied. Therefore, our work in the sermon is to explain the meaning and to see

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them individually to explain the idea behind the form. Then we shall interest them and form a congregation that will stand for the Universal Worship.

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Embodiment of the Message (August 30, 1925)

My blessed Cherags,

It must be known that you make the embodiment for the Message, the Message which is to live. It will be preserved by the Cherags; therefore, your work for the Sufi Movement is of the greatest importance. Many, perhaps, will come to the Sufi Movement and will attain spiritual realization, but your work is not only to attain spiritual realization, it is to make sacrifices, to face difficulties, to stand firm in faith, in all different situations defending the Cause. It is the pioneer work of the Message that is now being given. Upon you rests the Temple of the Sufi Message. The more conscious you are of your responsibility and the importance of your service to the Cause, the more the Cause will be strengthened and the more we can spread the Cause.

Do not take your work lightly, for this is the most important work. It will keep the Message, it will hold the Message. The Sufi Movement is not a school of esotericism only, where people come and study, and mediate and go. Neither is it like the activity of Brotherhood. There are many other activities of Brotherhood. The Sufi Message begins the new era, and the new form of devotion constituted of all different forms. It is therefore called the Universal Worship. The work of the Sufi Message is to answer today's need of humanity, especially in the devotional line. Therefore, the hearts of the Cherags of the Sufi Message are vessels in which the Message is to be kept, and in giving the Message we are giving the sacrament, which is to be given today. The more you realize this, the more you will be blessed with inspiration and power to fulfill your work. But remember, I never can ignore the fact of what my Cherags have to face in their work for the Cause. But through this test my Cherags will prove to be my friends to the end, to stand with me in my struggle, and to enable us to give the Message of God. Do not let your hearts be discouraged to think what a great work we have before us and how small a number we are. Nothing in the world is grown at once. An infant, who represents the image of God in man, even takes time to grow. And a Movement intended for humanity, a Message to be given to all people for centuries to come, it cannot be as great as we imagine it to be in one day. What will strengthen us most is that we stand close together in sympathy. We are in the same boat, in storm or clear sea. Only this realization will give us power to pull through all our difficulties.

Often I am asked, “Yes, all these things are true, but how much money we need!” Or someone else, “How thoroughly we must be organized in order to reach success!” Imagine that day, after I left my country. Was there any money? Was there any means? Was there any organization? I had not one single penny. What I had as my treasure was faith and trust in the Cause, and in God. God was my treasure — and it is His Purpose, His Cause. And His Cause can stand independently of earthly treasure. Because it is the Cause of God, it will be fulfilled, without earthly treasure. We must have faith and trust in God. Yes, means are needed, but not for us to worry about. If means come we will spend; if not, we will not be discouraged. And what is organization? Have we not seen great nations well organized in one moment fall to pieces? What is organization? Nothing, if we do not see the organization of God working behind! Remember the saying: man proposes but God disposes. Why worry? It is His Message. Organization is for our convenience of working, because we have to work in this time of world evolution. But if organization pulls us back from advancing, it if limits us, we do not want it. Our sympathy, our love for one another, our devotion to the Cause, our faith in God — with this organization we will work hand in hand.

Cherags must not think that when the services have been given in one city, in one town, that that is all. They must try to further the interest of the Universal Worship, to bring it to the notice of larger numbers of people, and to perform it in places where it has not been held before. All this is most necessary to be done. There are two points of view. One point of view in which one sees that it is not without risk to bring before the public something they are not accustomed to — however right it is — people are not prepared for it. No doubt, this is reasonable, but if it is carried too far it loses its reason; many are too careful and so accomplish nothing. Then there is another point of view: when a person is firm in faith and convinced of the Truth of the Message, and considers life a very small thing to risk in its service. If ever God’s Message, in any age, has been spread, it has been by such workers. When the Truth illuminated their hearts, it gave them such strength that they would stand before millions and defend the Cause.

The pioneer work of the Universal Worship requires a very great courage, and that courage comes from devotion. When the human heart is awakened to the truth of a thing, there is nothing we will not sacrifice. No doubt, you must use all wisdom in finding the best method of introducing the Universal Worship, but we must remember that the form is only a vehicle through which the Message manifests. Moses, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, all desired that the Universal Worship should be performed. It was their desire, and if it were possible, it would have been done at those times. It was not their desire to divide humanity into sections. Since it is the Message of God, it is always one and the same, whether the world goes backwards or

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forwards, for it is the Message of the same One. Those who are used to serve the Message are greatly privileged, and nothing should be too great for them in the service of the Message.

God bless you.

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A New Form (September 6, 1925)

Is the Sufi Message a new religion? Very often this question is asked, and in answer, I will say that it is the same old wine put into new bottles. But now I will give you an example: the example of Buddhism and Brahminism and its work in India. Originally, the religion of the Hindus was Brahminism, and, if I may explain what Brahminism is, the word comes from Brahma, the Creator. Brahminism means to recognize the Creator in all His forms. Then there came the time when a more logical idea was necessary for the Hindus. They were devoted, they were meditative, but the logical idea was necessary. Then comes Buddha, and Buddhism became prevalent and it remained in India for thousands of years. Then comes a wave of Brahminism again, a sweeping wave that took away Buddhism, and established Brahminism again. This came in the time of Shankaracharya.

One might ask why was the Brahminism that existed originally not sufficient for them? When we read the Vedantas and study them, we find that it is good for all ages, even for ten thousand years to come. It is as good as it has ever been. It was not lack of philosophy. It was the personal touch that Buddha had to give, a logical idea removing the magic and superstition which had increased. It was necessary that a wave should come and clear these ideas away, giving them the same Brahminism anew. It was the same essence of the Vedanta that Buddha gave to the people. If it was only a philosophy that was needed, they could have learned it, but it was the personal touch of the Teacher that gave strength to maintain the teaching for thousands of years. It was the living touch, which is the real sacrament. After a period of Buddhism, and when people corrupted Buddha's ideas, and Buddhism became worn out, there came again Shankaracharya's Message, and what did it bring to the people of India? It only swept away the correction that existed, in other words, the Message was the same. When he came, he only swept away the misunderstanding of Buddha's Message, and brought to it again the idea that was necessary — the idea of belief in God. The Message that the Sufi Movement has to accomplish in the world is not in the form of a new religion, it is not a new religion, it is a new form. The necessity of a new form is so great that even nature in the springtime gives a new form to every plant, and science says in seven years the skin changes. The Message is the revival of the same one religion. It might seem just now strange that the idea is put into the Universal form to which people are not accustomed. They know religion only as one form, not as many. But this is the fulfillment of the prayer of Moses, the aspiration of Jesus Christ, the

desire of Mohammed, the dream of Abraham. They all desired that one day there would come a time when humanity would no longer be divided into different sections.

The mission of the Sufi Message is that, instead of giving a new form of worship, it collects all forms in one, so that no one may say, "My form is left out." It gives examples so that the followers of all religions may worship at the same time. It also brings all teachers known and unknown to the world as different beads in the same rosary. Imagine this idea spreading and penetrating through those separated because of differences of faith! Is there any human being who does not wish that there should be one Truth and one idea of God understood by all? This is not a new religion to upset the thoughtful, to give a shock to minds who are tranquil, to hearts that feel deeply. This is the Message that will agree with their deepest longing, and it is with this hope that we have the necessity of the Message of today.

When the Cherag takes services, the power will pour out and spread, and the blessing given by the Cherag will be the blessing of all the Teachers of humanity. The Cherags must be conscious of this great power. The power is limited when all are not acknowledged; it is at its fullness when the devotion for all Teachers is given in the form of blessing. The more the Cherags recognize the sacredness of this power, the more they will realize its effects. What is living, however small, promises to grow. Whatever is dead, however large it may seem to be, will not spread, will not grow. It is with this confidence in our hearts that we must work, not looking at the small numbers, but knowing that it is the promised Message, that it will spread in all parts of the world one day, and that it is our great privilege to begin it.

If you observe life clearly with open eyes, it will not be difficult for you to feel the power of the Message. All opposition, sooner or later, must drop away, with all that we may have to suffer; and in spite of all opposition, the Message is living and will make its way through all difficulties, and this belief established firmly in our hearts will enable us all to fulfill our life's mission.

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

Keeping the Form (September 13, 1925)

There is a problem which you will very often be faced with. It is a problem of people's likes and dislikes, and their thousand different fancies and numerous opinions about the Universal Worship. Some will say, "I do not mind Saum, but I can't quite understand Salat. Will you perhaps, for my convenience, reduce one or two, or all names of the teachers?" You must know that this comes out of that person's prejudice, hidden in the heart, of which they are not conscious. The natural tendency of the Sufi is to harmonize and agree with everyone, but when you go to harmonize and agree with them, it means you give them more and more encouragement to dislike more things, till the service is changed to something quite different. Suppose parents always agree with their children's fancies — where will it end? Therefore, your responsibility is in keeping firm to the form of the Universal Worship and at the same time being lenient and harmonious to those who do not quite understand and who want to turn it to their own way; in that way you will not lose them and you will not lose the Universal Worship. If not, there is always a possibility of losing them by antagonizing them against it, by explaining something they are not capable of understanding.

In special cases, where it is not a matter of prejudice, but of faith, for instance, in China, where they would like to have the names of Confucius and Lao-Tzu added, there is the Anjuman of the Universal Worship — which means the special committee — which will decide for that particular country. In this case, there is no prejudice on the part of the Chinese, but the desire to add the names of their own personalities. The sacredness of Saum and Salat must be preserved. By reducing or by adding words, much of its originality, inspiration, and power is lost; and once a person wishes to improvise, there is no end to it. The question comes, how far to be lenient to the strange fancies of our friends in connection with the Universal Worship? The answer is that we must try slowly and gradually to change their minds and in time it will be changed, if we have patience. But as soon as we agree with them, we are put to a great loss; we can no longer stand on our own feet. In spite of the great effort the Sufi is supposed to make to agree with everyone, he must hold to the form which will keep together for years to come. And if we allow the form to break, if we allow ourselves to be divided, that will never do, for it entirely takes away the idea of the Universal Worship.

The East has always preserved the original language of every Message. It is now long ago since the coming of Buddha, that Zarathustra gave his Gathas, and today the Parsee who has not studied the language still keeps the sacred words in the original language he used, though the language is a dead language and they have long forgotten it. And so with the Chinese; what

comes from Confucius, they keep it in that language. Every Muslim child is taught religion in Arabic. The words of Brahma, the words of Krishna, they have now in Sanskrit, and though the Sanskrit language is dead — no one speaks it — they still have religious things spoken in Sanskrit, and so the effect is retained.

People ask why Plato and Socrates are not mentioned in Salat. Salat says, “Names known and unknown” — that includes all names; there is a place for all in it. But when the Message first reached the people of Europe and then goes to China. Besides, Lao-Tzu and Confucius were like Plato and Socrates. They were the wisest people of their time, but the Prophetic Message is rather different; it does not come regularly in that line, but to console so many million people, there is no harm if two names are added. It is, in that special case, just as well.

Every land has had at one time its great Messenger. No land has been without, but it is not known. Many souls have served the world as Prophets of God, their names are not known. But in Salat we think of the unity of all great teachers of all religions, if their names are known or not, but we only mention those communities which are still existing — the names of their great teachers are represented. The Message is for the whole world, but it is a matter of time where it goes, and we must take it. We must have patience. Until the Message is taken to all parts of the world, the Message is not fulfilled.

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The Hindu Point of View (June 20, 1926)

I would like to speak on the subject of the Indian point of view. As you all know, the Hindu religion is the most ancient of all religions known to the world. Also you know that the people of India have followed tradition as their sacred religion. Being traditional they have still kept their point of view which was before ten thousand years.

The point of view of the Hindu about God is that every person has his own conception of God, and, therefore, every person is free to choose his own God. The idea of many gods and goddesses has come from the same belief. Each one left the other alone who worshipped his own God. No doubt they were persecuted for this fault of theirs and they were criticized and some of them were convinced that it was not so. But, at the same time, that is the Hindu point of view about God. It is, therefore, that all the Hindus of different creeds had the same religion with different Gods, because each left the other alone with his God.

And now coming to the point of view of the Hindus about the Prophet. They considered the Prophet, each one has taken from the men of history his Prophet, and the other one has not imposed his belief of a Prophet upon the other. Therefore, there are some who are called Vishnu bhaktis, there are others who are called Shiva bhaktis, they are the devotees of Shiva, and there are others who are called Krishna bhaktis, they are the devotees of Krishna, and there are others who are called Rama bhaktis, they are the devotees of Rama. But do you think that the followers of Rama consider the followers of Krishna heathens or pagans? They think, "His Prophet is Krishna, my Prophet is Rama." The followers of Shiva think, "His Prophet is Rama, my Prophet is Shiva." By that he does not consider, "The Prophet of the other bhakti is any less than mine." He never thinks about it. Krishna bhakti never think that a Shiva bhakti was less because he is the Prophet of another. He only thinks of the beautiful life of Krishna, he has before him Krishna's ideal, and he leaves the follower of Shiva alone with his idea, he has respect for each one's ideal, he does not look at it with prejudice, with criticism, he simply leaves him to his own ideal having respect for his ideal in the same way. These devotees of different Prophets never look down upon the other as the followers of some Prophet who is less, who is smaller than the other, and at the same time, whoever is their Prophet, they raise him so high that nothing could be greater, that nothing else, no other Prophet is greater. Yet they do not look at another one with contempt and with the thought that he is lesser.

And now coming to the worship. They have different ways of worship, and they leave every person to have his own way of worship, and yet they call all different forms of worship a worship; they have the same feeling for it, for another person's worship they have the same regard. There is never a dispute about the different forms of worship among Hindus. There are forms of worship where the Hindu has put Krishna's statue in a little cradle, and the women are swinging that cradle, and the men are standing there in all reverence. One might think the race of Hindus, so old, so thoughtful, so philosophical, such meditative people, with ancient sciences with them, are they on that level standing before the doll Krishna who is swinging in the cradle, men and women both in reverence and worship? And if you saw their faces beaming with light, in sincere devotion. There is no thought that we are playing it; there is an earnest devotion. The women are singing lullabies to Krishna, with simple stories of Rama, which have been told before them for thousands of years. They content themselves; one might think, with all their wisdom and philosophy and deep understanding of life and insight into psychology, how can they stand childlike things like this. At the same time, it is only tolerance for mankind and respect for man's conception. Out of their tolerance and respect they adhere to any form accepted by a community, and benefit by that form, using it to the right purpose. The swinging Krishna for them is a re-creation, a beautiful picture. But in the heart of those evolved, the real Krishna is there. They are enjoying the religious songs, and worship even more than the simple ones, who are attending the worship of Krishna. It is wonderful to see the great tolerance the Hindu worshipper has for a general conception of religion. Besides that, for a Hindu it is not only worship, a certain form of worship is the only prayer for him. So he performs prayers from morning till evening.

When in the morning he goes to bathe in the river, in the running water he offers prayer to the water, prayer to the sun, prayer to God. Then he has his breathing exercises, Pranayama, in that it is prayer. And when he comes home and has his dinner, then that dinner is a prayer for him also. He wears special clothes for dinner, because it is prayerful to partake of the food God has created for man. He does not eat because in order to satisfy his hunger, or because it is a necessity, he eats because he is worshipping in eating and when there are little parties of five or six, ten or twenty Brahmins eating dinner, then each one recites a sacred chant. And that is their entertainment. That is religion again. When a person is alone eating, then he is in religion; and when he is eating together with others, then also there is religion. Then he goes to his business, and before going to his business, the first thing he will do is to go to the temple and greet and take the blessing of God and think of the Prophet, and then he goes to his work. When he goes to his work with that thought, all day long he has that thought in his mind. After the work, when he is back home, then his first thought is to go to the temple and worship God. When at home he comes, then after (with the) dinner he has a worship. So that shows

that he lives in worshipful attitude. All day long his thought is worship of God. Everything he does is a worship. Businessman, scientist, thinker, philosopher, mystic, all have their own way. And yet he is so tolerant that his way may be the best way and the highest way of worship, and he looks at a simple man who has a different way of worship and regards it so delicately and thoughtfully, that he never shows in thought, speech or word, that the other is a simple way of worship. Because he is deep, he sees in everything a depth. He never thinks that it is simple.

And now coming to the idea of the Hindus on meditation. No doubt meditation is the highest religion, and anyone who has through religion reached a point when he should meditate, he meditates, but at the same time he keeps the external form just the same. He never thinks, "I am too much evolved to observe the ordinary forms." It is that simplicity which helps him to evolve and reach the highest realization.

Questions and Answers

Q: Do you wish your Cherags to know about other religions? In London we have classes of comparative religion, and it was suggested that it was possibly not your wish that Sufism should be confused with any other religion. I said that I understood that you wish us to understand the other religion, and not confuse it with the Sufi Movement rather deep in philosophy, because it would confuse those who had not grasped the teachings of the Sufi Movement. Have the Cherags and Cheragas to understand the other religions today as we have the six candles?

A: Further I would like to say on this point that our mission in the world is to bring about the understanding of one religion to the followers of other religions. Therefore, it is necessary for us to become acquainted with the different religions. But, at the same time, we should not become acquainted with the different religions in the same way as a student of theology would be in the university. The other day I happened to see a professor in Switzerland, a professor who has been studying at the university specially theology. And he came to see me and said, he would like to know very much the difference between the Hindu and Buddhist idea and where do you differ from this. I said, "Our work is to find out where we unite, not where we differ. Because that which divides is not true, and that which unites is ultimate truth. When we are seeking for Truth, we should not be looking for things that divide, but for things which unite us." He said, "We have a different point of view at the university. We are told not to study these religions with interest, but we must be neutral in studying these religions." I said, "If you are neutral to your friend, to your neighbor, you will never understand him all your life. You may live together for years, you will never understand. As long as you are neutral there is a wall between you and the other person. It is only sympathy that will

make you understand your friend. And it is by sympathy that you will understand the religion of the other. Therefore, very often it proves to be futile to study religion with neutral point of view.” For us, especially for Cherags, workers of Universal Worship, it is most necessary to acquaint ourselves with the different religions, with the good points of religion, and those points we must bring before the world. Because they are serving the Message which is meant to interpret all different religions in the realm of divine wisdom.

God bless you.

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United
with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master,
the Spirit of Guidance*

Our Attitude (June 27, 1926)

My blessed Cherags,

I would like to speak on our attitude towards those who bring the question of inequality of religions. We shall find among hundred persons seventy-five who have the thought that: "No doubt, every religion has some wisdom, but my particular religion is the best". You need not find this idea of inequality between the followers of Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Zoroastrian or Hebrew religion, but even in Christian religion alone the different churches have the same idea.

The other day I met a priest who said: I believe in all religions, I think there is truth in everything, but the faith we have is the best, there is no doubt about it. I have never had a thought of intolerance towards anything, but mine is the best. Now our service in the world is to bring no religion forward to say that: this is the religion and anything else is less or nothing. Our work is to bring out the religion which is all religions. And therefore, as little we discuss and dispute with people the better it is. Besides, in one moment we cannot make a person think that his religion is the same as the other, and to dispute with him is useless. Only to tell him that: your religion which you consider the best, it is in order to take you deeper in the same that our service is being rendered. And when he touches the depth, naturally, instead of touching the drop he will touch the sea. Naturally he will understand the underlying truth of all religions. It is very difficult to say in words to what extent we must come forward and to what extent we must keep backwards. No doubt it is true that since we are new as a Movement and we are exposed to the wide world divided into different groups and large groups, and we stand in a very small number, it always needs a great consideration how to come before the world. But at the same time, we must continually try to come forward to bring our idea before the world and try constantly to do so without creating a prejudice. The work of a Cherag is of a much greater responsibility than that of a clergyman, or a priest, because their responsibility rests in the high authorities, the church organization. The priest or clergyman works with a support at the back of him. The whole church stands as a support behind him. But each Cherag has his own responsibility in discriminating what he says and how he does the work of the Message. He must therefore in the first place have the greatest faith and confidence in what he believes. It is with the faith in the Message that he will go forward. but if he has no faith or

if it is wobbling, then he goes so far and cannot go further. And it is faith that will give him the strength and conviction to stand against all attacks.

And now one asks: faith, in what way? First of all, faith in the mission that we have to perform in the world, faith in its divine origin and faith that we are protected from above. It is this faith. But if we only think that: it is a beautiful idea, that many religions are to come together. Intellectually a person thinks “it is a beautiful idea; if it one day can be, and I am working to do what I can”; that is weak. Then one day he will become tired and he will feel weak before the attack, he will not be able to defend the cause, not be able to endure what the pioneers had to endure in all ages. Every Cherag in the Movement is a pioneer of the work. And therefore, he cannot be compared with a clergyman or a priest. His responsibility is greater, his duty is greater. He is doing this work in the world for the first time; he needs much greater courage and strength. And this can come by faith.

Since last year from a mystical point of view there has begun the age of the spreading of the Universal Worship. And although there is Brotherhood, and there is Esoteric School, there is a special injunction to accomplish: to spread the work of the Universal Worship. And we must each feel our duty to give every attention to this main and most important aspect of the Message.

And now one might ask: what must we do? In the first place there is a very great need of a larger number of Cherags, and we each must try to prepare and interest those suited for the work of Cheragship. Secondly to prepare the minds of people for the Universal Worship, by holding informal services. For instance, if in a city like New York or London or Paris or Berlin or other very large cities a Universal Worship takes place in one house where ten or twelve or fifteen or thirty people come, that does not touch a large city very much. But if the mureeds who are of long standing, and who are more interested, if they were told that at a different time, for instance, if a service takes place in the morning, they must have a service in the afternoon in the houses, an informal service. They need not be Cherags. They must draw their friends before whom they must have a service; so that in every city in four, five or more places a service is taking place at another time. That will not prevent those who will come to the Universal Worship. It will only interest them. Therefore, the main church will always develop. And one need not think that because some of the mureeds will have in their houses informal groups, they will be quite content with the service they have, and will not come (to the main service of the Universal Worship.) Suppose in one place they are quite content, it does not matter. It is spreading the cause just the same. But in many other places the Universal Worship will become popular, people will come there.

The other idea is that Universal Worship must be advertised in the column of the notices of the church services in the papers. If you do not give a service the form the people are accustomed to see, then they think it is a private affair. In his house he is making a little private celebration and wants us to go there. But if it is in a public place, and advertised, naturally then people think this is also something for us to go and see, and in that way people will be attracted.

No doubt it is in the hands of the Siraj to allow the Cherags in different services to give the sermon themselves. Also, it needs a discrimination and consideration. But at the same time it is the best thing for the Sirajs of different countries to give in that way the Cherags the opportunity of speaking. And if they think that the first time a certain Cherag could not speak well, or another time he did not give the sermon as it ought to be, it does not matter. There must be the practice of doing it. And after ten or twelve times they will naturally develop a gift which otherwise will remain asleep. They must be given a chance. The Sirajs or Cherags and all different authorities of the Sufi Movement always must think that there are difficulties and there are disadvantages and there are oppositions and there are risks. But in spite of that the worst disadvantage and risk and opposition is the attitude of standing still. Then we defeat ourselves, as soon as in the face of opposition or coming disaster or risk we stand still. It is worse. Sometimes a friction is better than a standstill. Because standstill is death, friction is life. Therefore, Sufism is wisdom, we all wish to practice wisdom. But so much wisdom is right, too much wisdom is wrong. As I have said there is a protection, there is a force, there is an enthusiasm at the back of our work. And now this is our opportunity to understand it, to know it, to feel it, and to act according to it. And each step that we shall take in the path of spreading the cause, we shall be more and more sure of the blessing and protection and the support of God with us.

Questions and Answers

Q. Would it not be better to give classes for the Cherags where they could learn to speak?

A. A very good idea.

Q. When they are not attracted, they will not come again.

A. Quite true.

Q. In England our Siraja holds such classes, and there are many who speak in those classes, they are improving wonderfully.

A. There is an example, it always proves to be very helpful.

Q. Murshid, I was once asked how can you hold Universal Worship and your claim to know about all religions while it takes more than the whole life's time to know about your own religion.

A. This Message is the learning of the essence of religion. It is not knowing one's own religion but learning of the essence of religion. And by learning the essence of religion, one learns one's own religion and at the same time the essence of other religions. Besides, what does wisdom mean: the essence. Knowledge is one thing; wisdom is another thing. Knowledge is what we grasp, wisdom is the essence we take from it. Therefore, religions are many. We need not take all religions, that is not our Message, that is not our work. We are not giving people all religions; we are working to bring before the people the essence of religion. And therefore, what we want to bring before people is not all, but the essence, the wisdom.

Q. Murshid, how are we to explain the power of the Universal Worship to those who come to the church and who are interested, but do not belong to the church?

A. The first thing is the power of our own belief, and the next thing is that atmosphere which is created with Universal Worship. That in itself is a proof. And the third thing is that you may tell them that: only come without opposition, without doubt, without suspicion. Only with a friendly attitude and sympathy. It is not necessary that they come with faith. If they come for six times, the seventh time they will themselves feel the power. Only request them to come for six times, that is quite enough.

Q. Is it possible to say that it is the Message for the day to quite outside people?

A. No doubt about it.

Q. Can we say that?

A. Certainly.

Q. Very often it has been said: How can she expect us to accept that she all of a sudden can teach others?

A. That phenomenon cannot be understood unless they themselves had the same experience. The taper, the lighted taper can light the candle in a moment, and such is the inspiration that goes from one soul to another. The name of ordination, of initiation is not understood by ordinary people, by people who do not know what initiation means. One need not study for the whole life. If the time is there, if the heart is ready, the Teacher is willing, and it is done in a moment.

The Importance of Spreading the Universal Worship

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

The Importance of Spreading the Universal Worship (July 4, 1926)

Blessed Sirajs and Cherags and Co-workers,

I would like to say a few words to tell you what work is the work of the Universal Worship. If you were my collaborators in my esoteric work only, you would have done a great work and you would have given me help. But there are many other esoteric schools existing in the world, but there is one Message being given throughout the whole world, and that Message is delivered in the form of Universal Worship. Sometimes a thought might come to a worker of the Universal Worship that as long as we can serve in the esoteric direction, is it not enough? No, it is not enough. The esoteric work is the soul, the exoteric is the body. And if you pay all the homage and reverence to the soul and do not take care of the body, that would not be the right thing. The Universal Worship is the way by which the Message is spreading throughout the world, and therefore this may not be considered any less than other aspects of the Sufi Movement. On the contrary, a great attention must be paid to the work of the Universal Worship. If there were a few workers on the esoteric side, the work will still remain to continue. But if we shall not have a certain number of workers in the Universal Worship, the furthering of the Message will be very much hampered. What we need today most is the collaborators, workers in the Universal Worship. This is the branch which should be forwarded, which must be furthered in every nation, in every country to one's best ability. It is that worker only who will prove to be all sided worker, in other words, who will prove to give himself in every capacity. And it will be most appreciated, in a large city like Paris we must have fifty Cherags for the beginning of the work. In London we must have a hundred Cherags to begin the work. And so in New York and in San Francisco. We do not consider our work begun in the Universal Worship till we have five hundred Cherags to begin it. All the work that has been done is the foundation, the making of the foundation. We have not yet started in the United States. I cannot feel for one moment that we have begun the work of the Message in America. And how it must come? It must come by the example that the Cherags will give to the other members which will give them the spirit and the right attitude to further the cause. And if the Cherags will not understand their responsibility and their duty and the importance of their part of the work, then the other mureeds who are just now coming, they will not understand.

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Imagine what difficulty it has been in all times when the Message of God was given, there was always an opposition. Against what? Against something new. No doubt, if they understood what it is, they would never call it new. But it comes in a new form, it is a new realm. And naturally everyone revolts against it. Keeping this in view, the Cherags must work in the Sufi Movement. If there was some little courage or confidence or enthusiasm or appreciation lacking in the Cherags, it would take away the faith of a mureed or a new member who is just beginning. And he must be fed by the faith of the Cherag. In all periods of history, whenever something great has been accomplished, it is by the power of faith. Even if there are few, it is their enthusiasm, it is their inner conviction, it is their courage that has helped them.

I have much to thank God as I have always said to my friends; that in my difficult work I have one great blessing, and that is sincere friends. And I shall never be discouraged no matter what difficulty comes, because I am sure of their friendship. But if I tell you this it is because to make you understand where we stand. I can never imagine for one moment that my friends, those who are working hand in hand with me that they will keep back even if it came to give their lives for the cause I am sure. Only we must become acquainted with the psychology of people, that it is in our appreciation of things and it is on our enthusiasm and our self-confidence that the mureeds are fed. It is their food. Our faith is their food. And they need it, especially at this time. Imagine the influence of materialism and commercialism and competition from every side. Every soul is wobbling in this world. And it is for us to keep the faith of the mureeds in the right condition. It is like holding the little child which is just now learning to walk, I have no doubt that you have many difficulties in your work, and yet I am thankful that we are in times that there is not that difficulty which the people who have gone before us had. They were exposed to wars, and disasters. Their life was always in risk. Our time is a much better time, only the difference of that time and this time is that at that time those who followed, who came with the Message they were strong, they stuck to it. Now the time is very different. Those who opposed they wanted to fight, but those who came with us they wanted to defend it. Now today the time is such that they come with indifference, they stay in indifference, and they go away, sometimes, indifferently. And therefore, they easily come and they easily go. But they don't stand before you with a sword and saying: do not touch my belief, do not have to do anything with my faith. They are easily attracted. In one way it is a very good time and in another way, it is a very bad time. Sometimes the indifference has a deadening effect upon the work. In that time when they opposed it had a life-giving effect, the opposition gave a life, enthusiasm, it gave a new spirit to the cause. And now there is no opposition, there is indifference, which has deadening effect upon the work. Nevertheless, every time has its own beauty, this time has its beauty also. For it is a wonderful time for intellectual spreading of the philosophy of truth. It is wonderful time to expose the mysteries which were guarded once from the ignorant; at this time they can appreciate it, they can

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understand it. We have much to thank in our lives and in working for the Sufi cause. If we are going slowly, still we are going forward, and we certainly shall reach the goal; only, if we keep ourselves united together, and because we are small in number so more united and devoted to one another, helping one another in every way possible in order to further the cause of God.

Questions and Answers

Q. What is the reason that people can understand now much more the philosophy of truth?

A. The intellect is more developed. But it only means that there was a period of heart, and now there is a period of head.

Q. If we have so many Cherags as you mentioned, we have no churches.

A. I think our every Cherag is a church himself. And with that spirit he must go out in the world. Other religions and different churches are the backbone of the clergy, but our Cherag is a church himself. And he must know that he is the pioneer of the work. Therefore, his responsibility is great, his difficulties are great. But at the same time his work is great too.

Q. But he must find a place to speak. That is the difficulty.

A. When we come to this question, first think about Jesus Christ. Where did he begin his work? Was there a church, was there a hall? Nothing! There he began his work. Then church and hall, everything came. And today the whole world has churches.

The Prophet Mohammed, he used to stand in the outskirts of Mecca, because in the town nobody would let him speak. And when people in the town knew that he was speaking outside the town, then they went there to oppose him. There was no mosque. And when they used to call for prayers, they used to put their hands in an earthen pitcher, that the voice should not reach further, that the voice only may reach in so much place. Because if the voice of the call reached further, people would come in arms to attack them. When the spiritual Message is given, in whatever time, it is given in that way.

Besides that, the Sufi Message was being given when there was nothing. Now there is a Summer school and a roof over our heads, where we can sit. And so things grow in their own time. As I have said in my address of this afternoon that if the attitude is right, it will all come well, it will all become easy. We do not want church first. We want attitude first.

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Q. When someone comes and says: the Sufi Message comes and gives what was known before, somebody says to us: if it is the same, help us to purify the old. We need . . .

A. Well, if yesterday's lunch was good for yesterday, today's lunch is good for today. It is the same lunch, for yesterday's appetite was yesterday's lunch, but for today's appetite, today's lunch is necessary. Besides, rainwater. The rain falls every year. If a person says: Last year the rain came, it was most beautiful. We have tanks and ponds all filled; we do not require it this year. It is not only to fill the tanks, nor to fill the lakes that the rain comes. But it charges the whole thing, the clouds, the trees, the earth, everything is charged with a new life. Therefore, the Message has the effect of charging the life anew. It is the same Message, but it comes every time with a certain purpose.

Q. To ask all believers of the other creeds to look for their creed in the other creeds, would that be a good method, i.e. for a Christian to look in a Jewish creed, to find his creed in the other thing?

A. No doubt, any method that can be adopted to bring about a better understanding among the followers of different religions, that is the best thing one can do.

Q. Principal thing enthusiasm?

A. No doubt. Enthusiasm is the battery. If there is no enthusiasm the battery cannot go, does not work.

Q. Have I understood rightly that all the teachings of the esoteric school do not belong to the Message properly?

A. No, I did not mean that. I only meant that for the furthering of the Message in the world and for fulfilling that promise and that work which is destined to us, it is not only the esoteric school, because there are other esoteric schools in Persia, Egypt, India, where the initiations are given and where deep esoteric study is done. But the difference is that this is an esoteric school but at the same time the Message that goes, that spreads out, that reaches all the different parts of the world. Therefore, it is quite a different part again. Therefore, that school, the esoteric school is the battery, but with that battery the light must be spread all over, with that torch it must be taken. And that torch is the Universal Worship.

Q. Do the others not spread?

A. No, they are schools. It is not their destiny to spread. Spreading is the work of the Message. The work of the school is a different work.

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Q. Is not the Message wanted there?

A. Everywhere. There is no place where the Message is not wanted. Only, what is wanted first is the workers who will take the Message in different countries. What is our greatest need today is the collaborators, the workers who will go forward and spread the Message.

And now one side of the same idea I would like to explain. This is, at the time of the Prophet Mohammed's delivery of the Message, that Prophet Mohammed was poor as other prophets, many of them. And although he was all sided, there were never funds. And there came a call of a world mission, of spreading. And those who worked with the Prophet were not rich. Because that time was not the time of business and industry. And therefore, money was scarce everywhere. And those who took upon themselves to go to the other countries and give the Message, did they once think that without money how shall we be able to accomplish this mission? Never! If they would have done it, they would have denied the teaching of the Prophet. Because from the first to the last what the Prophet impressed upon them, that: the providence is not in the purse, the providence is the living spirit. It is with you, and wherever you go providence goes with you. And in that belief they started and they left their country, they went to countries where they did not even know the language of that country. No doubt, after they had been, there were oppositions, there were parties, fights and wars. Sometimes they were defeated and sometimes they became kings. That was the time, and a most beautiful time too with such experiences. To go with nothing, and then to become a king. But at the same time, they never forgot the Message whether they came in the position of power, of rank, of wealth, or whatever. The Message was first with every influence, with money, power, rank, with whatever they could support the Message and bring it forward. That only was the object in their lives. And now we are in an age where the same thing cannot be done.

Suppose I went to America. Without a large hall I could not have spoken, without advertisement no one would have come, without publicity nobody could have known. But if had stayed here waiting ten years till things were properly arranged, then things perhaps never would have been arranged. That must be the spirit. Our spirit must be to do whatever we can in order to suit the time: publicity, advertisement, arrangement, management, everything required we must try to do it, because this is the time. But at the same time the lack of it must not take away our enthusiasm, our patience, lack of it must not break our hearts. We must be as strong and full of enterprise as possible. You must never think what failure means. Failure is not for us. It is the Message of God. We must do our best. You must never even use the word failure. It is not for us. That is

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for a businessman. For him when there is little money in his pocket there is a failure. Our success is the Message itself, our service in the path of God is our success. If we had nothing in the world, in the path of God still we shall go on. And if no one will hear us, the walls will hear us, in the spheres the Message will remain. The Truth is victorious.

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master,
the Spirit of Guidance*

How to Carry On with the Work (July 11, 1926)

Blessed Cherags,

I would like to make a few remarks on the subject of the Universal Worship.

The first remark is the introduction of the study of the comparative religions. In the first place the Scriptures, which come to our hands and we read here, are translated from some or other language and, whenever anything is translated, so much of it is taken away. And then, the Scriptures which have come to us after so many years, if we only introduce the comparative religions to find in these Scriptures all that is inspiring and uniting the different religions, so far it is advisable. But as soon as we come to dispute over what we read in the Scriptures and what differs from one and the other, we bring about in a thoughtless person a conflict, and in the thoughtful people a doubt. Our motive is to bring to the minds of those who will study comparative religions the idea that all different Scriptures have come from one Mind and were given to the world by various lips. That the difference among the Prophets has been of the different lips, but there has been one Spirit from which the wisdom has come. And if anything in the study of the comparative religions takes away that, it will always prove to be very troublesome. And it is better from the beginning to guard against it. If the Siraj who takes the comparative religion classes, who introduces them or organizes them, will keep this in view, it will always avoid difficulties.

And now coming to the Sufi Message. It is a general tendency and specially today, to confuse one thing with another. Those who will not oppose and who will not say against the Sufi Message and who will show a great sympathy and friendly feeling, they will mix it up with everything else saying that the other thing is also good, another society also good, another institute, another Message very nice, and a third Message is also saying the Truth.

During my six months traveling through America, I have seen much of it, that people show their appreciation in mixing things saying that it is quite true, but there is something else which is quite true also, and something else again is true. And in this condition the position of the worker becomes very difficult, because his motive of spreading the Message is defeated instantly a person says, "You are as good as another." He does not say, "You are as bad," he shows his

appreciation. But his appreciation is deadening, it is not encouraging, not strengthening, not comforting. It is deadening. Remember therefore that every God's Message at every time it has come to the world, there is a certain time, during that time it has its period. Afterwards there will be another Message; but at the time, during the time it is given, there is no other Message; there is only one Message. If a Cherag has not that conviction, he will not be able to further the Cause, he will not be able to go forward, he has not yet the conviction and understanding. I have heard a Hindustani poet say, "Lord, where the camphor and bone and sugar and salt are considered all white, let my merit not be savored. They have no distinction."

Where any occultist or any psychic, or any clairvoyant, or any so-called mystic is mixed up, then there is no distinction. Let not the Message be destroyed and ruined in their hands.

The other day I was invited in New York to an occult club and I went there. They used to meet every month at dinner table, and each one at the table had his own message to give. As many people there were so many messages there were in this occult club. One had to say about spirits, another about colors, another had seen some light, another was reading about clairvoyance or something else. And each one had a vote in this club, and each one thought his knowledge and his understanding was as good as the knowledge and understanding of the other. And when a person comes to that state there is no progress. It is called Kemal state. Everyone is a Teacher, you cannot find a pupil, even if you went to look with a candle for one.

Nevertheless, no matter how many difficulties there came, the Message will go on; no matter what state the world is in, the Message will go on, and no matter how many difficulties and how slow the work went, the Message will go on. Only, if Cherags knew more about it, they will be able to defend it.

But now if there comes a question: how do you distinguish the Message compared with others? And the answer is that you cannot explain it in words. Take two religions and let the exponents of these two religions discuss on what is written in their Scriptures. Everyone will say something right, and everyone will say something wrong. The same one who says something right will say something wrong also. And it will be the most difficult thing to judge between the two whose religion is better. The more you know the less you can say whose religion is better. Never therefore mix in such dispute the Sufi Message, never let it be compared with this or that. Why must it be compared? Let them think what they think about it, but let us not compare. Because this teaches this, and another religion teaches that, and this teaches something more wonderful than it is written in another book. Never do it. Are you serving from your whole heart the Sufi Cause for this reason that one particular teaching has appealed to you, one particular phrase has appealed to you, one particular principle appeals to

you? Not at all. It is not a book or a particular theory or dogma which has made you work for the Cause. Not at all. You yourself cannot explain what has appealed to you. You can only say, there is something that I feel that I must render my service to the Cause. That is all. And that ought to be so.

And now coming on the third point, the difference about the names of the Teachers and of the Scriptures. You can always say that if there was another Teacher whom some people adhere, or if there was another Teacher about whom people have read in a Scripture, or they came out with something, that shows that in such and such time there was a great Prophet who has given in some country a spiritual Message why his name must not be included? And that question will come up. And you can simply say that these few names represent all. It does not mean that we restrict our adherence to so few names. But they are the names suggested, by divine inspiration given to us. It does not mean at all that we ignore the existence of other Teachers. On the contrary. By lighting the candle and by saying, "The known and unknown," we include and adhere to all those who belong there.

And the fourth thing is when there comes a question in regard to your Siraj-un-Munir's personality. You must think that analyzing a person, how great or how small, is not the right thing. If you have a friend whom you love, whom you respect, you help and serve, it is not for another person to say that 'this person deserves your friendship' or 'this person does not deserve it.' It is up to you. No person has the right to tell you this person must be your friend or not. You do not even need a reason why you should have him as your friend. It is quite enough that he is your friend. But at the same time your respect, your reverence, your devotion, your sympathy must not be hurt when another person says something which does not fit in with your outlook. Because you must know that another person is not yourself, he has not your point of view. And therefore, he is not to be blamed. The best thing you can do is to leave him alone instead of disputing with him. Because very often, to dispute a personality is to drag a person down.

How much welfare and respect you may have for your friend, as soon as you begin to dispute his personality, you unconsciously break him down. Never therefore do it. Leave him alone. Never therefore dispute with those who have something to say against your Siraj-un-Munir, against the Message. If they are not sympathetic, if they are unfavorable, leave them alone. But many will say, "I have corrected that person who was speaking against you." But who knows that he has really corrected? Perhaps when he goes away from you, then he remains uncorrected just the same. On the contrary he becomes corrupted. Can words correct a person's belief? Can pleading make a person think better of another person? Never. You must let the time bring it about, you must let the nature work for it. The life itself will work for it.

Only if you had the faith to stand against all criticisms and all that is said against and still be firm in your work, that is all that is expected of my collaborators.

Questions and Answers

Q: Murshid, if a person comes into a society of people who have different opinions on religion, for instance on the idea that any Prophet or Messenger has given on marriage or divorce, then we shall be asked which of these Prophets or Messengers was right. How can we proclaim the unity of the Sufi Message?

A: In the first place the Prophets of the past had in their work, some of them at least, had in their work lawgiving, especially in the work of Moses. But not in the work of Jesus Christ. Also Mohammed gave the law. Therefore, there is a law that the church holds, and there is a law that Prophets give. That came as far as the coming of Mohammed. But after Mohammed there was no lawgiver, there has never been a lawgiver. Then the law has come in the hands of the nations. Every nation has its law. And therefore, even if we held out the law of this religion or that religion, in the first place we cannot get it. The law of Jesus Christ directly we cannot get it. The law of Buddha directly we cannot find it, neither of Krishna nor of Rama. The law that is so much changed, and only ten commandments remain. That was the law given by Hebrew Prophets, except afterwards what Mohammed proclaimed, that was another law. After that there was no claim of any Prophets that there will come a lawgiver. Therefore, lawgiving was stopped from the time of Prophet Mohammed. But the Message of wisdom remains. Besides, humanity was at an age that lawgiving was necessary. Now lawgiving is not necessary; wisdom is necessary. It is the inspiration of the essence of wisdom which will enable the states and the nations and countries to make the law better and better. Therefore, the Message, the spiritual Message, does not give directly a law. But indirectly it throws a light upon life, and in that way the states are wakening and will be wakened as time goes on, to make the law better.

Q: Murshid, once a person asked me, "How can I be a Catholic and a Sufi at the same time?" I answered, "If you are Catholic in the highest form, you are a Sufi."

A: That is a very good answer. But at the same time, when one is nothing, one is all. What Sufism teaches is to arrive at that stage in the end, but to what one must come in the end. If one begins from the same point, then in the end one will come in the beginning. Therefore, progress must be gradually.

Q: Murshid, is it allowed for us to say to the persons we meet that the Sufi Message is the Message for the day for the world?

A: There is no doubt about it.

Q: Can we say it?

A: Yes.

Q: It is in a certain way a claiming of the Message.

A: Yes, 'Message of the day' does not claim. It only claims that for this day what is necessary is being given. As long as you do not attack any theories, any dogmas, any societies, any other works, so long it does not matter.

Q: Murshid, will not these people say that you are intolerant?

A: Well it only depends upon in what tone you say it. Sometimes 'thank you' means so much, and sometimes 'thank you' means nothing. Besides that, everything you say you must feel from the bottom of your heart, your soul must speak it. And if that is not your condition, then never say it. In the East, especially in the schools of the Sufis, there is a belief, it is a wonderful belief. The belief is that when you come to understand the science of words, then you know that what you are entitled to say and what you are not entitled to say. Everybody does not think it, but those who have reached that stage where they begin to understand that science, they know it. What you are entitled to say is what comes from the innermost of your being, nothing in the world will hinder it, nothing in the world will oppose it. You can stand against the whole world with your word. Then you can say it. But if a person says in a louder voice if you are frightened about it, you may just as well not say it. One must weigh the power of one's conviction in every statement one makes. And that power is so great that the power of thousands and millions of people is nothing before it. It will fall flat. But if there is no conviction and people say 'how can it be true?' and you say it is a great statement, ten, twenty, hundred persons rise before you and say 'What do you say, it is all foolish?' And then if the power of one's faith has gone and you think, 'Am I mad, am I wrong, am I silly? Did I do it right? Perhaps I made a mistake. What did I do? Perhaps I said something at the time when I ought not to have said. Is it really true what I have said? What are they saying? Is their opposition right? That person may just as well not say anything. Because first was the Word, and the Word was God. It is not only first, but last also. If the Word becomes word what you say with conviction, it is the greatest power. There is nothing equal to it.

Q: Does not one get in hot argument easily?

A: Yes, but the dervishes have jumped into the fire for their conviction. Have you heard of it? They have jumped into fire, that the fire will not burn. Hot argument is nothing.

Q: A person said to me, “You need not to tell me that you were not hypnotized when you entered the Sufi Order.” And I answered, “You reckon that Christ hypnotized his disciples.”

Q: If they ask, “Have they any miracles in the Sufi society like in the Christian faith?”

A: No, miracles have no relation with us. We are not for miracles. Wisdom has nothing to do with miracles. If you can take interest in the Message without miracles, you are welcome. If you want to look for miracles, you can go somewhere else. As long as you are not following the mob, what does it matter. We do not go to invite people, “Come to us, come to us.” We only take before them the Message. Let them say what they will, let them come if they will. If not, let them. Maybe that after ten years they will come. We are not in a hurry. If it were a business or a commerce where a person said, “Next year we must have success,” then it would be different. This is something which will develop in hundreds of years, we do not need to hurry it. If we were hurried and terribly anxious, we would spoil the work. Success ought not to be anticipated. It ought to follow. Therefore, we have time to wait. Who knows that the same ones who oppose today, will not be different tomorrow. If there is any miracle, that is the miracle. After one year, after ten years, what does it matter? If they will not come just now, they will come later on.

Q: Murshid, if there appear antagonistic critics in the papers, leave them alone and not answer?

A: It is better not. Because as much helpful as is the praise to us, so much helpful the blame. Let praise and blame both come together. That is just like light and shade which makes a picture complete. Why not be tolerant for blame if the praise delights us? Besides, wherever there is something that will manifest to view, naturally it will be criticized. Let it be.

Q: Is it not right to meet that person, speak with that person?

A: Well, sometimes it works out successfully. But sometimes it makes that person so proud to think that we have surrendered to him and he has got us down. And perhaps he will have a favorable point of view or perhaps he will not. Too much sensitiveness to criticism is not good because it becomes a disease in the end. A person becomes so sensitive to everyone who says something about him that his faith, his conviction, his

power becomes diminished. And the one who does not take notice of bad criticism, really has some power in him. Because he thinks, "The man knows only that much, he has brought it out in what he has written. He has wasted his power and it has dropped, it has ended. But my strife and my work and my enthusiasm has not ended. It is going on still!"

That must be the spirit.

On the Concentration That the Cherag Must Hold While Doing the Service

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

On the Concentration That the Cherag Must Hold While Doing the Service (July 18, 1926)

Blessed Sirajs and Cherags,

I appreciate very much what Siraj van Tuyl has said. Indeed, it is necessary for Cherags to think that this is one of the most important duties to make themselves acquainted with different religions. And therefore, reading of comparative religions and studying them, not only from the point of view of a student, an intellectual student, but from the point of view of a Sufi whose main idea is to unite rather than to divide.

Today I would like to speak on the concentration that the Cherag must hold while doing the service. The time when the Cherag comes in the room where the Universal Worship is going to be performed, he must bear in mind that he is coming with the Sufi Message to give in the form of the Universal Worship. At that time, he must think that he is the vehicle at that particular moment to give the Message to those who are waiting to receive it. He must absolutely forget his own personality in the thought of the Message, in the spirit of the Message. And in order to quiet people, when he sits down it is better not to sit too long because people become tired of waiting. There is nothing so disagreeable as waiting and especially in the service. When at the present time people are put in a place, it is not as in the past, that people waited for hours before the priest came to give the blessing. Today either they are attracted by some influence or they are drawn by something or they are pushed by something, or they are held by something. Therefore, they are sitting there. That must be understood. Not to keep them too long waiting. Once the service begins the influence begins, the influence goes out and that holds them. But only sitting down will not hold them.

And when the Cherag says, "Towards the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty" to think that he is united with God, that he is working for God, and all that he says and does is towards God. And when he says, "united," then he must know that he is united with all the Prophets and Messengers whose names are mentioned in the Service, also those whose names are unknown, and those who are not mentioned. That he is united with them all, that he is the Representative of all the spiritual souls, Prophets and Masters and Messengers.

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And when he raises the taper to kindle the lights, he must think in his mind that the light that was given by that particular religion, which by the lapse of time has become dim, needs to be kindled, and “here am I kindling it.”

And when he is kindling the candle of those known and unknown messengers, he must think that, “the divine wisdom as the one underlying current in all religions, which has become dim, now I am kindling it.” Never think that “I am a limited being, a Cherag, a personality, how could I think of this.” At that time never think that, “I am a certain individual” or even “a Cherag.” Think that, “I am the representative this time,” that, “this is my sacred mission to do it. Destiny has meant that at this time I must do it for the whole world, for the whole universe.” That must be the spirit. And there is a great magic hidden behind it.

And when the Cherag reads the passage he must read with appreciation, he must read with devotion, and he must read with understanding, and he must read with the thought at the back of it that it goes and enlightens the listeners.

And when he raises the book and mentions the name of a certain Message, to think at that time of the Messenger who brought that Message, and to feel and realize, that he is at one-ment with that Messenger.

And when the Cherag says his first prayer, he must think and feel every word of the prayer. And with Saum he must realize the birth of the Message; with Salat he must realize the continuity, the life of the Message. And with Khatum, the last prayer, he must realize the fulfillment of the Message.

To perform the service has a spiritual magic in it. And if it is performed with that magic, its effect is thousand times greater.

When the Cherag gives blessings and raises his hands he must not think that these are his own hands. He must think that these are the hands of the Message itself blessing humanity. Then the effect will manifest.

And when he leaves gently the room where he has performed, he must think that he is leaving in the place and in the heart of those who are present an everlasting impression of the sacred word of God.

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Questions and Answers

Q: I should like to ask, is there not a danger in studying symbols, if we are not on the level of evolution that we can read symbols as a natural thing?

A: It is better to study with someone who knows them.

Q: Murshid, would it not be of immense value to the spreading of the Message if we could get these words you speak, if we could have the teachings, so that we do not...

A: It is already given to the Cherags.

Q: I have never received anything.

A: Ask the Siraj of your country about it.

Q: Murshid, don't you think that the church ought to be open one half hour before the beginning of the service? Not kept waiting too long?

A: Yes, those who wish to come to the church half an hour earlier or an hour earlier to take a rest, they may just as well take a rest. Perhaps they have patience, because they have come for a rest in the atmosphere of the church. But at the same time today it is different than what it was yesterday. If I were to tell you my impressions in the public lectures, sometimes feeling the thoughts of so many people, in their minds who are looking at the watch although they do not take it out, and who are saying in their minds, "will he not finish it soon, all he has to say will he not say it quickly?" And there are thousands, people's feelings are not so gentle and patient today.

The first thing I was advised by my well-wishers when I began my work in New York that: the thing that you want to say the last you must say the first. I had to forget my habit of preparing people with ten or twelve lectures to hear what I was going to say. They told me: what you have to say, say on the first day the first thing. Then people will come. You must not begin from A.B.C., you must begin from Z. Then come to A. When they know the last word is right, then they will come to the first. They will not come to the first word, they will come to the last. Therefore, we must study the psychology of the day. And the best thing is, those who will wait, they come sooner, but in our silence not to keep them waiting too long. People have not the habit of silence these days, and if they are cross in the silence, it spoils the service, it spoils the atmosphere. Neither to give too many silences nor to keep a silence too long. Avoid those things. One might think that because the world is in a nervous state, we must give them a silence and tune them, But we must first prepare them to be tuned. If you first tune them, then they run away. Besides, if they don't wish to be tuned, we cannot do it. Besides, we are not meant to give them punishment. If the world is going at a certain

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rate of speed, we must have a little less, but not quite the contrary to the rhythm of the world.

Q: Murshid, do you think in time they will be less nervous? In America for instance, they will have a slower rhythm?

A: I should think on the contrary. In ten years' time the rhythm will be quite different. No, the world will have to make its own rhythm. We cannot go by the rhythm of the past. With the evolution of the world, with the progress of the world, the rhythm is changing, the best thing for us is to keep to the rhythm of the world and not to go back.

Q: Murshid, is the tendency of the evolution of humanity that the rhythm always becomes more quick and more quick?

A: Naturally. It is life, it is energy. Life is motion and energy is motion. Only, if it loses balance, it strikes against something, and a catastrophe comes. Just like the last war. It was a result of a too speedily rhythm, a rhythm which has become too high, too quick. And therefore, always such disasters come and create again a kind of balance. But at the same time, if the rhythm of the whole universe is getting quicker, and we thought that we must go to the other extreme, that will not do, it cannot work. Yes, if we want to work for our own spiritual development that is another thing.

I will tell you a story, that in India. there is a custom that every singer tuned his tamboura, (there is only one cord on that instrument) for about fifteen minutes. But if he was a great singer, he tuned it for half an hour when the audience is there, be it a Maharaja, a king, a nobleman, no matter what the condition was, he took fifteen minutes or half an hour to tune tamboura. After half an hour's waiting he began to sing. But in order to sing his real song, he prepares them by singing just the scale. That took half an hour. First half an hour, and then he began to sing on the first phrase of the song. Then he improvised for half an hour, then he went in the second phrase. If I were to defend the singers of India, I should say, "Yes, it was quite right. He was tuning, tuning his soul, at the same time his heart, his mind, the atmosphere; he was tuning the hearts of those who were sitting there. Therefore, it was a kind of magical effect, merely the tuning of the instrument was a kind of magic. Then he prepared the ground by just singing his scale for half an hour. He just moved here and there in the scale, just a little melody, extemporization for half an hour. But that prepared the ground for him to build a kind of temple of music."

When I look at it, I think it is most wonderful, most admirable. And now the modern India, they say, "Please," when the ustad comes to sing, "please tune your instrument at

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home and come here with a quite tuned instrument. Let it not take time.” At first in the palace, first there is an order that he must tune it downstairs. Then it must be brought quite ready that he can begin his music. When he must begin his music in such a hurry and not the atmosphere he wanted to, the joy and pleasure and magic and charm and phenomenon of the music is lost. Today it is a most unfortunate thing for a singer of high ideal, that a music of a high conception, to continue to cultivate the same work as he did before. And if I would advise practically a musician I would say: go by the rhythm of the day. But at the same time if I look at it from a real point of view, I think that that was a great virtue. The same thing is with us. I would think the Universal Worship would be more effective if there was half an hour silence first and then half an hour in the middle, and then half an hour at the end. But what about those people who will be driven mad and go home grumbling? All the good impression made will be spoiled. Besides, there is a certain rhythm of America, a certain rhythm of Europe, and there is another rhythm in the East. We must keep to the rhythm of that country.

Q: Murshid, is there any limit to the rhythm of the world?

A: No, it must be held back. If not, it will go quick. If people were enlightened in that particular idea, if that idea was brought to the public, if people understood that for the happiness and welfare of humanity the rhythm must be controlled, not allowed to go quicker than today, if not, if the world goes on automatically as it has gone on, it will strike against some disaster and again it will bring catastrophe.

Q: When the rhythm establishes again, will it become quicker or slower?

A: Slower. Because it becomes quicker and quicker still. So the rhythm will become slower. For instance, how many different reasons people give for the drowning of the Titanic. But the main reason of its sinking was that the rhythm was quicker than it ought to be. If it was in its proper rhythm, it would not have sunk. And the rhythm was quicker because it was a new ship, and people were happy and enjoying and there was no danger to be foreseen. And the captain who ought to have kept the rhythm in hand he was enthusiastic in the new ship, he was enjoying with people. Therefore, his rhythm became quicker. The same thing in horse-riding, in wars, in sports, in everything. As long as there is a proper rhythm in sports, it is successful. As soon as you go a little further than the rhythm ought to be, one loses, then one does not win.

Q: Murshid, is it the rhythm of the planet that affects humanity or is it the rhythm of humanity that affects the planet?

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A: Both have their effects. There is a kind of interchange of effects, just like if mind is quickly working, then the circulation of the blood is quick, and if the circulation of the blood is quick then the mind is quickly working. Either the rhythm comes from within or from without. Either it comes from the rotation of light or from the action of humanity. Nevertheless, wisdom teaches balance, and balance comes by the control of rhythm.

God bless you.

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master,
the Spirit of Guidance*

Consciousness of Our Role (July 25, 1926)

My blessed Sirajs and Cherags,

I wish to speak today about the idea that we do not dress like the priest and the clergyman, and it is possible for us to feel before the clergyman and before the priests as an amateur musician feels before a professional musician. How much an amateur may be well versed in singing or playing, but because his consciousness knows himself to be an amateur, that itself keeps him down and beneath someone who comes forward and professes himself to be a professional man. Our position in the world is that we are each individually doing our work only at the time that is left to us from our home duties or from our work outside. Therefore naturally, for one reason that we do not put on a clergyman's dress, and for the second reason that our work, our everyday duties, have different directions, that naturally some of us may feel automatically a consciousness that makes them feel that we are not of that position, of that rank. Or we are not someone who can stand and say, "Here I have a religious authority given to me." This is a psychological problem. And in this way, there is always a possibility that a Cherag may limit and restrict his powers and his inspiration to a very great extent. There is always that danger. Therefore, for the very fact that our life is divided into so many things in the world, we ought to be still more conscious that the Message of the day is to be given by our efforts. That we are used by destiny to give the Message of the day, and for that reason we must be conscious of our distinct service and privilege more than any clergy or priest can be. Self-respect for us is always necessary, but self-respect in the consciousness of our work. If our consciousness is not holding the privilege destiny has given us, then we shall not find that inspiration and power with which to convince those who will come before us to receive the Message and the blessing. And therefore, we have a double duty. One duty is to do our work in everyday life, and the other duty is to be conscious of the sacred ordination.

And now comes the question about the small number that we are just now. No doubt, with all the hopefulness that we have, and with all the promise that we have, sometimes it makes one feel distressed. The reason is that while we are spreading, it must be quickly spread, from a psychological point of view. For instance, in a country like Holland, where the service takes place in the Hague, in Amsterdam, in Rotterdam, that is not enough. That day we shall think that Universal Worship is introduced in Holland, when in fifty places there is a service at the

same time. Then alone Universal Worship will begin to come out. In hundred places it ought to be, even in a place like Holland. Then imagine about England, about France, about the United States. It will not do to do the service perhaps in Detroit, and then perhaps in Los Angeles, and after that perhaps in San Francisco. Today a thousand Cherags must be working in America to feel in ourselves that we are beginning. And if we thought that we shall wait for the prepared people to come, by waiting we shall lose our opportunity of spreading the Message, waiting will be too long. Many people may come, but the ideal will come at the end. But ordination itself develops a soul to become ideal, that must never be forgotten and every effort must be made in helping to spread the Universal Worship. We must take every opportunity of introducing the message in villages, in small towns, large towns, every effort must be made. As much as widely Universal Worship can be spread, so widely it must be spread. It is not promising when in a large country in one place there is Universal Worship taking place. If in Berlin in one place it takes place, then there is Leipzig, then there is Hannover, then there is Frankfurt, then there is Munich, and there are so many different places where no Universal Worship is held. And therefore, the psychological current that must build up the Universal Worship in Germany must be strong. No doubt, a candle kindled in a country also makes a beginning. I do not mean to say that it has not begun. But I mean for our satisfaction it has not begun. Will not my collaborators then sympathize with me in my heavy task, to feel that at this time when there is the greatest necessity to spread the Universal Worship to try that each Cherag and Siraj will help to make this building as much prepared as possible? Because this is the main channel of spreading the Cause. And you may show me this reason or that reason why Universal Worship is not spreading, but at the same time, when it will come to sympathize with your Siraj-un-Munir you will not spare yourself. This is the time when I call upon every Siraj and Cherag to help to build the Universal Worship in Europe, in the United States. Before we build the Universal Worship there, we cannot go further. There is much ground to be covered, but this must be covered first. And everything you can possibly do is to try your best to gather your friends and those willing to serve the Cause, in order to promote that idea in education in that direction, in building a strong institute that will answer the purpose for which it is destined.

Questions and Answers

Q: Murshid, do you mean to say that some of us have to go to America?

A: Not necessarily. But if life permits some of you to go to America, it is just as well. In whatever country you are, the idea must be promoted; the idea must be spread; people must be prepared to understand and to serve the spiritual Cause.

Q: Can we begin with the Informal Service?

A: I think that is a very beautiful beginning.

Q: What would be the method of introducing it into a new town? Would you call it the Sufi Movement? How to advertise it, to mention the fact?

A: I think the first name, Universal Worship, is the best. And then when people come to Universal Worship, no doubt the Sufi literature will be read in Gathekas. Naturally, they will become acquainted with the Sufi Message in due time.

Q: One has to be very careful how to introduce it?

A: Certainly. We should regard the susceptibility of people in different places.

Q: Should we avoid calling it a Church?

A: Yes, now we use the words "Universal Worship." We shall from now use the words "Universal Worship."

Q: Murshid, if the majority of the members prefer the Informal Service, may they have it, or better the Formal Service.

A: Yes, now that is a very delicate point. Sometimes collective mentality is a very difficult mentality to deal with. If the leader knows the psychology, he will make them see the beauty of it, the psychology of the thing. But if he does not know, then the beauty of their conception will be the beauty that the leader will follow. And very often even if the group was inclined to appreciate and enjoy the Universal Worship of form, that group may be made prejudiced against the form just because the leader gave them a kind of preference. If you prefer this or the other, "Look here, this is simple. This is formless. This is form." If two say, "The beauty of the form is greater," then five among them will say, "You are quite right." The Cherag must be so convinced of the beauty of the Universal Worship that his conviction must reflect on those who see it. Besides that, in religious matters, you cannot consult everyone, because as many people so many will be their ideas. And if those churches who have managed to exist till now, if they would have consulted several people, they would have gone long ago. They have existed because they have not consulted many people. Besides, one day they will say, "We like form." Another day another person will come, "No, without form, we can do without form." Another day a person will say, "Change some books, it will suit us better." Or another day a person comes and says, "It will suit us better if you will have one candle." There will be no end to suit them. No religion could exist if they depended upon the opinion of generality.

Q: Murshid, in introducing the Universal Worship into new places, it would be impossible to carry it out unless there are Cherags to carry it out.

A: Informal Universal Worship can be carried out without Cherags, but Formal Universal Worship is to be carried out with Cherags. But by the time I come there, or the Siraj of the country, one can prepare ten or fifteen Cherags, make them ready.

Q: Murshid, should it not be the ideal of the Siraj and Cherags to be able to devote all their time to the work and not any other occupation?

A: No. I think for the Movement it is best that each person, those whose life needs some other work, that they did the other work and made themselves independent in that way. Because in that way they will help the Movement four times more. I am not saying of those for whom destiny has made it easy so that they can give every moment of their time to the Cause. But otherwise, some little work can be taken, and then the rest of the time can be given to the promoting of the Universal Worship.

Q: Sometimes there is no way to begin, the way is to be made clear for itself.

A: Yes, but till that way has been made clear it is necessary. When the way has been made clear, it is all right.

Q: Will you please say something about collectivity and individuality; if you have a new town where you want to spread the Message and you don't know anybody, then you should think that the treatment of people you do not know would have to be different from the treatment of those whom you have known closely and intimately. If it is an audience of friends, it would be a different Universal Worship than if you have got an audience of other people too?

A: It is, no doubt. But at the same time, it is easier to introduce Universal Worship before the multitude than before individuals. Because every individual has his own ideas and he comes with them. But if it is introduced before the multitude and if the multitude has taken interest, then let individuals come. But do not first call individuals. First call the multitude.

Q: May Cherags who are put in a certain place also speak in other towns?

A: Yes, they may. But that arrangement depends upon the Siraj of the country. But it is the best thing that the Siraj of the country can do, to send Cherags on mission to different places.

Q: Is it advisable to remain in one's church in which one has been brought up, or is it better to direct all our activities to the Universal Worship?

A: If one realizes that by keeping attached to the church that one has belonged before, one can in any way win the friendship of the members of the church, or of the clergyman, in that case it is advisable. But mostly it never is the case. And therefore, the best thing is to give one's time and thought to the Universal Worship. Besides that, if those who attend to the Universal Worship see that the Cherag is interested in some other church also, and that his interest is divided, they will not think of the broadness of the Cherag. What they will think is of the division of his mind. And by thinking that, they will think, "When Cherags can go to one other church, we can go to four other churches."

Q: Our own Church is included in the Universal Worship, is it not, Murshid?

A: That is so. A single-minded devotion and a continual perseverance and conviction are the most necessary things in working for the Cause.

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Symbology Part I (August 1, 1926)

Blessed Collaborators,

I appreciate very much the interest that our Siraj van Tuyll is taking in studying symbology of the Scriptures. Naturally, since we have to do with the scriptures in our Universal Worship, it is nice to be as much acquainted with them as possible. No doubt it depends upon your leisure and upon your interest in the subject.

Symbology is not one fixed thing. People of many different stages of evolution may look at one symbol each from their own point of view; and maybe that the ten persons interpreting the same symbol may differ from one another for the reason that not any one of them is wrong. Maybe that at least five of them may be right. And each one of them may have his own interpretation of it.

And therefore no one will ever be able to fix a rule that a certain symbol means a certain thing. And if you did it, it would be limiting symbology instead of spreading it. Nevertheless, any study of symbology made to the depth of it with a perseverance such as our Siraj van Tuyll is making, is worth appreciating.

Cherags will have to look at three sides, the past, digging into the past, but don't waste the present. The present is the Message. The Message is the interpretation of all symbology that has ever existed in the world. Ali was not mistaken, the day when he heard Mohammed preach. In covering all the books, he said, "A living Message to be compared with books! Keep them!"

This is a question which makes our tongues held back, our lips sealed, we cannot talk more. But at the same time Cherags must be wakened to the living spirit of the Message. What is the Message? The Message is the interpretation of all that the Teachers have brought. It is not what they have kept in the drawer, but what they said, what they brought. That which is given in words, in books, in symbology may have been changed. But this cannot be changed. Because the voice with the same spirit comes with the Message. Besides, every word of the Message is a symbol, be it worldly, be it heavenly, be it spiritual, be it material. Those whose

soul will be wakened to it, every word of it will show a symbol, a symbol of the day, the current coin.

And as to the future, we are building for the future. This will be the future; the message will re-echo in the future.

But now, how will Cherags study the Message? There are published books and there is circulated literature. In the form of literature, you have two things. Besides, words spoken to Cherags.

If you will read it once, it is only taking one step; if you will read it twice, it is the second step taken; and when you read three times the same, it is the third step taken. And do not think that it is fanatical on the part of the Muslims who read Koran day after day. And there is no prayer held by a Muslim without repeating a sura of Koran. What is it? When a hundred times he has repeated, he has found out the inner symbology of the sura.

The spirit with which the Message is given, it conveys. When you go once over a book it is one step. It is hundred steps or thousand steps each time you read the same. It is going forward if you read more; it is not standing still, although outwardly it may seem that it is standing still.

The more my Cherags and Sirajs will meditate on the words given in the Message they will get more and more inspiration, even to read and understand the symbology of all the different religions which is often unknown to the authorities of that particular religion.

And now there is another question. A great master of Koran who understand Koran well, is not necessarily the interpreter of the Sufi Message. But the one who has been initiated in the Sufi Message and whose spirit has soaked into it, for him it is not difficult to interpret Koran. He is charged with the new electricity, with the new magnetism, with the new life, he has got the lantern that Alladin went to look for. He will throw the light of that lantern and look into every Scripture, and he will find what is missing there and what is altered there, what has been taken away. And he will add there. He will look at it in that light.

It is not many years since literature has been given, and yet there is not a small literature. There is much of it that could be studied for twelve years at least, or longer. Reading is not studying. Real study means meditating on the subject. And if the Cherags wish that Murshid must tell them what the Sufi Message is, it never will finish, and Murshid can never put it in words. It is the voice of your own spirit that must tell you what the Sufi Message is. And once your heart is

touched by the Message, all you will say is the Message. It need not be in any book. What you say will be the Sufi Message.

Therefore, though we are beginning, and it is a humble beginning, and it is in a small way, and yet never be unconscious of the living life of the Spirit of the Message. Cherish it, maintain it, rear it, water it, raise it high, and continue to spread it. For God has destined us all to serve His Divine Cause.

Questions and Answers

Q: Murshid, the writers and composers of the holy Scriptures, were they conscious of all the different symbolical interpretations that are in it?

A: Sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious, and sometimes differently conscious. Each one had his own consciousness about it.

Q: Murshid, about the words we use, we are inclined to use the words that you use in your Message. Is it presumption?

A: It is the best thing you could do. Because when you use Murshid's proper words, you get in touch with Murshid's spirit in no minute. Because that is the secret of it.

Q: Murshid, will you please explain what you mean with a dogma. Sometimes people say to me, "Sufism pretends to have no dogma." But then comes, "The ten Sufi thoughts are your dogma."

A: But we don't call it dogma, we call it "thoughts." That is in their minds that it is a dogma. Some Hindu said, "There is a difference in the way how a person looks at a thing. Some call it an ideal (idol), I call it God. What is the difference? To that person it is an ideal (idol), to me it is God."

When we say, "Sufi thoughts" it is a thought. When another person says "dogma," well, it is a dogma for him. To us it is a thought.

Q: What is the difference? What do you mean by dogma?

A: 'Dogma' means, "You must do so and so and so." We don't say that you must believe in the first Sufi thought, in the second Sufi thought. We say it is a thought. That itself shows that you are not obliged to believe and any of these thoughts. Without believing in any of these thoughts you can be our members, you can follow the Sufi path. You are not obliged to believe in what you do not want.

Q: That is a dogma, to say as the orthodox, “If you don’t believe your soul is lost?”

A: We do not present the ten Sufi thoughts as dogma, that if you don’t believe you will be driven out of the Sufi movement. There is no such thing.

Q: It was said, “There is no ‘must’ in the Sufi Movement.”

A: Yes, we always try to keep it out. And I beg you all that you will help me to do so.

Q: There is just one dogma, “We must be free.”

A: Yes, but even that much I do not teach, we ‘must’ nothing. Because as soon as we put ‘must’ in freedom, then it is no longer a freedom.

Q: There are some not attracted at all by religion, by any church service, who are interested in the little they have heard, but apart from any religion. How will you reach those? How bring them in?

A: There are some who are prejudiced against religion. And it is very difficult to take away their prejudice. We must have patience with them. And there are others who think that they are above it. And therefore, we must respect their pride. But there are some who by a friendly contact and by not imposing upon them and by urging upon them the religious idea, if they are brought to look at it, to be tolerant, to sit there, to listen to it, there will come a time when they will begin to like it. I know of a person who used to run away if there was music played. But by begging him to sit and hear for five minutes, in the end I was able to keep him half an hour hearing music. Imagine!

Q: Murshid, there is a difficulty in arranging the service for many of us, that there are many ideas and many subjects about which you spoke to us, and it would be nice to give sermons about the same ideas and subjects. But the difficulty is to find these same ideas in the ancient Scriptures. For instance, in the Old Testament, it is very difficult.

A: It does not matter. If you can find ideas which are not too different from the subject you are going to speak, if you have some little correspondence or more correspondence, it does not matter so much. Because you do not find a similar idea in the Scripture it is not necessary to give up a certain idea which has come to you, which you wish to give in a sermon. It is nice when one can get the Scripture as a support to the idea. But if you cannot find it you must not give up your idea because you cannot find. You must not lose the idea in keeping to the Scriptures.

Q: Should we try to write sermons, try to express our thoughts as a sort of preparation? Should we prepare sermons even if for the moment we do not give them?

A: Very good.

Q: Murshid, you said to repeat your words. Would this be the key to contact with your personality?

A: Yes.

Q: Would this be the case with any words, for instance with the words of Christ too, with Mohammed too?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it the rhythm?

A: Certainly. Because word is living. The Bible says it twice, "First was the Word, and the Word was God." "There was first Word, and then came Light." Therefore, word is living. And the words which you have heard in your ears they are thousand times more powerful than the words you read. But the words which you read which are directly given from Murshid have a greater power than the words which are taken by another person, taken down, written down, another person has printed them, and in thousand years' time they will be changed.

I will tell you another story. When Prophet Mohammed was leaving this earth, that day he asked his friends to kindly take him in the hall where he would speak for the last time to his friends. And after having asked forgiveness of each of his followers, if ever he had spoken a hard word to anyone, or if ever he did anything that has not been approved of by anyone, he asked their pardon. And then he said that, "I beg you to be the trustees of the words I have spoken to you." Imagine, nothing else he asked. That was the most important thing. And the followers they held the words of the Prophet as jewels. What is a jewel? A jewel is a stone. And when Khalifs came one after another, the strict law was made that in Koran not one dot should be added, or not one letter should be taken away. That Koran should be kept intact. In that way the power of the word was retained. And today among Muslims who know about the power of word of Koran, they have a science of it. And they can use those words to accomplish anything, anything in the world. It has served as a magic. Take one word of Koran and repeat it. And in thirty days, forty days, a wonder has happened. Because a living word was kept intact. And the greatest misfortune of Buddhism was that the four wonderful books of Buddha were lost, that the direct words of Buddha were not preserved. The pupils said what Buddha said, and so on it was handed down. And you can always imagine for the Teacher what a blow it is if his own words are forgotten.

Besides that, in our everyday life you give a message to a person, “Say to the other person this way (this and this),” and this person takes that message to a third person, and the third person gives it to the fourth person, and when it comes to the real person all the message, it is lost, quite misunderstood. I am seeing it in everyday life. The words that I have spoken if they had reached directly, the same words, they would have had quite a different effect. But because they have been transferred by three or four persons the meaning is lost, the idea is lost, the power is lost, the inspiration is lost.

And you can do nothing better in sympathy and in devotion to the Cause, and in sympathy to your Murshid than preserve the words that are once spoken before you.

God bless you.

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There Is One Religion (August 8, 1926)

My blessed Sirajs and Cherags,

I wish to speak on the one question which is very often asked by a person who is not yet acquainted with the Sufi Message, questions that this is a new religion. That a Christian might ask that, "This is not Christianity, it is not a Christian church." That a Muslim might ask, "This is not a Muslim Mosque." That a Hindu might ask that, "This is not the Hindu religion." I am very often asked this question, in my work, and so you will be asked this question also. If I say, "No, this is not Christianity, this is a new religion," no sooner you say this you have got one enemy. But if you say, "This is the same religion completed, this is the same religion developed. This is the same religion brought forward because this time has come that it may be brought forward." Then the person understands it, and then you have said the truth also. When you say to people that this was the object of Jesus Christ, that this was the motive of Prophet Mohammed, that this was the thought of Moses, that this was the idea of Krishna and of Rama, that this was the wisdom of Buddha, that one day humanity may come together in a form of worship in which people of all different religions may take part. Therefore, it is not a certain religion which is an opposing influence to the existing religions, it is only the same religion put in a wider sense which embraces and envelops all other religions. But then they will say that the belief that we have, perhaps you are not teaching that belief. Our answer must be that we have no such beliefs as to be taught to the followers of this Movement. And that is true. There is no belief that we urge upon anyone, and, therefore, they can safely keep their beliefs without breaking them, if they have any. If they have none, to them our doors are open. They can come without a belief. Even the ten Sufi thoughts, those who think they are beliefs, we would have called them beliefs. Do we ever urge upon a new mureed, saying that, "You must take these ten Sufi thoughts as your dogma, as your belief?" Never. Are there any principles, any rules that we urge upon mureeds as dogma, as a part of belief? Never. If that freedom is given, that in itself takes away the idea of having an exclusive religion. We have not an exclusive religion. We are here together in the bond of friendship, in the bond of sympathy, in the desire of rendering service to humanity in spreading the Message. That does not mean that we are giving a new religion, for the very fact, that we are not giving any particular beliefs.

Is there any member of the Sufi Movement who is told that, "You must attend to the Universal Worship. If not, you will be put out of the church." No. And if he does not come, can he not be our member? Certainly, he can. There is no binding. We do not say, "You must believe in a certain thing, then you will be a member of the Sufi Movement." Or "Come to the Universal Worship, then alone you will be a member of the Sufi Movement." Then what else is there to make it a new religion? And besides, for us to understand, there is only one religion, if there was any and if there will be any. There cannot be two religions. There is one Truth, there is one God, there is one religion. And whenever God's Message is given to humanity, it is only the interpretation of that religion, the fresh interpretation of that religion. And it is not necessary, as it is necessary to have an alarm clock to remind us of the time? Every day we may wake up at a certain time, and yet we may fall asleep, but we can depend upon this alarm clock which is wound for that purpose. It is necessary to have a calendar to know what day it is although we may be conscious of it day after day, and yet it is necessary. The rain of the last year was not sufficient. You may fill tanks with it, but this year's rain is necessary. The water has new magnetism. It does not mean that the water of last year had no magnetism. It was for last year. This rain is for this year. It is the same water, it comes from the same sky and it has risen from the same vapors. And what is the Message of God? The wisdom, the experience, the knowledge that rises from this universe like vapor and touches the center, the Spirit of Guidance. When the same comes in the form of rain, it is that which is called "The Message."

Therefore, it is the necessity that there should be the Message. Besides, when Jesus Christ said that, "I have not come to give a new law," that itself shows that if there were many religions, Jesus Christ would have said, "This is new, a new religion again." But it was not so. People have made it. They called it as a new religion.

Was it the desire of Prophet Mohammed or was it the desire on the part of Moses, Zoroaster, or Buddha, that they should have exclusive religion followed by a certain sect of people? Never.

It was given to humanity at large, and mankind, as he is limited, according to his limitedness he makes the teaching narrow. The rain does not fall that it may only fill that particular tank. It falls on the trees and on the tanks and on the lakes and on the pools and on the sea and on the river, where there is water, where there is no water, everywhere it falls. By making sects mankind has made tanks to fill with water, and then he says, "This tank is called such and such," and in this way many tanks are kept by different sections of people, each tank is called by the name of a certain religion. It is not the tank which is the religion. It is the rainfall which was the religion, that rainfall which has filled this tank. And if one does not recognize in the rainfall the Message, and if one gives an importance to the tanks, that person has not yet realized the meaning of Divine Message.

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The Opposition to the Message (August 15, 1926)

My Blessed Cherags,

I would add to what our Siraj has just now said about the beginning of the work in the Christian church. To begin with I will tell you another story. When Prophet Mohammed was beginning his preaching in Mecca, people began to stone him. When preaching was going on people began to insult the disciples of the Prophet who listened to him. By the fear of their lives they would not even come near those who had some interest, fearing that they might be accused of heresy. In this way the Movement started. And the day when they called for the prayers, today it is called from the minaret and hundreds of people stand before the minaret in all respect and reverence. In that day there was nobody. They had to call, putting their mouth in the pitcher, that the sound should remain hidden in the pitcher. But with all this it was meant that the Message should spread. The same country from where three times the Prophet was exiled and hundreds of his disciples were wounded and died and were insulted time after time, the same land today holds with the greatest reverence the Koran as the sacred book that the Prophet gave.

Things that are of less importance will rise soon, will develop soon, and will finish soon. But things that will remain, will slowly grow and will remain longer, and it will take a long time for something that succeeds it to come. The Sufi Message therefore is now in its beginning, and it is our privilege to do the pioneer work which is as hard as it has ever been. And a thousand years from now that the Message was given, it will be even as hard or even harder still. Today we are not stoned, today we are not flayed. But today we have other difficulties, perhaps greater difficulties. And our difficulty is the lack of response. Those times there was a response, that is why they revolted even in a furious way, with the use of the sword to oppose. But even we have not that. Before us backs are turned. Therefore, we have to knock against stone walls. And I wish to ask you my new friends and my old friends will you withstand it. It wants constant patience. I do not wish to tell you hopeful things, I wish to tell you the worst thing. If something better comes, we shall be pleased to have them. I wish to tell you that you have to withstand the coarseness of the world, the negligence of humanity, the disapproval of your friends, and the opposition on the part of those who are inclined to oppose. You will have difficulties from your own people and from those who are opposed. One is strengthened by

two things: by friends and by enemies. If one has strong friends, friends with strong faith and sincerity one will feel the strength to go through every difficulty. And we in our infancy, since the Movement is infant, we have very few friends to begin this world movement. For the very reason that we have few friends, we ought to be more united with one another in order to be strong.

Another thing is the tendency of the day which is toward materialism. Our work is difficult. To spread a spiritual Cause through this age means a great difficulty. A person hears about it and looks at it with pessimism. Among the public audience in my public lectures those who hear in advertisement and those who come there, there are perhaps five persons who like to listen to it. The others have a sort of wall of pessimism before them. Before they hear of anything spiritual there is a wall of pessimism before them.

Only our hope is that for the very fact that materialism is more prevailing, the souls are restless. They are looking for something, and they have no discrimination which is which. That is only our hope. And if there is anything else it is the command of God which we are following. And therefore, the work we are doing, the Message of God we are spreading, it is this which is our hope and strength. And although we are so few and we are beginning, still we must hope that God's Message must spread and must be fulfilled in its own time.

Questions and Answers

Q: Murshid, I would like to ask you, is it a great wish of yours that comparative study should be made of different Holy Scriptures? Would you be so kind as to give an explanation of what exactly your wish is? The different meanings of subjects are very different. Some ask for symbolical explanations, others want only Scriptures explained as teaching, others only examples which the life of the Teacher has set before them. Which is the way of leading such a class, giving explanation to all those rising questions? What is the meaning for explanation?

A: First I shall ask Siraj van Tuyl to tell us what he thinks about this question.

(Siraj van Tuyl) Dividing religion in three parts: the life of the Teacher, secondly preaching of the teaching, thirdly the hidden words. As far as I understand they are all one.

(Siraja Green was then asked to say her opinion.)

(Siraja Green) I think, as we only have limited time at our disposal, we cannot attempt to study the Scriptures in a deep way. As I said, the first thing is we should understand a little of the life of the Messenger, to trace the time in which he was born, the condition under which he lived, then the chief names of the Scriptures which he left. Then having grasped the right pronunciation as we can get it. It is a great shock to many people to hear their sacred names mispronounced. If then we had time, I then suggest that they should acquaint themselves with the symbology of the religion and bring it to me. We have not time for collective study of symbology. We should specialize... of our own scriptures better, the books given by Siraj-un-Munir, the Message of the day, with the life in it. The work by the Siraj of Holland is for people of leisure. In England, those who are in the Universal Worship are working very hard. When they come to me, I follow the method I have spoken of.

(Cherag van Ingen then said the following words.)

What do people see in it? Can we give an explanation of symbols given by Prophets if we have not reached illumination? I am sure that all the work of studying symbols is very interesting, a great pleasure and help, but although a teacher... that if we study symbols we cannot see the depth of it, there will be a misunderstanding in the end. If everyone gives his own interpretation it seems to me that it must make confusion.

(Siraj-un-Munir) Yes, I have always appreciated any study in any line whether symbolical, whether on the life of the Prophet, but as says Siraja Green, where there is little leisure time it cannot be done, if there are thousand duties it cannot be done. As Mr. van Ingen has said just now, that "are we illuminated?" Cherag will never doubt, are they not ordained in Universal Worship? And what is ordination? It is the same thing in the spiritual sphere. In the spiritual plane it is the same thing as lighting the taper and kindling the candle. The candle that is lighted cannot doubt that it is not illuminated. Cherags must be conscious of it. At the same time the work of symbolism certainly belongs more to the esoteric side, and as one will be illuminated more, so one will be able to know it more.

But may I tell you the best way of studying the teaching of the Prophets, of studying the Scriptures, of knowing the symbology of it? The best way is the Message itself. The Sufi Message is the interpretation of all Messages before. Study it. If you have once read the books, it is not enough. If you read one hundred times one book "The Inner Life," it is not enough. The suras of Koran are read by Muslims day after day. Every day they repeat them and all their life they repeat, and it is never enough. And every prayer they perform, among their five times prayers of the faithful, in each prayer they

repeat a sura from Koran. So five suras or more, at least every worshiper says in his everyday life. And one might think that they would look for something new. No. They just think that it is this that brings illumination more and more and more. The Message is being given. When the books are published, already in this time although not every Scripture is printed, it can reach many hands... something to appreciate, to value and to utilize toward the best purpose. Besides that, the literature which is circulated only among mureeds such as Gathas... Gitas and others, is another source of illumination. For remember that the Message is the interpretation of all religions. All explanations of different religions are given or interpreted in the Message. Perhaps it is not said that "This is the inner meaning of the particular symbol," because by the study of it you will be able to clearly see...

In other Scriptures, in architecture you will be able to understand the teachings, the inner meaning and in the inner meaning the innermost meaning by studying the teachings given in the Message.

So therefore, when you have within your reach this treasure you do not look for the knowledge in other things. The other things will be open to you, the whole life will become your book once the eyes are open.

And besides, the practices, the practices which are given in connection with your initiation they will illuminate, and you will for yourself begin to see the meaning of all symbols. And it is in this way you can develop your study.

Nevertheless, we appreciate more than words can say the study that Siraj van Tuyll has made and is practicing in his country in giving interest to others on that subject.

Only we do not wish to restrict our Universal Worship and the study of our Cherags only to one thing or the other. But if there is anything that is mostly needed is to draw their attention to the Message and to its teachings, to look into it as deeply as you can and repeat it as many times as you can.

And you will find each time you read the same thing there will be a new illumination coming, which will culminate into a revelation.

God bless you.

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Spreading the Universal Worship (August 22, 1926)

My blessed Sirajs, and Cherags and Collaborators,

I am very glad, indeed, to have heard the address of Siraja Susanna Kjösterud, and the points that appealed to me are these: the first point is that since our heart is convinced that the Message of God is to be given to the world, what fear is there? It is possible that those who take too many precautions not to be persecuted or accused by others of teaching something which is not in agreement with their way, will only keep back the Message. We ought to be thankful that this day we do not meet with those difficulties which have been met with by the Teachers of the past. Each of them had to have battles and wars. Even Sri Krishna, whose life begins with harmony and beauty and love, you can see in his life from childhood, even he had to go in the battle of Mahabharata. We ought to be thankful that our time is much better. If they will not believe, they will at least listen; if they will not listen, then they will leave us alone. And if with all this we keep ourselves back thinking, "What will happen; what will people say, how can we bring this something which is something quite new, before people?" This would be too much precaution to be taken. And it will not prove to be desirable in the end.

And now there is another idea, that some of us may think that we must slowly progress. But I should like to say that we cannot work quickly enough for the time and need. We might just as well close our eyes and nod and say, "We must slowly grow." But the world is going at a different rate, and if we make ourselves slow, it only means that we shall keep back the Message which ought to go further and which ought to spread wider. As I have often told you our great need, I wish to say it again, from the mystical point of view, from a psychological point of view, and from the practical point of view, the most desirable thing is to make the Universal Worship as widely known as possible. And in countries such as Holland, such as Sweden, Norway and Denmark, where it can be possible to have Universal Worship performed in every large city, it is better to make it possible that it may be performed there. Of course, in countries which are large, the area is large and there are twenty large towns, we cannot expect that. The idea is this, that the spreading of the Message and furthering of the idea of Universal Worship can only be done when there is a large effort and great effort made to spread it, to introduce it. And you cannot introduce it in a country by having it only in one town. It must be done in ten or twelve cities. And if it is done in a city which happens to be large, there must be two, three

places where the Universal Worship is performed. Because sometimes, if the Universal Worship is performed in one place, only so many persons can attend to it. But if in many places it is performed in a large town, many people can attend to it. In order to make Universal Worship more interesting for the new people, the best thing is that one must not depend only upon the Gathekas which are sent. The Cherags may make sermons based upon the teachings given in the books which are published, upon the ideas which are to be read in the Gayan, also now in Vadan, also on the subject of philosophy, ethics, religion, and morals; that the activity of the Universal Worship may be kept alive and people may come with a renewed interest every time they come to the Universal Worship.

By my experience of all these years I have seen that as the world is today it will take everything that is given in a perfect form. For instance, in a large city as Chicago, if you have nine persons coming at every Universal Worship, and you continue it for twenty years, it will remain the same. But if one worked it up, if one arranged it so that every time more persons will come, then perhaps in one year's time the audience will be twice as large an audience. Since I see the earnestness of my collaborators, Sirajs and Cherags, I feel their feelings, that everyone of them is most earnest and desirous of spreading the Message and trying to see that the Message reaches far and wide. I consider that this is the time that I may tell you all what is most necessary for the spreading of the Cause. I have not the least doubt since this is the Message of God, and since it is destined that the world must receive it, that sooner or later it will reach all the points of the world and all races and people and nations will receive it one day. But at the same time, what about our longing to see it spread? Is it not our longing from morning till evening to see it grow? It is for that longing to be satisfied to some extent, we must not leave one stone unturned to spread it, to push it forward. And that can only be done by knowing the psychology of this time. The slower we will go, the slower will be the reception. If not, from the mystic standpoint I must adopt another attitude, the attitude of dreaming. As a mystic I ought to dream and feel, "Well, it will grow in its own time, since it is the promise of God, it must come. Why must I trouble about it!" And that is true too. It will come, it must come, it must grow, and it must spread. But at the same time we can make it grow quicker. Even the trees and plants are made to grow quicker by the electric power that the sciences produce. And at this time when there is such a convenience of post office, telegraph office, and railway trains, and ships going across, and if we do not take the advantage of all that exists — tramcars, taxis, motorcars going from one part of the city to another, trains with which you can reach through the whole country in a few hours — if we do not take this convenience which never was before, and if we do not make the haste that is necessary for us to spread the Cause, it would be a great pity. Our enthusiasm is our worship; our desire is our prayer; besides, our eagerness is divine impulse, our hope is the promise of God. We only have to move and all will be done.

Questions and Answers

Q: When a Cherag is coming to another country, has he a right to work there? Can he speak publicly? For instance, in America can he work for the Message?

A: Every member of the Sufi Movement is a missionary of the Movement, Cherags apart. And wherever a Cherag goes he takes the blessing of the Message in that place. Even before he starts to work, his very presence takes the blessing of the Message. Wherever he moves, whatever town he goes, he must be conscious of that. And according to that consciousness he will spread the Message.

And now as to the working. Naturally the Cherag goes as the ray of the Spirit of the Message. Where the ray of the light will go, it will spread light there. It is the best thing a Cherag can do to introduce wherever he goes the Universal Worship. But, at the same time, if it happens that the Cherag goes in a country where there is already the Sufi Movement working, then his duty is first to go to the Siraj of the country and render his assistance and services to the Siraj and ask the Siraj in what way he can be of some use by going to another city or by staying in the city where the Sufi Movement is, or in whatever way there was the possibility, with the consent of the Siraj he may do his work there.

Q: When a Cherag likes to give in his sermons some of the teachings of the Sufi Message, how has he to deal with the texts of the ancient Scriptures, for it is not always easy to find phrases and passages which suit with the ideas. For instance, the teachings in *The Soul Whence and Whither*, or as about free will and destiny or concerning the vibrations, it is very difficult to find suitable texts in the Old Testament and Koran.

A: Well, in that case it is not necessary that one should wait for texts, for quotations from the different books. If one can find some quotations in support to his argument, then it is better. But if he cannot find, then one must find in some of our published books, for instance from *Gayan*, from *Vadan*, from *The Way of Illumination*, and these quotations should be included in the address in order to give support to one's argument.

Q: Do you think it good to give in the service more the tendency of moral character, or is the philosophical teaching of the Sufi Movement also good as a sermon?

A: If the service is attended by an intellectual class of people, it is always good to put a little, some philosophy in it just like putting color in a picture. But if you thought that they are more devotional people who come to the Service, then have the moral more put into it. It is according to the people who come to the service one must form the sermon.

Q: Must we not always give in the sermon some religious touch since that it is religious? Some said it is not religious enough, see that it is religious, and not only philosophical. Because I have heard those remarks, some people have said; “We are afraid, this is very good, but not religious enough for us and for many others.”

A: When we think of remarks, there is no end of remarks. One will come and say, “It is too religious,” and another will come and say, “It is not religious enough,” another one will say, “It is too philosophical,” and another will say, “It is too plain.” It is just like the salt in soup. That for one person it is too salty, and for the other person there is too little. The best thing is to enrich the sermon with some philosophical remarks, with some remarks on ethics, with some remarks on the life today, and in this way to see how one touches the audience. And then according to the response you have you can change your sermons accordingly.

Q: What about music in the service? There are many people who like to sing very much and for that reason they go to the Catholic Church. Are we permitted to have one or two songs at the end?

A: I should leave this also to the Siraj of the country and to Cherags who have the charge of Universal Worship, to see for themselves what the people who come to the Service are inclined to. If they are inclined to music, arrange some music; if they are inclined to more, arrange more music. It does not matter. If they are the other kind who perhaps do not like music at all in the service, it is just as well to miss it. According to the people. It does not matter. But at the same time a little music is always desirable.

Q: Would you always keep the service in the hands of the Cherags, or would you occasionally think it well if a Jewish Rabbi was present to read the Jewish Scripture?

A: From one point of view it seems desirable, and from another point of view it seems undesirable. Undesirable from the point of view that we shall not be able to get always the Rabbi, and the Mullah from the Muslims, and Dastur of the Zarathustrians, and Pungi of Buddhists all to come and read for us. And if they all come to read for us in the Universal Worship, they would no longer be Pungi, or Mullah, or Brahmin, or clergyman. So either they belong to our Movement or they are a Pungi, or Mullah, or Brahmin, or clergyman, or a Rabbi. May be that after fifty years or a hundred years we shall come to a point where all these will come together in the Sufi Movement and read different Scriptures. But today if we put a Rabbi for a change and the Mullah were missing, it would not be the right thing.

God bless you.

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master,
the Spirit of Guidance*

Symbology Part 2 (August 29, 1926)

The subject of symbology has been spoken twice before, and I had made all the remarks that could be made on that subject. Perhaps for the convenience of those who were not present here, I will repeat what I said. I have said that when the new Message comes to the world, it includes in itself all Messages of the past. And, therefore, if the gold mine or the silver mine or the diamond mine is to be found, it is to be found in the same Message. There are several books which are already published and there are several books which are unpublished and which are circulated in the form of literature. And even if you said, "I have read it hundred times." I will say, "It is not enough." And it is not I who will say this only. You can ask in the East to a Brahmin, to a Muslim, to a Zoroastrian, to a Buddhist, that after so many thousand years of study of the Scriptures that you have made, "Is it enough?" "It is never enough," he will say. "Every day I read my Scripture or perhaps one verse and one prayer I have read for my whole life and it is always revealing." Shall I tell you my own experience? A most revealing verse of a great poet in a song I used to sing, and I used to like it for many, many years. And there came one day after perhaps ten years singing that song, that the meaning of that particular verse was revealed to me, and the feeling of exaltation was so great that I felt as if that verse had uplifted me. That one direction which had been covered for the whole life was revealed in one moment's time. There comes a time when divine light is thrown upon a particular subject and that subject becomes revealed

I have said that the practices which are given to mureeds, these practices are helpful and that they develop intuitive faculty that you will be able to understand for yourself the meaning of different Scriptures as much as you will understand the meaning of our own Message.

I have also said that those united with the blessing of ordination, of initiation, are linked with their Siraj-un-Munir, with the Pir-o-Murshid, that this link will strengthen and illuminate them and enable them every day and every hour of the day more and more to throw its light and to find the Truth of our own Scriptures and of the Scriptures of the past.

And now, what I have not said I will say now. We are not only concerned with the Bible. No sooner we have taken Universal Worship, we are concerned with all Scriptures. And how many symbolical ideas you will find in Bhagavad Gita and limitless symbolical teachings you will find

in the Qur'an, and beyond limit there will be symbolical teachings in the Buddhist Scriptures. I do not think a hundred years' life could be sufficient to one who will devote his life to find out the symbolism of every letter, every work, and every sentence in these six Scriptures only. But in spite of this all, I very much admire Siraj van Tuyll's intention of trying his best to fortify the knowledge of Cherags and of himself in order to answer questions that come up on the subject of symbology. And as Siraj van Tuyll has asked me to help, for the help I am born; that is my duty; that is my work; that is my aspiration; and no one in the world would be so willing to help as I would. Only the question is, which help? Which I consider best for you, or which you consider best for yourself? I will do both, if time permits.

Questions and Answers

Q: Was I right to say it had really happened so that it was no symbol, that stories of the sacred Scriptures can be considered as history, but as real happenings?

A: I thought what Cherag von Frankenberg has said is right also. But at the same time there are in every scripture, there are facts in plain words and there are symbolical expressions in the midst of them. And it is most difficult to divide one from the other. But at the same time, if you throw the light of symbology on facts, you will turn it into a symbol also. As in London there was a clergyman who found out something quite new, and many believed him. He found out that Christ as a being was never born. And hundreds of people began to follow him because he invented a truth. He said that it was symbolical. So if you throw a symbolical light you can see everything in symbols. A person walking in the street, if he turns to the right side and if you throw your symbolical light upon him, you will find a symbol in it, that there is a symbol. If he threw something down and he bent low to pick it up and why he bent and why he picked up something and why he threw a thing down, there is a symbol. There is a symbol to everything. It may be a fact and yet it is a symbol. But can you make a grammar of symbology? Never. Can you say, "This is a symbol of this?" Never. It is impossible. Ten brains will explain it differently. To ten minds the symbol will have ten different meanings. Therefore, in the light of symbology, the whole life is symbolical. The more intuitive you become, the more meanings you will understand. But you can never make a book on symbols. For instance, many have attempted in the East and West to give the meaning of dreams, to write a dream book. Have they ever succeeded? And can anyone ever succeed? Never. Now psychologists are trying. Because every mind is different from the other and, therefore, every mind has its own language, and in that particular language the symbol manifests. Every dream has a meaning. But if you write it down that such dream means such and such, it is perhaps true in that particular person's case. In one person's case it is true; in another person's case the same symbol is

different. Therefore, you cannot fix symbols with a certain meaning and say, "This is the symbol that belongs to such and such case."

But I quite agree with Siraj van Tuyll that we can never study enough, and the more we are acquainted with the Scriptures as he says, I am sure, the more fortified we become to face the world.

Q: For all Cherags, is it necessary, must they study symbolism? Is it a kind of principle? Or is there a period in life when it is allowed only to think and pray? Must they study symbolism?

A: In the Sufi Movement there is no such thing as 'must.' You may.

Q: Siraj-un-Munir, will you please tell us what is the reason why all things are symbolical?

A: They are symbolical because symbol is in our mind. As long as symbol is not wakened in our mind, they are not symbols. Symbology is from the effect to find the cause. To learn symbols or to have a symbolical point of view is to learn from the effect the cause. And, therefore, in every action, in every movement, in every form, in every word, there is an effect and there is a cause. And when a person by intuition develops that faculty of knowing the cause from the effect, he sees the cause in the form of a symbol, or the symbol lends or helps him to know the cause.

For instance, a person was sent as an envoy from one country to another with the Message of peace. But the morning he had to leave his place, he woke up with the impression that he had dreamed that he saw fire burning everywhere. That suggests that the effect is destructive, that the Message of peace that he is taking will not be fulfilled. Before the Message he has seen the fire, the symbol of destruction. But a man who was going to find a job he had applied for, and many other candidates were going to be there also, and before going to that office where he was to find that job, that night he had a dream, and in that dream, he saw that there was a fire. And there was a kettle on the fire and some dish was cooking, food was cooking in it. And when he got up he went. The effect is that he will get his job. The making of the food, although there was a fire, but at the same time the making of the food will cooperate with his condition. Therefore, there will be success in that place, although he saw a fire. In one condition, aspect, the fire was destructive, in the other case, the fire is helpful. There is a third person who has someone very ill, and he is hoping that he will be soon well. Doctors have lost all hope, and before waking up he has seen fire. That means that the ill person must die. But there is another person whose beloved one has been vexed with him, and

he has been badly treated, very coldly treated. And he saw the goldsmith working with hot iron. And in the morning, he received a good letter because the heart was glowing again with love.

The Spirit of the Message in the Universal Worship

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
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The Spirit of the Message in the Universal Worship (September 5, 1926)

Blessed Collaborators,

I would like to say that when I was in the United States, some friends and acquaintances were interested in the idea of Universal Worship, but from what point of view? From the point of view that it is a good idea that unites different religions, it brings them closer; others, that it is a good idea that different Scriptures are read at a service. Another one says, it is a good idea that the followers of different creeds may come together in order to inaugurate the religions of many. There also came suggestions that why must we not inaugurate the Universal Worship in a large way, to invite the chief Rabbi of New York and to invite the Archbishop or the Catholic priest, cardinal, leader of the country, also to invite the leader of the Buddhists, so that a Universal Worship may be given before the public of New York in a proper way. Many at once consented to it, but I was diffident in giving a decision. And that shows that as the idea it will appeal to many and perhaps many will imitate the idea sooner or later. But as a purpose many remain ignorant. It is not only the best idea which is the form, but it is what is behind the idea, and that is the spirit. The spirit of the Universal Worship is not only that universal idea of worship, but the spirit of the Universal Worship is the spirit of the Message. Without the spirit of the Message, the Universal Worship is a beautiful statue, but with the Message it is a living being.

And now one might ask, "What must be done about it? Shall we speak about the Message every time we hold a service?" It is not necessary to adhere to that principle. I mean to say: when the spirit moves, you cannot help but speak, but you may not take it as a principle that you must speak about the Message because it is a principle. But when performing the service and at other times also, if the Cherag is conscious of the Message, that consciousness itself will give life to the Universal Worship. But if not, how well the service was performed and how many beautiful quotations were read, but if there was not that consciousness it will be like a beautiful picture which has no life in it. The first thing the Cherag must be conscious of is the life of the ordination, the life that is given through the ordination to their spirit. That their spirit having been charged with that life of the Message which they have to give to the world. And the next thing that the Cherag has to be conscious of is that by the consciousness of this

principle, whatever they will say, the Message will reach unconsciously to the people in the audience.

What Siraja Green wished to say is, “gather your thoughts, center your mind, make your concentration on the central idea of the Universal Worship.” And what that idea is? That idea is the Message. That all the inspiration and power will come by itself and it will flow through the Cherags to the audience with that consciousness. And all the obstacles that stand in the way will be gradually removed, difficulties will be surmounted and the path will be made clear if only we each of us will maintain the consciousness of the Message.

Questions and Answers

Q: Siraj-un-Munir, will you please tell us how we can find the balance between those two points of view, the first you have just exposed that the Cherags have to be in a certain way the teachers of the Message, and the other idea that you have exposed this afternoon that the mureed should care not to be eager to be a teacher.

A: The position of the Cherag is a special one. Cherag is a channel of the Siraj-un-Munir, that the divine Message in the form of light, life and blessing that manifests through Siraj-un-Munir flows through the Cherag to the world. Therefore, a Cherag’s work is not only of a teacher, but also of a friend, of a counselor, of a father, of a mother. And what I said this afternoon about the idea of teachership, you must remember that that idea even the great Teachers of humanity also kept away from their hearts. I do not mean that they did not teach, I do not mean that they did not fulfill duties as Teachers. But the idea “I am a teacher” that they have always tried to keep back. There are two things: to fulfill one’s duty, to do the work, and the other thing is to think, “I am so and so.” That is quite different.

Besides that, what I specially said was that there is a certain period when a soul is on the path of a disciple. That is a certain space that you have to pass through, that you have to cross. And after you have come to a certain point, then your duty changes. There is another way of looking at it. There is a child who hears something new or sees something which impresses him, that he has learned something. Then he comes and tells everybody in the family: now you must do it in this way, and you must think like this, and it is in this way that it must be done. May be that he knows it or may be that he does not know. But in both cases, he would rather have not spoken. It is not his age; it is not his time to speak about it. He could have allowed himself to have grown still more in order to come to that point that his word could be carried through. When a person who is in the period of discipleship wants to correct another one or tell another

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one or discuss with another one or speak to another one with that authority, that is exactly like the little child who comes home and begins to show that he knows something. But when the same child has grown in the condition of a father and he has his own children, and if he says to his children, "Well, it is done in this way and it must not be done in that way," then he is quite right; he has reached that age, he has reached that stage when he can say. After having passed through the period of discipleship, when a person has reached a stage, then he can teach. But he who is able to give that person the idea, "I am a teacher," he is more able at that time to keep that idea away. Now besides, there is one person, if he says, "I wish you had not done it," to another person, the other person thinks about it and the other person values it. If the same thing another person has said who ought not to have said it, instead of making him better he will make him worse. Therefore, one can find within oneself, by studying life better when to say and what to say, and when not to say.

Would you believe, consider my responsibility with mureeds and my duty towards them in their individual lives. Sometimes I wait so many days, and sometimes I wait so many months, and sometimes I wait for years to tell something which I would have liked to tell a mureed, waiting for the time to come, waiting for the spirit of the mureed to become ripened, waiting for the devotion of the mureed to grow so much that if I said a word, it will be able to lift him. What is the use if I said a word and if his devotion was not strong enough to lift him, but threw him down? Then the word is lost. That shows that the work of the teacher is such a great responsibility. And the greatest responsibility of the teacher is to forget that he is a teacher, but keep the attitude of a pupil from the first to the last.

Q: Siraj-un-Munir, how can a Cherag, which is the case of the Cherag, who cannot rely upon sufficient inspiration or is not sufficient channel of Siraj-un-Munir, how can he give an address? What do you think of the method of reading a paper? ...Notes?

A: A Cherag may read from Religious Gathekas of the Universal Worship. Also a Siraj may take out an article, an essay taking paragraphs from different books, published books, and make it an article and read it. But at the same time, to become more inspired there is one key, and that key is self-confidence.

Q: Siraj-un-Munir, if we have so much self-confidence, will we not lose sight of Siraj-un-Munir's view?

A: It is your self-confidence that accepts my guidance, and if you lack self-confidence that means you will lack my guidance.

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A mureed came to me and told me, “Murshid, I have lost trust in all friends and everybody, the world has proved to me false from top to toe. I have no confidence even in myself. Yes, but if you say something, I believe it.” I said, “It is difficult to believe in your belief. If you have no self-confidence and you believe in me, today you believe in me and tomorrow you will give it up. Because your belief is not founded on self-confidence. But if your belief is founded on self-confidence thousand persons will come and say for and against the Siraj-un-Munir, and the Message, but because your belief is founded on your own confidence you will not give it up. It is therefore that self-confidence is the first. On the ground of self-confidence you must rear the plant of faith for the Message.

Q: Do you mean that we should always feel that we shall be inspired to make ourselves a perfect channel from which the Message will come from Siraj-un-Munir, so perfecting the channel?

A: Yes, I will say it more clearly again. The first thing is that we do not need to think that we will have inspiration. Will is too far. No sooner one is ordained, to feel confidence in oneself with the ordination itself. On that we will be inspired. But with the ordination we are inspired that we are the channels through which the Message will flow. Besides, about the nearness of the Siraj-un-Munir, the Cherags are the first to feel it. Mureeds come afterwards. The Cherags have the ordination and that builds that connection, that link, with Siraj-un-Munir which is very close. They should feel Siraj-un-Munir’s link with them in everything they do.

I will tell you a story of a mureed which will explain it more. A peasant came to a Murshid and said, “I would so much like to go under your guidance, to become your mureed, to receive your initiation, but I feel that I am so unworthy that perhaps you will not take me.” The teacher said, “No, I think I will take you as my mureed.” Then he said, “But let me tell you, before you will take me as your mureed, that I have many faults.” The teacher said, “What faults?” He said, “I am very fond of gambling.” “Well,” the teacher said, “It does not matter.” This candidate was very surprised, but he said, “I have a still worse fault, that I like to drink.” The teacher said, “It does not matter.” The candidate was still more confused. He said two, three faults, and the teacher continued to say, “It does not matter.” He said, “If it does not matter, you take me as your pupil.” The teacher said very gently, “With all these faults I have accepted you to be my pupil. Will you then make one condition, keep to one condition I make with you? That all these that you call your faults, you must not do in my presence.” He said, “That is very easy.” He thought, “When I come to my teacher I shall be quite free from them.” And he went home. First of all, he wanted to be quite different from what he was before.

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He tried, but one day when passing near a café he felt a great attraction, and he went near there. And then perhaps some thought came and he came back. So he went to one thing and another. When next time he came to his teacher, the teacher asked him, “Have you been doing your faults that you said you have?” He said, “Teacher, many times I was much attracted to them, but whenever I wanted to do it, then I saw your face. You would not let me alone, and I could not do it.”

That is the idea. When a mureed is close to his Teacher, then the consciousness is there, and that consciousness takes the part of the Teacher, that the guidance that comes from the Teacher through that consciousness, directs the pupil.

*Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All
the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master,
the Spirit of Guidance*

Ordination in the Church of All (September 12, 1926)

Blessed Collaborators,

This is the last Collective Interview of Cherags and yet it is not the last meeting. Every meeting is the first meeting to unite for the future. And what I wish to say is that all the words I have said in my lectures, things that have appealed to you, that have touched you, you will take them home with you. And things that have seemed strange and you have not yet realized, you may leave them alone.

And now about the work. You know that you share my joy and my sorrow in working with me in this spiritual Cause. If it is success, it is our success, and if there is a lack of it, it is a delay before us. And for us in our lives you must be more and more conscious that we are bound together as one embodiment, and we must bear with one another with our faults. I may have shortcomings and faults, and you have, we are all human beings. God alone is perfect. Therefore, neither expect from me to be perfect, nor from your fellow workers. We all have our faults, and the only thing is to bear with one another and work harmoniously towards the accomplishment of the great purpose. And to remember one thing: do not take the rule and the organization so seriously. What are these rules and organization? They are only railway tracks. They put railway tracks to let the railway go. But remember, the steam which makes the engine go, that is the important part. Although the railway is necessary, although the road is necessary, so organization is necessary, and rules are necessary. But do not give them such importance that you may not see what is behind it: the spirit of the Message. I would have been the first person to abolish all organization and rules and regulations and would have lived as the Vairagas in the East live near a bank of a river, sitting under the shade of a tree, and giving the blessing to those who come. I would have done the same and would have been thousand times happier; because when I speak to you all this, you cannot imagine how tempted I become to have this condition. This condition for me to have to be in the midst of the world and to have to strive and struggle with earthly things; it has no charm for me. It has to exist, since the Message is to be given in the world, that the channels may be made. Just like Mr. Ford who has a motorcar factory; he had to make ships to carry them, and railway trains, and a market for the workers who work in the factory. You could not have imagined that all these things were needed, but they were needed. That is organization. That makes things easy. Would you

believe that in the beginning when I gave, served the Message, there was no trace of organization? But what happened? But everything that was done, it seemed that it was drowned. It was not really drowned, but there was no connection between mureeds; there was not constructive element there. And the moment when the constructive element was produced, then the Movement began; and now it will grow by itself. But in all conditions, when it grew and when it did not grow, my conviction was no less at this time when it did not grow. And now the conviction has become deeper and deeper and deeper, and greater and stronger and more substantial, it has become more organized every moment of the day. And as I say that, you will all share my happiness, my sorrow, my struggle, my trouble; you will also share my conviction for the Sufi Message to spread throughout the whole world and reach the whole humanity. And you will see that your conviction will prove to be true.

And now, as we shall part outwardly, I will be closer to every one of you; still closer than I am just now in your presence before you. For the very reason that space will divide us; and yet nothing can divide us; we are together in truth, in God, and for the service of humanity.

Questions and Answers

Q: When we are going back to our countries, there are Cherags and mureeds eagerly waiting for us, and some of them have never seen you. It would be so beautiful if you would give us some words with us to say to them.

A: You will tell them that it is said in Koran that when a person takes one step towards God, God takes ten steps towards them. And therefore, my eagerness is the same as theirs, and God please, we shall meet soon; and give them my blessing.

Q: If people visit the Church, who have great spiritual aspirations but also are in great material trouble, what is your opinion in the material help to give to them? Not exactly the poor classes will visit our gatherings, but if poor artists with all their heart full of spiritual longings are in great need to put the art before the world, to sell their beautiful things they have made, what has to be our attitude?

A: I think that our object is to do everything possible to make our Movement philanthropic, because that is the only object of spirituality. If we are not of use to others, what is the use? I do not see it. But at the same time, if we introduce any such ideas in the beginning, and especially to those who have not yet become deepened in the Sufi Message, they will feel the pressure of it so heavy that they will leave our Movement. In the first place we are asking them as our first demand to give their very best thing they have, and that is their ego, their Nafs, which they have valued most, which they like most, and for which they always stand, and which is the last thing they

give. And if we add to this, which is too great to give, if we say: also some money for the poor, then they will say, "What is left with us? Our ego, the treasure within we have given. And then what is in the purse, if we give you that, then what is left with us?" Therefore, the best thing is, not as a principle, to think in our mind, that is the best thing to do. Some day we shall develop our society. But personally, if we can do something, this is the best thing.

I will tell you a little story that will give you some idea about it. When I was coming back from New York in the ship, they had a concert. And in this concert the chairman of this concert was going to speak first, and I was going to speak at the end of the concert. And when the chairman began, he said how there was a certain fund he wanted to have money for. From the beginning to the end, he said how good it was to give to that fund and how greatly it was necessary that this fund should be bigger, and what a great virtue it was to contribute to it. And everyone who was sitting in the audience said, "He seems to have come from the Salvation Army." Everyone said it, and everyone was annoyed, because they came there to hear music, and he gave another music. And when my turn came in the end, instead of telling them to give to the fund, I only struck the note of our duty towards one another; that was quite enough. It is the opening of the heart; when the heart is open, you do not need to say, "Give for it." When the heart is open, a person will be most willing to do it without your asking for it. In that way you must introduce philanthropic ideal to our Movement.

Q: Has poverty not always got a special reason, and is connected with some fault of the one who is poor?

A: No, not always. Sometimes poverty has its great virtue, sometimes poverty has its great mission, sometimes poverty has done such wonders with souls, sometimes poverty can turn a devil into a saint. And therefore, never think that poverty is an evil; but do not seek for poverty, avoid it, do everything to avoid it. Do not keep poverty as your ideal. But if it comes, then take yesterday with resignation, but today with strife. Be resigned to what has passed, but struggle for the present. Know that poverty of the past had a meaning, but know at the same time that poverty of the future is undesirable.

To add to it I will say that poverty is a perfection and at the same time a limitation. It is limiting when you are limited; it is perfecting when you are perfect. A limited person with poverty will become more limited, but a perfect person with poverty will become perfect.

Q: Is it now the time to encourage people of the lower classes to visit the Churches?

A: I think we must encourage people from all classes to visit Church services. But only we must have a kind of measure in our mind. That if we have twenty persons, nineteen among them are responsive, and one among them is sneering, it can go on very well. But if five among them are sneering and fifteen among them are serious, it is bad. We must measure it our, we must work it out in this way, that among twenty persons we can only allow one person who will sneer. But we cannot allow five persons who sneer, because our service will be spoiled. And in this way gradually add to our service. Because the sneering of the one person will be drowned in the seriousness of twenty persons, but if there are five it will be worse.

I will tell you my experience that at times I have felt uncomfortable by one antagonistic person sitting in the audience of five hundred persons. One person among five hundred has made me feel uncomfortable. No doubt, afterwards when I found that person, then I changed my attitude. But at the same time, to begin with, it was most difficult. And it must be remembered, besides, we have to follow the law of politeness. I know of a clergyman, when he gave a sermon and he felt a person who was antagonistic, he stopped his sermon, and he said, "Will you, sir, will you kindly go away; it is just as well that you are gone instead of being here." That is another thing. Our way is not that; we have to be polite, we have to be kind, and, therefore, very gradually to take those who will respond.

Q: How can it be best avoided by a Cherag that undesirable persons come during the service?

A: In the first place, undesirable people will only come once. They will not have patience to come twice. Unless a person is determined to cause us harm or trouble us, that person will come twice or three times. But an undesirable person will come once; he has no patience with us. We are always safe to avoid them. Besides, as like attracts like, those who like will come; in this matter there is nothing to worry about. Only at the same time it is better to avoid it.

Q: There is a little problem regarding the attitude of the public towards the form of the Universal Worship. We are so free from all form that people cannot understand it at first. They see the candles, think it is Catholic. Would it be better to start with informal service?

A: Yes, I think it is sometimes better to begin with informal service. And when people are accustomed to it, then bring them to the formal service. But at the same time, human tendency is the same in all countries. They differ a little bit, but they are just the same.

English people say the same, and French people say the same, and Dutch people say the same. Perhaps a little more, a little less. The same problems come more or less. But let me tell you that the influence of the Vatican is ever increasing in the United States in spite of the general opinion that the Americans are going far away from religion, and they do not care for form. There was a play produced in Chicago—I had heard that nothing religious on the stage would be tolerated—and this play was called “Miracle”; Virgin Mary taking the place of a nun who went away and till she comes back, Virgin Mary takes the place. And there were religious processions. And the whole tableau was religious, and priests and all the Catholic symbols. And how the play was loved and liked and attended, that I can assure you that this play went on for one year. It can be produced for twelve years; people will not get tired of it. It is not that America does not like form, but it must be complete and perfect. Everything that is complete and perfect America will like. If there is a theater, if there is a building, it must be all so wonderfully made and so neat and so well finished. No matter what you produce America will like it.

Therefore, be most careful in America. Have instead of three Cherags, six Cherags working, or twelve Cherags working at the same time. Wonderful large hall, and well-arranged altar; you will see that no one will go to any other Church; they will all come to the Universal Worship. It must be well produced, everything must be well done.

Q: That is just one of the difficulties. If the form is not perfectly carried out, every action beautiful and perfect, it is difficult to get Cherags to do it in a perfect manner. If they are criticized, they get angry and will not do it at all.

A: That difficulty can be solved, especially with the American Cherags, by telling them of American psychology as I am telling you; that how an American is sensitive to anything missing in the theater, in the school, in the club, in the hotel. Nothing must be missing. If there is anything missing, it cannot go on. It must be finished, perfect in America. Well, they will all listen to you as soon as you tell them the American mind. And those who are not ready to cooperate with them, please tell them, “If you are not willing, please do not cooperate.” If you tell them, I am sure they will understand.

Q: Is it best to begin with the Universal Worship?

A: I do not see any objection, as long as it is done very nicely.

Q: What is the best attitude towards the more intellectual types, who very much like what they hear about the Movement, but just oppose themselves against the Universal Worship, and think it too devotional?

A: Well, those who do not take sugar in the tea, they must be given only tea. Those who think it is too devotional, tell them, "Please there is another meeting that is called Brotherhood Meeting. You can come there, that will perhaps agree with you more." After they have come two, three, ten times, they will get accustomed to the idea, and may be that after they have made friends in the Brotherhood Meeting, they may tolerate our devotion more than they have before.

Q: Could you give us some advice how we can come best in contact with you when we are far away?

A: The contact with me depends upon your consciousness. The more you are conscious of me being with you, my friendship with you, of sympathy with you, my prayers with you, my blessing with you, the more you will hear my own voice in your hearts.

God bless you.

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance

Advice to Cherags (undated)

The duties have been fixed as follows: the taking of Services, teaching of comparative religions, consulting with those who follow the Services of the Universal Worship, giving them counsel in need and troubles, giving Confirmation to those who wish to join the Church, receiving children in the Universal Worship, marrying couples who wish to be married in the Universal Worship, and performing the Service for the burial of the dead. And the instructions regarding these Services are to be received from the Siraj of one's country.

It is necessary in order to attain uniformity of working that one plan should be carried out in the Services, but in the arrangements of the Altar the Siraj is given power to use his discrimination, knowing the psychology of the people of his country, as to what is the best way, but it is expected of all workers of the Message to keep uniformity as far as possible in all things.

Questions and Answers

Q: How must the Cherag consider himself when doing the Service? Has he special power given to him by his ordination as Cherag?

A: The most desirable thing is that the Cherag consider himself as nothing; he must be the empty reed.

Q: What can we tell about Sufism?

A: You may tell that there exists a Sufi Order, which has originated from the most ancient school of wisdom, which existed in Egypt, from which source all the different schools of the inner cult have come.

You can also tell the two great objects of the Order: One is to form a human brotherhood, beyond the barriers of caste, race, creed, nation or religion; and the second is to help those who are seeking after truth.

You may also tell that the Sufi Order is a world mission, the work of which is to answer the purpose of humanity at the present time. You may tell that the Sufi Order is not a particular religion, but it is all religions and in that way it proves to be the true religion of Christ.

We are building the palace for the king, where the king must live and that his name be known to the world. It is not for us to live in, nor is it for the glorification of our names. The best way of working in the spiritual path is to be silent, and yet constantly active in the service of God and humanity.